A COMPARATIVE APPRAISAL OF CONDITION OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SHOMOLU, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Infrastructure is the basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society or enterprise, or the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. The term typically refers to the technical structures that support a society, such as roads, water supply, sewers, power grids, telecommunications, and so forth. Viewed functionally, infrastructure facilitates the production of goods and services; for example, roads enable transportation of raw materials to the factory, and also for the distribution of finished products to markets. It also includes basic social services such as schools and hospitals. In military parlance, the term refers to buildings and permanent installations necessary for the support, redeployment, and operation of military forces. Infrastructure can then be more concisely defined as the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living.

According to Idachaba (1989) infrastructure means a system of physical, human, and institutional forms of capital, which enable urban residents to perform their production, processing and distribution activities as well as help to improve the overall quality of life. One of the basic infrastructural facilities and services in the human settlement, and available in every neighbourhood is the primary school. Therefore, primary school is a basic component of the

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urban physical infrastructure which must be adequately provided and effectively maintained in every civilized society. This is because education is the greatest force that brings about change, and as such its foundation must be on a sound footing.

One of the greatest challenges facing education sector, and particularly primary education in Nigeria, however is the provision and maintenance of infrastructural facilities in such schools to meet the demand of the international best practices. This is particularly of concern in the ever-urbanizing Lagos in Nigeria, due to its increasing rate of immigration and births, and the resultant problems of overcrowding in houses, streets, and of course class rooms, among other places. To worsen the situation in primary schools, poor maintenance culture is made manifest in dilapidated buildings, inadequate personnel and other pedagogic materials. This is one of the main reasons, while private investment intervention has been one of the giant attempts aimed at rescuing the falling standard of education at that level for quite some time now. It has, however, been criticized that most private schools are also not faring better than their public counterparts, as they attempt to compromise quality in their quest for profit-making. It is against this background that this paper attempts a comparative assessment of infrastructural facilities in public and private schools in Shomolu area of Lagos State. The choice of Shomolu Local Government was informed by its centrality in the state. The study was designed towards testing a hypothesis about the popularly held views that "the condition of facilities is better in private schools than in public schools". This view is being challenged these days, and particularly, with the current intervention of the present democratic dispensation in the state. This paper, therefore seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

- What is the present state of infrastructure in the primary schools in the study area?
- Does the condition of facilities vary with type of ownership – private or public?
- Which aspects of school infrastructure should be tackled first?
- What can be done to improve the condition of facilities in primary schools in the study area?

The Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess and compare the physical condition of infrastructural facilities in private and public primary schools in Shomolu Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. This is with a view to evolving credible management and maintenance strategies capable of ensuring effective and conducive learning environment in the schools.

The specific objectives are to:

- Take an inventory of the existing infrastructural facilities in the primary schools in Shomolu local government area
- Appraise the physical conditions of the existing infrastructure (building structures, classrooms furniture, toilets etc) in the primary schools in the study area
- Compare the situations in the public and private primary schools
- Identify rehabilitation/improvement needs as well as management and maintenance strategies for improved infrastructural facilities in the schools.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis testing is a test of guess statement (speculation) that has not been verified. It could be rejected or accepted. Hypothesis testing enables one to draw conclusion or inferences on a given population under study based on the sample of the given population. There are two types of hypothesis. They are: (1) the null-hypothesis, H_0, and (2) the alternative hypothesis, H_1. (Leedy, and Ormrod, 2011; Okoko, 2000; Adana, 1996)

In this study the H_0 states that: "the condition of infrastructural facilities in the two categories of primary schools is the same", while the H_1 states the opposite.

Why the Study?

The millennium development goal 2 is to achieve universal primary education and ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling. Before, and since the time of this declaration, the state of infrastructure in primary schools, however, has been a problem to teachers and pupils, and a serious concern to other stakeholders, including parents and guardians. The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) nationwide in 1976 experienced problems of under-estimation of about 30 percent of the turn-up number of the children enrolment, acute shortage of classroom spaces or over-crowded classrooms, shortage of teachers and equipment. This had indicated that primary school education was under-funded; most of the primary schools controlled and financed by the government were in shambles. This may not be unconnected to the neglect and lack of maintenance of schools over the years. This inability of the government to effectively maintain primary schools had made people to agitate for the return

of schools to the missionaries and other voluntary agencies. Also, it brought the emergence of many private primary schools presently experienced in Nigeria.

Despite the fact that there is increasing provision of teachers at public primary schools, there is no adequate documented information in form of empirical studies about the situation now. And most studies in the existing literature generally, are concentrated on the effect of school condition on students' performance (Plumley, 1978; Chan 1979; and Phillips 1997), not from urban infrastructure management point of view. The general perception, however, is that there is constant problem of over-crowded classrooms and other bad conditions of public schools' facilities. The parents are also with the opinion that the teachers in public primary schools are no longer committed in discharging their duties due to one reason or the other. So, a large number of parents prefer private primary schools for their wards. Also, the public perception generally is that the quality of education offered in public schools is comparatively low and continue to drop. However, with current intervention by the democratic dispensation in the state, coupled with the fact that public schools are now being subsidized through additional funds contributed by communities to their local schools through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA's), School Councils, and other Community based Organizations, one expects the situation to have improved and the schools to compare with their private counterparts. This is one of the motivations for this study, while others may not be unconnected to the need to identify appropriate maintenance strategies for primary school facilities in the area.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceptions about School Facilities and Environment

There are different perceptions of how schools as physical facilities are designed and maintained. Schools have been designed for many years to provide an area that could be used for education. However, for the most part, these buildings were not "special" in any educational sense. Most were dull, or barn style usually copied from some other district's latest building project, therefore saving money on the architect fees. Others described schools as ugly, predictable rectangles that were structurally unprepared for the test of several decades. While they have not been special in their design, the schools have also not been very special in their effect on student or public perception. For the most part, schools have been rather uninviting structures, especially to

students. The quality of the physical environment has a great deal to do with how a building is perceived and used (West, 2005).

Student perception of a school influences several aspects of their educational experience. Building age, general appearance, and student-friendliness aspects influence the perception of those attending that school. Research has shown that a link exists between student achievement and behavior on the one hand, and the overall condition of school buildings on the other. For example, in a study of all of the primary schools in Georgia, fourth grade students in non-modernized buildings recorded poorer results in basic skills assessment than those in modernized or new buildings (Plumley, 1978). Similarly eighth grade students scored consistently higher in mathematics and vocabulary assessment if accommodated in new or modernized buildings. This was repeated in a study of 10 elementary schools where teachers' attitudes to school buildings were significantly improved in new and modernized buildings (Chan, 1979). A further study demonstrated an improvement in student achievement scores in newer facilities especially in sixth grade mathematics (Phillips, 1997).

However, there is not total agreement on all of these findings. For example, in one study a strong inverse relationship was found between student behavior and building age, that is, the older the buildings were, the better the behavior of the students (Earthman, 1998). It has been speculated that this conflicting finding may be the result of negative student reaction to greater supervision and disciplinary measures in the newer facilities.

More so, student safety is a big concern for adults. Most would rather have a safe school than one with curb appeal. Schools that are designed with safety in mind utilize three critical design principles. These include access control, natural surveillance, and definition of territory. Access control uses doors, shrubs, fences, gates and other physical design elements to discourage access to an area by all but its intended users. Natural surveillance assures that offenders and intruders will be observed. Territorial reinforcement suggests that physical design can contribute to a sphere of influence so that users develop a sense of "ownership" that is perceived by offenders. Sidewalks, landscaping, porches and other elements that establish the boundaries between public and private areas define territory (Lackney, 2003).

Criteria for Assessing School Facilities' Condition

Age of building is an important factor here. Studies carried out on the impact of the age of school buildings generally identify three categories representative of school building age: non-modernized, modernized, and new.

Next is furniture condition. UNESCO's Education Building and Furniture Programme has been engaged for many years in extensive empirical project based work in developing countries. UNESCO reports that uncomfortable and unsuitable furniture causes problems including backache, poor concentration, and writing difficulties, thus reducing learning opportunities. There is a general body of work on ergonomics that support these conclusions. These fundamental principles are clearly also applicable to the developed world, although it appears that no specific research studies have attempted to measure the impact.

Another important factor is design. More recent empirical research explores how spaces should be re-configured to assure improved student behaviour and outcomes. Many building projects evolve from revisions in pedagogy and curriculum and new trends in behaviour research. For example, a 1993 Australian Government report identified the need for a separate environment for middle schooling. Whilst the middle school might still be co-located with the senior school to enable the sharing of specialist facilities, separation allows 11 to 16 year olds (in years 8 to 10) to have an identity, focus and culture of their own; independent of the influence of older students in years 11 and 12 (Owoade, 2012).

In addition, over the past 20 years it has consistently been shown that there are many building elements whose design features, condition and levels of maintenance all influence learning outcomes and student behaviour, these elements have been aggregated into two categories: structural and cosmetic factors. The structural factor refers to all issues of design and stability, while the cosmetic factor may refer to finishing, beautification, and other landscape issues (Owoade, 2012).

Other Empirical Studies

Considerable rigorous and academically sound empirical quantitative research work has been carried out in the United States. However, the sample sizes vary between studies, as do the levels of correlation between achievements and building conditions, which suggests that more studies need to be carried out in this field to fully validate the findings.

These qualitative studies have provided a deeper analysis and understanding of the more classical scientifically based quantitative finding, which indicates that: student academic achievement improves with improved building condition, lighting level, air quality and temperature and acoustics, although there is limited quantitative evidence available on some of these factors (Owoade, 2012).

It is important to note that, as buildings age, the individual building elements, such as lighting, air-conditioning, and floor coverings, vary in life expectancy and levels of maintenance. Thus different elements will impact on learning and behavior differentially. Four recent replicated studies have identified a relationship between cosmetic factors (related to age, maintenance, and condition) and student performance and behavior, with student achievement scores improving by as much as 5% in schools of higher condition ratings (Owoade, 2012).

Gap and Contribution to Knowledge

What has been unveiled in the literature review above is the fact that the condition of infrastructural facilities in schools has a significant role to play in the learning process, and by implication, in the quality of education offered by the school. Most of these studies were, however, from educational training background, reflecting on what needed be done to improve the quality of education. Why this is worthwhile in its own right, there exists a gap on the knowledge about public-private dichotomy in the availability, condition and maintenance of facilities in schools, especially, from urban planning and management point of view. This is an attempt in this direction.

3. THE STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

The Study Area

The study area is the physical, economic, and political entity known as Shomolu local government area of Lagos State. The local government exudes an impressive industrial, cultural, and socio-economic history. It has a thriving population and a favourable outlook especially for education investment and promotion.

Shomolu Local Government Area, Lagos State of Nigeria, is within the tropical rain forest zone located approximately at latitude 6.28'north and longitude 3.45' east (Balogun1999). It covers an area of about 25sq km, bounded in the North by Kosofe local government area, in the south by

Lagos Mainland L.G.A., in the east by the Lagos lagoon and in the west by Ikeja local government area. It comprises of the communities such as Akoka area, some part of Fadeyi, closer to Ikorodu Road and the Anthony Oke inter change where its bounded by the Bariga and part of Akoka, Igbari, Obanikoro, Pedro village Abule Okuta, Seriki village, Apelehin and Ilaje, with gradient of 1:200 along Bariga, 1:20 around Oworosonki and Ilaje areas, the local government is located at the lower level than the surrounding areas.

Generally in Lagos state, including the study area, the atmospheric condition is warm and cold, the sky is clear and dry, dull and wet, while the wind could be termed light or strong. The mean annual temperature is moderately hot and ranges between 24^0c and 27^0c which makes people migrate and reside in Lagos. The heavy relative humidity and rainfall is mostly experienced between April and October with July being the peak period. This has also contributed to the increase in the population in Lagos state. (Federal Office of Statistics, 2010)

According to the 1996 National Census, Shomolu local government has a population of 771,194. This increased considerably over the years to 935,789 in 2006 according to the 2006 national population census; and from which, using a growth rate of 4.5 percent, a projected estimate of 1, 165, 993 was made for 2011 (NPC, 2006).

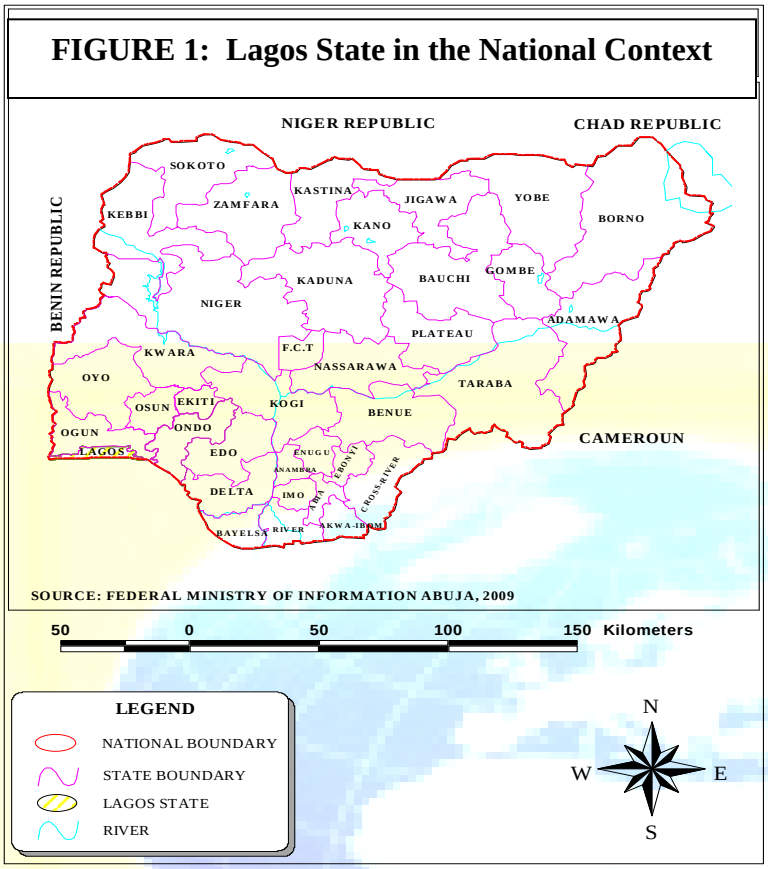
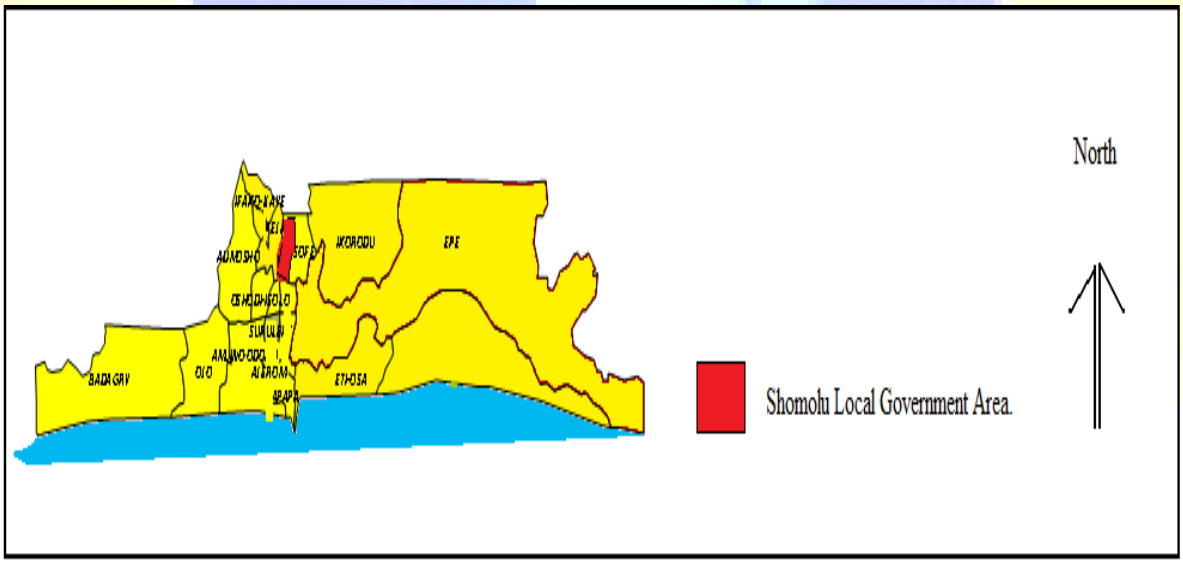


Figure 2: The Study Area and Other Local Government Areas in Lagos State



Source: Shomolu Local Government Brochure.

Study Nature and Data

The study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature, and so were the data, which were of two categories – primary and secondary. Apart from the population data of teachers and students, which were obtained from the respective schools and Shomolu Local Government Educational Planning Authority, primary data constituted the main aspect of the data volume used in this study. The qualitative primary data were obtained through direct observation of the situations, key informant interview, and focus group discussion with key officers of the schools, while the quantitative primary data were obtained using the sampling techniques discussed below.

Sample Frame and Size

There were 83 primary schools (public and private) in the study area as at the time of this study (2011); out of which, 49 were public, while 34 were private. About fifty percent of the population of primary schools was covered in the field survey. These included 24 public primary schools and 16 private primary schools, making a total of 40 schools covered, and 3 questionnaires administered per school to obtain information from a class-teacher, head-teacher and a non-teaching member of staff from each school, making a total of 120 respondents.

Method of Data Analysis and Operationalization of Key Variables

Apart from display of qualitative data via pictures and maps and their content analysis, quantitative data were summarized using tabulation and other descriptive statistics, while t-test was employed to test the hypothesis that: "the condition of infrastructural facilities in the two categories of primary schools is the same".

To facilitate the testing of the hypothesis above, Condition of Infrastructure Index (CII) was computed as an aggregate of all the variables used to measure the condition of infrastructure in each school. These include: condition of: (1) school buildings, (2) classroom furniture, (3) roof (4) wall, (5) windows, (6) floor, (7) ceiling (8) interior finishing, (9) water and sanitation, (10) security and (11) quality, etc. Each of these was measured using Likhert's scale ranging from 1 to 5, for very poor, poor, fair, good/sound and very good/very sound respectively.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The findings of the study could be categorized into four different aspects. These include: (1) external physical condition of the buildings, (2) internal physical condition, (3) classroom

facilities, (4) water and sanitation, (5) security facilities (all of which are descriptive summaries of the situation) on the one hand, and (6) test of hypothesis on the composite (aggregate) index of school infrastructure on the other.

4.2 External Physical Condition of the School Buildings

The external physical condition of school buildings were measured through such variables as building type, material of construction, conditions of roof, wall, window and age of buildings. From Table 1, it is observed that most of the buildings (80 and 52 percent in public and private schools respectively) are bungalow, while more modern storey-buildings constitute 18.6 percent in public schools, and considerably high (46%) in private schools. It reveals that all the buildings in public schools are more than 20 years old, while age distribution for the private school indicates that relatively new buildings are of quite considerable proportions.

Table 1: External Physical Characteristics of School Buildings

Variable		Type of School			
		Private		Public	
		Freq.	%	Freq	%
Building Type	Bungalow	56	80.0	26	52.0
	Storey-Building	13	18.6	23	46.0
	Others	01	1.4	01	2.0
Building Material	Mud	3	4.3	0	0.0
	Concrete	45	90.0	60	94.3
	Others	01	2.0	01	1.4
Age of Building (Yrs)	0-5				
	6-10	0	0.0		8.0
	11-15	0	0.0		14.0
	16-20	0	0.0		40.0
	above 20	49	100.0		38.0
Condition of Building	Very-Poor		0.0		2.0
	Poor		1.4		0.0
	Fair		4.4		16.0
	Good		54.3		70.0
	Very Good		2.9		12.0
Condition of Roof	Very-Poor	2	2.9	0	0.0
	Poor	2	2.9	1	2.0
	Fair	45	64.3	10	20.0
	Good	21	30.0	32	64.4

	Very Good	7	5.8	0	0.0
Wall Condition	Very-Poor	1	1.4	0	0.0
	Poor	4	5.7	0	0.0
	Fair	41	58.6	14	28.0
	Good	23	32.9	25	50.0
	Very Good	1	1.4	11	22.0
Window Condition	Very-Poor	1	1.4	0	0.0
	Poor	15	21.4	2	4.0
	Fair	39	55.7	8	16.0
	Good	14	20.0	36	72.0
	Very Good	1	1.4	4	8.0

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2011)

From the same table, it is shown further that most (82%) of the buildings in private schools are at least good, while the proportion of buildings in that category in public schools, though also considerably high, is 57.2 percent (i.e. 54.3% + 2.9%). The distribution is similar to that of roof condition, of which 64.4% are good in private schools, while the proportion that is at least good in public schools is as comparatively low as 35.8%. This is slightly different from the condition of wall distribution with not quite different proportions of 58.6 and 50 percent of buildings observed to be in fair condition for the two respective categories, while another sharp difference is observed in window condition assessment, with only 21.4% (i.e. 20 + 1.4 percent) and 80% (i.e 72 + 8 percent) are at least good in public and private schools respectively. The different external conditions of buildings in the two categories of schools is, however, less visible in the type of building materials used as 90 and 94.3 percent of them are observed to be built of concrete blocks in the two respective categories.

4.3 Internal Physical Condition of School Buildings

This is measured via variables such as floor and ceiling conditions and materials, type of door, window materials, as well as interior and floor finishing. In Table 2 clear differences in favour of private schools are observed on all the variables. For example, while the floor condition of 62 (i.e 38 + 24) percent of buildings in private schools are observed to be at least good, the proportion is as comparatively low as 28.5 (i.e 27.1 + 1.4) percent in public schools. More so, while only 25.7% of buildings in public schools are good, 66 (i.e. 46 + 20) percent are at least good in private schools. Similar patterns and differences are observed in the variables of other internal physical condition as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: External Physical Characteristics of School Buildings

Variable		Type of School			
		Private		Public	
		Freq.	%	Freq	%
Floor Condition	Very-Poor	1	1.4	0	0.0
	Poor	5	7.1	0	0.0
	Fair	44	62.9	19	38.0
	Good	19	27.1	19	38.0
	Very Good	1	1.4	12	24.0
Ceiling Condition	Very-Poor	-	-	-	-
	Poor	13	18.6	1	2.0
	Fair	39	55.7	16	32.0
	Good	18	25.7	23	46.0
	Very Good	0	0.0	10	20.0
Roofing Material	Aluminum	28	56.0	60	85.7
	Asbestos	26	42.0	5	7.1
	Others	1	2.0	5	7.1
Type of Door	Wooden	23	46.0	48	68.6
	Metallic	27	54.0	18	25.7
	Others	0	0.0	4	5.7
Window Material	Glass	31	62.0	14	20.0
	Wooden	19	38.0	51	72.9
	Others	0	0.0	5	7.1
Interior Finishing	Not-Plastered		6.0		0.0
	Just-Plastered		18.0		31.4
	Plastered and Painted		76.0		62.9
Floor Finishing	Concrete	40	80.0	44	62.9
	Tiles	3	6.0	6	8.6
	German-Floor	7	14.0	16	22.9
	Others	0	0.0	4	5.7
Ceiling Material	Asbestos	34	68.0	49	70.0
	Ceramics	0	0.0	6	8.6
	Slate	16	32.0	9	12.9
	Others	0	0.0	1	1.4
		0	0.0	5	7.1

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2011)

4.4 Classroom Facilities

The variables of classroom facilities observed and assessed include furniture condition and material, type of board, sitting arrangement and occupancy, lightening, and ventilation. As revealed by Table 3, there are sharp differences between the two categories of schools in furniture condition and sitting arrangement. 86 (i.e. 80 + 6) percent and a comparatively low proportion of 41.4 percent of furniture in private and public schools respectively are observed to be in good condition. Regarding sitting arrangement, most (58%) of pupils in private primary schools have a seat to themselves, while the proportion is just 2.9 percent in public schools. More so, the modern marker board is observed to be used in not less than 62 percent of private schools, while only 5.7 percent of public schools make use of this; majority of them still stick to the use of chalk board. Most other variables of classroom facilities also show similar magnitudes of differences in favour of private schools.

4.5 Water and Sanitation

Generally, most schools have deep-well as the main water source. However, it is observed from Figure 3 that, while most (72.9%) of the public schools have no established water supply, all but three of the private schools, have one form of water supply or another, ranging from well (58%) and borehole (24%) to pipe-borne water (12%). The implication of this for the available type of toilet facility is clear. While most (64%) of private schools have water closet, only 5.7 percent of public schools have the facility; majority (47.1%) of these government schools make do with pit latrine, and the health implication of that for the pupils and staff of the schools.

4.6 Security Facilities

Our investigation shows that all private and public schools have security staff, especially night guard. However, the issue of security fence and gate, illustrated in Figure 4, shows that most (88%) of the private schools are fenced, while the proportion is just 38.6% for public schools. The distribution of gate availability is similar to that of fence as many (86%) of the private schools have gate while less than half (42.9%) of schools in the public category have the facility.

4.7 Testing of Hypothesis

In Table 3 and Table 4, variations in the conditions of infrastructure in the public and primary schools are analyzed. Table 3 shows the average situations.

Table 3: Condition of Infrastructure for the Two Categories of Primary School

	Type of school	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Condition of Infrastructure Index	Private	50	3.8444	.49994	.07070
	Public	70	3.2159	.46177	.05519

t = 7.102, p-value = 0.00 (approximately)

Source: Author's Field Work, 2011

It is evident from the table that, the private primary schools are in relatively good condition. This is as a result of the mean value which is 3.8444 (i.e. approximately 4, which denotes 'good') while that of the public primary school are in fair condition with the mean value of 3.2159 (i.e. approximately 3, which denotes 'fair'). At 95% confidence level (i.e. 5% alpha or probability level), an average private primary school in the area will have its condition of infrastructure value lying between 3.70 and 3.99 (2 standard errors ± mean; approximately 4.0 which denotes good for both lower and upper limit). Therefore, it is generally observed that the condition of infrastructure in private primary schools in Shomolu local government area of Lagos State is good.

Also at 95% confidence level i.e. (5% alpha or probability level), the average public primary school will have its condition of infrastructure lying between 3.11 and 3.33 (2 standard errors ± mean; approximately 3.0 which denotes fair for both lower and upper limit). Therefore, the conditions of infrastructure in public primary school in shomolu local government area of Lagos State could be described as fair. This implies that comparatively, the condition of infrastructure in private primary school in the study is better than the condition of infrastructure in public schools in the study area.

Having observed the difference in the condition of infrastructure between private and public primary schools in shomolu local government area, the difference is subjected to a t-test analysis. It is observed that, with a t-value of 7.1 and probability value of approximately 0.0, the observed differences are significant at the highest level of confidence, at alpha equals 0.01.

5 Discussion

It is established here that, in spite of the intervention of the current civilian dispensation, the condition of public primary schools, though observed to be fair (and better than what it used to be), is still relatively poorly maintained compared to their private counterparts. This is an indication of the fact that the state government, which happens to be the proprietor of such schools, still has a lot more to do to make the public primary schools attractive to the people of the state. There is need for further funding and better maintenance structures. More so, the relatively less encouraging condition of the public school in the area is also a reflection of the lackadaisical attitude of virtually every category of stakeholders in the educational sector of today, who sees primary school services and facilities as an exclusive role of the private sector. They, therefore, consider the public school as 'education for the children of the wretched and the destitute', about which nobody cares. Until this orientation is changed, it may be difficult for the situation to improve in such schools.

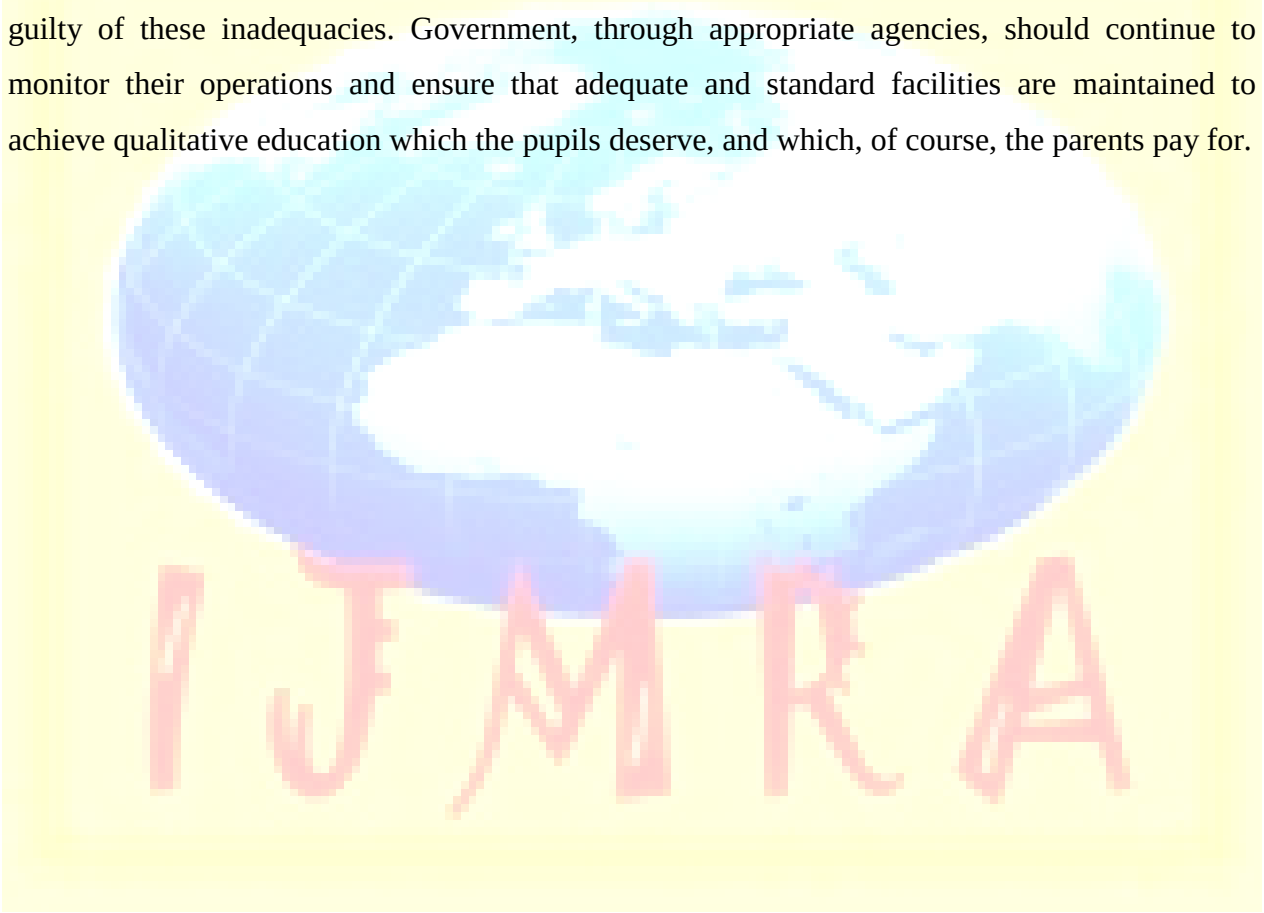
It is important to mention, however, that the better condition of facilities in private schools is not an indication that all is well with every private primary school, or that the private schools are better funded than the public school. Rather, it is an indication that in Nigerian society generally, private businesses are better maintained than public ones. But school facilities at that level should be considered as part of social services to be enjoyed by the populace, except a parent/guardian willingly choose otherwise for their children/wards. The implication of the relative condition of primary school facilities for the masses therefore calls for concern, as it is not all who could conveniently afford to send their children/wards to the private school.

6 Conclusion

This study is carried-out to assess the physical conditions of infrastructure in private and public primary schools. It is observed that the condition of infrastructure in public primary schools in the study area (which is similar to what obtains in schools in most other local government areas in the country) is not encouraging compared to the private school. The study is of the opinion that the state government should be more alive to its responsibility in the area of primary education, and of course its efforts should be augmented by the local government. The attention of the power-that-be is specifically called to the aspects of physical facilities to provide a conducive environment for learning in such schools and make them compete favourably with

their private counterparts. It is recommended that the board in charge of primary schools should be made to provide appropriate structures, mechanism and strategies for proper provision and maintenance of such facilities as water and sanitation, chairs and lockers, electricity, writing board, perimeter fence, etc. More so, the involvement of Parent Teachers Association (PTA) is necessary, and should not only be sustained but also enhanced to ensure that these facilities are provided and maintained.

On the other side, the private school should not be seen as a model, as some of them are also guilty of these inadequacies. Government, through appropriate agencies, should continue to monitor their operations and ensure that adequate and standard facilities are maintained to achieve qualitative education which the pupils deserve, and which, of course, the parents pay for.



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