IJSSE Vol. 3, No. 1 2026
Department of Social Science Education,
Faculty of Education,
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ISSN: 2616-1435

PROLIFERATION OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL ON SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE IN JOS NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
This study examined the proliferation of private secondary schools and its effect on Social Studies students' academic performance in Jos North Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria. The research was anchored on Structural Functionalism Theory and adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample of 48 private schools was selected from a population of 219 schools, comprising 301 JSS III students and 92 Social Studies teachers. Two validated questionnaires QPPSSAP and TPPSSAPB with reliability coefficients of 0.75 and 0.70 respectively, were used for data collection. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study, with data analyzed using mean scores, percentages, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression at 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that proliferation of private schools significantly affects students' academic performance ($r = .682$, $p < 0.05$). Non-compliance with government guidelines for establishing schools significantly undermines academic outcomes ($r = .715$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, a significant relationship exists between proliferation, facility availability, and academic performance ($R = .734$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that many private schools operate without adhering to established guidelines, employ unqualified teachers, and lack essential facilities including adequate classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and functional toilets, driven by profit orientation that sacrifices educational quality. Recommendations include strengthening regulatory monitoring and inspection mechanisms, ensuring school owners prioritize quality over profit, and enhancing parental vigilance in school selection.

Keywords: Proliferation, Private Secondary Schools, Social Studies, Students' Academic Performance, Jos North,

Introduction
Education is an instrument for sustainable change and development, and the best investment a nation can give to her citizens is to provide them with viable and quality education. It is often said that a country cannot grow above her level of education because education is one of the key indices used to measure development. When citizens are exposed to quality education,

they become well informed and enlightened, which contributes to the development of a decisive citizenry. Education is also a total process of human learning through which knowledge is imparted, facilitated and skills developed, serving as an instrument for economic, social, political, educational, technological, scientific and cultural development. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) emphasised human resource development and the preparation of individuals to contribute responsibly to society. Consequently, education is aimed at socialisation of an individual into the ways of his society and serves as a means of developing and disciplining the individual mind. This explains the increasing demand for education and the corresponding proliferation of private secondary schools, particularly in Jos North and its environs.

The increasing demand for education has contributed to the rapid growth of private secondary schools in Nigeria, particularly in response to the consciousness of education in society and the economic challenges facing parents. Education remains one of the major mediums through which positive changes in the attitudes of human beings and harmony are fostered in society. However, there has been recurrent concern about the quality and standard of education in Nigeria. According to Mezieobi (2018), the reasons behind the falling standard are largely human factors inherent in the system, especially at the implementation stage. This implies that the educational blueprint of any nation can be altered by the pursuit of quantitative education rather than qualitative education.

The provision of quantity in place of quality is what has opened the floodgate to the proliferation of private secondary schools in Nigeria. According to Robinson (2018), proliferation is defined as a sudden increase in the number or amount of something. Today, in most societies, there has been a continuous increase in the number of private schools, particularly without adequate resources to cater for their students and adherence to standard guidelines for establishing such schools, and this constitutes a serious challenge to the educational system. This has raised concerns about the availability of qualified teachers, instructional materials, facilities, school environment and adherence to approved standards. This concern is particularly relevant to Social Studies, a subject that plays an important role in preparing learners to understand and respond to societal challenges.

Social Studies is an integrated subject concerned with social relationships, the functioning of society and the interaction between individuals and their environment. It is aimed at preparing individuals to acquire skills for solving societal and environmental problems. It is concerned with the study of social life, which influences individuals' attitudes positively for the betterment of social, cultural, economic and political values and the total environment. Similarly, Bozimo (2018) observed that Social Studies involves the study of the interplay between man and his environment and the impacts that result from it. It encourages voluntary participation in social and civic duties, as well as the development of life skills, and sensitises individuals to engage in voluntary community self-help projects. In other words, Social Studies is seen as a global discipline that studies humans in their immediate environment and other parts of the world and the reciprocal interaction with the society (Mbaya, Ariya & Irmiya, 2025). Since no man is an island, daily interaction and interrelationship with others require individuals to understand

their socio-civic needs and responsibilities. Consequently, the conditions under which Social Studies is taught and learned are important to students' academic performance.

Students' academic performance in Social Studies is influenced by several factors, including school location, quality and quantity of teachers, availability of facilities, school management, libraries, laboratories, discipline and compliance with government guidelines (Wiseman, 2018). Okeke (2017) noted that the school environment is an important variable affecting students' academic performance because it determines the atmosphere and conditions under which teaching and learning take place. In Jos North, the concentration of private secondary schools in limited spaces, inadequate facilities, uncompleted buildings, leaking roofs and poor furniture may create unconducive learning environments (Adekunle, 2017). These conditions raise concerns about the ability of some private schools to provide quality education and may have implications for students' academic performance.

The concerns about school conditions are further reinforced by reports of declining academic performance in Social Studies. The average performance of students in Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) Social Studies was reported to have declined from 67% in 2016 to 47% in 2024. This decline, alongside concerns about examination malpractice and the falling standard of education, raises questions about whether private secondary schools in Jos North are operating in accordance with approved standards. The increasing number of schools also creates competition for students, and Wiseman (2019) observed that the desire to attract students for financial benefits may make some schools reluctant to enforce discipline. These issues provide justification for examining the proliferation of private secondary schools and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Statement of Problem

This study intends to draw attention to the poor state of some Nigerian private secondary school whose standard in terms of classroom, school environment and availability of facilities have significantly fallen below the line of minimum academic standard. Seriously jeopardizing the popular believe that private schools provide better and efficient services to students and that learners acquire better language skills and better education in general more so, the dwindling rate is largely attributed to lack of space for expansion and partly because of private school desire for profit further, promoting poor performance in students learning. Available statistics or data from both the Area Directorate of Education office in Jos North also reveals that, over the last 10 years there has been massive increase in the number of private secondary schools and many are classified as mission schools and yet lack the needed facilities which fosters learning and achievement of Social Studies goals and objectives. The data further showed, there are 33 private schools in Jos North 36 years ago, however today in this century there are about 219 registered private secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area where as the number of Government secondary has not changed or even increased. These astronomical increase in the number of private secondary schools is not reflective of improve academic learning since the

average academic performance of Social Studies students in public examinations in SSCE, NECO, JSCE & BECE has not improved significantly. Strongly discrediting the high regards attached by society over the preference of these schools.

It further goes without saying that, if there are twenty-two (22) private secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area 36 years ago representing 93.7% of the total number of secondary schools how much more now. The result of Plateau State in JSCE and SSCE for instance in terms of student's performance in Social Studies can largely be positively tied up with performance of the private secondary schools lately and those of the Government schools in the state. However, over the years effective, functional and goal-oriented schools should have existed to reflect progression in the educational growth trend of the local governments in the state. This to a large extend calls for this research especially when the percentage average of academic performance ratio of eight (8) years between 2018 in Social Studies in BECE showed 67% but by the 2019 for instance the BECE percentage performance ratio reveals a decline in academic of students in the local government with 47% within the existing private secondary schools. (Source, Area Directorate of Education Office Jos North, 2023).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out the proliferation of private secondary school on Social Studies students' performance in Jos North, Plateau state Specially the research is aimed at achieving the following specific objectives.

1. examine the extent to which the proliferation of commercial and private schools in Jos North affects Social Studies students' academic performance in B.E.C.E.
2. determine the extent to which non-compliance of private school owners for setting up schools affects the academic performance of students in Social Studies in Jos-North, Plateau State.
3. identify how the proliferation of private schools affects classroom and facilities availability and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Jos North, Plateau State.

Research Question

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the extent to which the proliferation of commercial and private schools in Jos North affects Social Studies students' academic performance in B.E.C.E.?
2. How does the non-compliance of private school owners for setting up schools affects the academic performance of students in Social Studies in Jos-North, Plateau State?
3. How is the proliferation of private schools affecting classroom and facilities availability and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Jos North, Plateau State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance:

1. There is no significant extent to which the proliferation of commercial and private schools in Jos North affects Social Studies students' academic performance in B.E.C.E.
2. There is no significant effect of non-compliance of private school owners with government guidelines for setting up schools on the academic performance of students in Social Studies in Jos-North, Plateau State.
3. There is no significant relationship between the proliferation of private schools and classroom and facilities availability, and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Jos North, Plateau State.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Structural Functionalism Theory developed by Talcott Parsons (1951), building on the foundational ideas of Émile Durkheim. The theory conceptualizes society as a complex system comprising interconnected institutions that work together to maintain stability and social order. Each institution performs essential functions that contribute to societal survival and development. The educational institution, as a critical subsystem, is charged with transmitting knowledge, attitudes, and values while preparing individuals for productive societal roles. The relationship between this theory and the current study is threefold. First, the proliferation of private secondary schools without adequate resources represents a systemic dysfunction where educational institutions fail to perform their manifest function of quality knowledge transmission. Second, the theory explains the interconnectedness between educational quality and societal development when students receive substandard Social Studies instruction, their ability to contribute meaningfully to social cohesion, civic responsibility, and national integration becomes compromised. Third, the declining academic performance evidenced by BECE scores dropping from 67% to 47% reflects institutional failure within the educational subsystem.

This study extends Structural Functionalism theory by applying it to the contemporary Nigerian context of educational privatization and proliferation. While the theory traditionally emphasizes institutional stability and equilibrium, this research demonstrates how rapid quantitative expansion without corresponding quality assurance creates systemic dysfunction that reverberates across society. The study further extends the theory by identifying specific mechanisms regulatory non-compliance, resource inadequacy, and facility deficiencies through which proliferating institutions generate dysfunction, thereby providing empirical evidence of how educational subsystem failures manifest in measurable academic outcomes. This contextual application enriches the theory's explanatory power regarding educational transformation in developing nations.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. According to Creswell (2019), a descriptive survey design is appropriate for collecting information on facts, opinions, and attitudes of individuals regarding educational events, problems, or objectives. This design was considered suitable because it depicts the state of affairs as they exist at a particular time and allows for firsthand information gathering from the population under investigation. Additionally, Awotunde (2023) justifies this design as it enables researchers to describe events that have already occurred without manipulating variables, thereby yielding accurate research outcomes. The descriptive survey design was therefore employed to select groups of respondents from sampled private schools under study, enabling the researchers to examine the proliferation of private secondary schools and its relationship with Social Studies students' academic performance in Jos North Local Government Area.

The population of this study comprised all private secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area, totaling 219 schools. The target population specifically included JSS III students (upper basic III) because they are the graduating class preparing for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), and Social Studies teachers in these schools. The sample size consisted of 48 private schools selected from the 219 schools, with 301 JSS III students and 92 Social Studies teachers participating. This sample was determined using probability proportionate to size from the entire population. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the 48 private schools, systematically choosing them using a sampling interval. This approach ensured that every school had an equal chance of being selected, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

Two instruments were developed and used for data collection. The first instrument, tagged "Questionnaire on Proliferation of Private Secondary Schools and Students' Academic Performance" (QPPSSAP), was administered to JSS III students. The second instrument, titled "Teachers and Proprietors of Private Secondary Schools and Academic Performance" (TPPSSAPB), was administered to teachers and school proprietors. Both instruments were structured using a four-point Likert scale comprising Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The questionnaires were designed to elicit responses on the extent of proliferation, compliance with government guidelines, classroom and facility availability, and their effects on student academic performance. The instruments were subjected to content validity by experts in Social Studies Education and Research Methodology to determine their appropriateness, usefulness, and meaningfulness to the study. This process ensured that the instruments adequately addressed the research questions and tested the stated hypotheses. The reliability of the instruments was established using the internal consistency method. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was computed using SPSS, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.75 for QPPSSAP and 0.70 for TPPSSAPB. These coefficients were considered acceptable for educational research, indicating that the instruments were reliable for data collection.

Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Simple percentages and mean scores were employed to answer the research questions. The decision benchmark was calculated as follows: the mean cut-off point was determined using the formula $\bar{x}c = (4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.50$. Consequently, any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered accepted (positive), while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was rejected (negative). This statistical approach enabled the researchers to determine the level of agreement among respondents regarding the impact of proliferation on academic performance, non-compliance with government guidelines, and the state of classroom and facility availability in private secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent to which the proliferation of commercial and private schools in Jos North affects Social Studies students' academic performance in B.E.C.E.?

Table 1: Mean Responses on Factors of Proliferation and Students' Performance.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Over concentration of public with weak standard educational quality provides little output to is the driving force of low students' performance	57	32	7	4	3.4	Accepted
2	Some private schools employing unqualified teachers is the driving force of low students' performance	62	27	8	3	3.5	Accepted
3	Teachers are over worked and not paid salaries which lead to lack of motivation that can cause students' academic performance to dwindle	53	28	11	8	3.3	Accepted
4	Overcrowded classroom limits individual instruction and personalized learning which in turn affects students' performance	49	36	7	8	3.3	Accepted

All four items recorded mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark, indicating strong agreement among respondents that proliferation negatively impacts students' academic performance. The highest mean of 3.5 (Item 2) shows that employing unqualified teachers is the most critical factor driving poor performance. This is followed by 3.4 (Item 1) indicating that weak educational standards from public schools contribute to low output. Items 3 and 4 with means of 3.3 each confirm that teacher overwork, poor salaries, and overcrowded classrooms significantly hinder learning. These findings reveal that the proliferation of private schools has introduced systemic challenges unqualified staff, demotivated teachers, and congested classrooms all of which collectively undermine students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

Research Question 2: How does the non-compliance of private school owners for setting up schools affects the academic performance of students in Social Studies in Jos-North, Plateau State?

Table 2: Mean Responses on Proliferation of Private and Commercial Schools and how it affects Performance

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	The use of non-teaching staffs without standard qualifications in private school contributes to the low performance of students.	171	79	30	30	3.3	Accepted
2	Most school owners have no standard operating procedures like finance and staff welfare which is expected to motivate teachers and lead to positive students' performance	196	67	25	12	3.5	Accepted
3	High school fees and no consensus between stakeholders affects accessibility to educational opportunities which can lead to educational wastage.	199	65	14	22	3.47	Accepted
4	Inadequate facilities and poor salaries	204	70	21	5	3.6	Accepted

Items show mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark, confirming that non-compliance with government guidelines significantly affects students' academic performance. The highest mean of 3.6 (Item 4) reveals that inadequate facilities and poor salaries are the most critical compliance-related factors. Item 2 (3.5) indicates that lack of standard operating procedures for finance and staff welfare demotivates teachers, while Item 3 (3.47) shows that high school fees without stakeholder consensus creates educational wastage. Item 1 (3.3) confirms that employing unqualified non-teaching staff contributes to low performance. These findings demonstrate that many private school owners prioritize profit over quality, operating without proper structures or adherence to established guidelines, which directly compromises educational outcomes.

Research Question 3: How is the proliferation of private schools affecting classroom and facilities availability and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Jos North, Plateau State?

Table 3: Mean scores on proliferation of private schools affecting classroom and facilities availability and students' academic performance

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Inadequate classroom space limits individualized instruction and hinders effective teaching-learning of Social Studies	58	29	9	4	3.41	Accepted
2	Most private schools established due to proliferation operate in residential buildings with insufficient classrooms, thereby creating overcrowded learning environments that negatively impact students' academic performance	63	25	8	4	3.47	Accepted
3	The proliferation of private schools has led to a shortage of essential learning facilities such as libraries, laboratories, and instructional materials required for effective Social Studies instruction	55	33	7	5	3.38	Accepted
4	Lack of functional toilet facilities and proper sanitation amenities in many proliferated private schools disrupts learning time and exposes students to health hazards, affecting their academic concentration	49	34	11	6	3.26	Accepted

All four items in table 3 recorded mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark, confirming that the proliferation of private schools has severely compromised classroom infrastructure and learning facilities. The highest mean of 3.47 (Item 2) indicates that most proliferated schools operate in residential buildings with insufficient classrooms, creating overcrowded learning environments. Item 1 (3.41) confirms that inadequate classroom space limits individualized instruction, while Item 3 (3.38) reveals shortages of essential facilities like libraries and laboratories. The lowest mean of 3.26 (Item 4) still indicates significant concern about the lack of functional toilets and sanitation amenities, which disrupts learning time and exposes students to health hazards. These findings collectively show that the rapid increase in private schools has been accompanied by a corresponding decline in facility standards and classroom quality, creating unconducive learning environments that hinder effective teaching-learning of Social Studies.

Table 4: Summary Table of Hypotheses

SN	Null Hypothesis (H_0)	Test Statistic	DF	Calculated Value	Critical Value	p-value	Decision
1	There is no significant extent to which the proliferation of commercial and private schools in Jos North affects Social Studies students' academic performance in B.E.C.E.	Pearson Correlation (r) & Simple Regression	299	r = .682; F = 261.456	r = .113; F = 3.84	0	**Reject H_0**
2	There is no significant effect of non-compliance of private school owners with government guidelines for setting up schools on the academic performance of students in Social Studies in Jos-North, Plateau State.	Pearson Correlation (r) & Simple Regression	299	r = .715; F = 313.642	r = .113; F = 3.84	0	**Reject H_0**
3	There is no significant relationship between the proliferation of private schools and classroom and facilities availability, and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Jos North, Plateau State.	Multiple Regression (R)	298	R = .734; F = 176.456	R = .113; F = 3.00	0	**Reject H_0**

The three null hypotheses tested at 0.05 significance level were all rejected. Hypothesis One established a significant relationship between proliferation of private schools and Social Studies students' academic performance ($r = .682$, $p < 0.05$). Hypothesis Two confirmed that non-compliance with government guidelines significantly affects academic performance ($r = .715$, $p < 0.05$). Hypothesis Three demonstrated a significant combined relationship between proliferation, facility availability, and academic performance ($R = .734$, $p < 0.05$). These findings collectively confirm that the proliferation of private schools, non-compliance with regulatory standards, and inadequate facilities significantly undermine students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Jos North Local Government Area.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide compelling empirical evidence that the proliferation of private secondary schools significantly undermines Social Studies students' academic performance in Jos North, challenging the prevailing assumption that private education inherently delivers superior outcomes. The documented decline in BECE scores from 67% in 2016 to 47% in 2024 demonstrates that quantitative expansion without corresponding quality assurance fundamentally compromises educational achievement. This finding corroborates Mezieobi's (2018) assertion that pursuing quantity over quality alters a nation's educational blueprint, and aligns with Wiseman's (2018) contention that academic performance depends on teacher quality, facilities, and regulatory compliance. However, the current study extends these observations by revealing that employing unqualified teachers and overcrowded classrooms are the most critical factors driving poor performance, providing empirical specificity to what previous scholars had only theorized. This novel insight fundamentally challenges perceptions of private education superiority, exposing a troubling reality where profit orientation consistently overrides quality considerations.

The finding that non-compliance with government guidelines significantly affects academic performance reinforces Fasubu's (2019) emphasis on adhering to established requirements for establishing schools. The present study provides new evidence that most private schools in Jos North operate without essential provisions, with inadequate facilities and poor teacher remuneration emerging as critical compliance-related factors. This converges with Abdul-Hamid et al.'s (2017) Lagos study, confirming that regulatory non-compliance is a nationwide phenomenon. However, the current study diverges from Oke and Iheretu's (2018) findings in Ogun State by demonstrating that even registered schools often fail to maintain operational standards, suggesting that registration alone does not guarantee quality. The novel contribution lies in identifying specific non-compliance mechanisms lack of standard operating procedures, absence of stakeholder consensus on fees, and teacher exploitation through poor remuneration through which proliferation generates systemic dysfunction.

The significant relationship between proliferation, facility availability, and academic performance provides empirical support for James's (2019) assertion that learning environment

quality directly affects student performance. The finding that proliferated schools operate in residential buildings with insufficient classrooms, creating overcrowded learning environments, diverges from the National Policy on Education's (FRN, 2014) vision of conducive learning spaces. This study extends Narad and Abdullahi's (2016) environmental factors research by demonstrating that facility deficiencies including absent toilets, libraries, and laboratories fundamentally compromise student concentration and learning effectiveness. The novel insight regarding health-related facilities as critical determinants of academic performance challenges the common oversight of sanitation in educational quality discourse, suggesting that the proliferation-private school nexus creates a multi-dimensional quality crisis encompassing infrastructure, resources, and learner wellbeing. These findings collectively extend Structural Functionalism theory by providing empirical evidence of how systemic dysfunction in the educational subsystem compromises society's knowledge transmission capacity. The study concludes that proliferation in Jos North has created a quality crisis demanding urgent regulatory intervention, representing a fundamental betrayal of education's promise as an instrument for sustainable national development.

Conclusion

The study conclusively established that the proliferation of private secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area significantly undermines Social Studies students' academic performance. The findings revealed that many private schools operate without adherence to government guidelines, employ unqualified teachers, and lack essential facilities including adequate classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and functional toilets. The profit-driven orientation of school owners has created a systemic dysfunction where educational quality is sacrificed for financial gain, evidenced by declining BECE performance from 67% in 2016 to 47% in 2024. This situation fundamentally betrays education's promise as an instrument for sustainable national development and social transformation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. For Government and Regulatory Agencies: The Plateau State Ministry of Education and the Area Directorate of Education should strengthen monitoring and inspection mechanisms to ensure strict compliance with established guidelines for establishing and operating private schools. This should include regular unannounced visits, verification of teacher qualifications, assessment of facility standards, and enforcement of sanctions for non-compliant institutions. Schools found operating without proper registration or maintaining substandard facilities should be closed until they meet minimum requirements.
2. For Private School Owners and Proprietors: School owners should prioritize educational quality over profit maximization by investing adequately in qualified teachers, instructional materials, and appropriate facilities. They should establish transparent standard operating procedures for staff welfare, ensure competitive remuneration to motivate teachers, and

maintain stakeholder engagement with parents regarding school fees and educational standards. The long-term sustainability of private education depends on building trust through demonstrable commitment to quality.

4. For Parents and Community Stakeholders: Parents should exercise greater vigilance in selecting schools for their children by verifying registration status, teacher qualifications, and facility standards before enrollment. Parent-Teacher Associations should actively participate in school governance to ensure accountability and quality assurance. Community members should report non-compliant schools to regulatory authorities and collectively advocate for improved educational standards in the local government area.

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