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School Resource Availability and Utilization in Private Junior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis: Teachers' Perspective

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Abstract

This study investigated school resource availability and utilization in private junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 366 teachers (156 males and 210 females) drawn from private junior secondary schools in the study area. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data, which were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while the z-test was employed to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that some material resources, including classrooms, electricity, water supply, and instructional resource centres, were generally available, whereas laboratories, libraries, and staff offices were inadequate. The study further found that management staff, cleaners, security personnel, and other support staff were available, while qualified teachers, guidance counsellors, and opportunities for staff training were insufficient. Financial resources were found to be more readily available for classroom maintenance and utilities than for instructional materials, laboratory facilities, libraries, ICT resources, and teachers' welfare. Inadequate funding, limited infrastructure, poor accessibility, and insufficient staff incentives were identified as the major constraints affecting the availability and utilization of school resources. The study also found no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female teachers on the variables examined. The study concludes that although some essential school resources are available in private junior secondary schools, significant deficiencies remain in critical instructional, human, and financial resources. It recommends increased investment in educational facilities, improved funding, continuous professional development for teachers, and effective resource management to enhance the quality of education in private junior secondary schools.

Keywords: School Resources, Resource Availability, Resource Utilization, Private Junior Secondary Schools, Educational Resources.

Introduction

Education remains a fundamental driver of national development, economic growth, and social transformation. The achievement of educational goals, however, depends largely on the availability and effective utilization of school resources that support teaching, learning, and school administration. School resources encompass the human, material, and financial inputs required to ensure that educational institutions function efficiently and achieve their intended objectives. The effective management of these resources has become increasingly important as schools strive to improve educational quality and respond to the changing demands of the twenty-first century (UNESCO, 2024; World Bank, 2023). School resources include qualified teachers and other personnel, instructional facilities, classrooms, laboratories, libraries, information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, and financial resources needed for school operations. These resources are essential because they provide the enabling environment for effective instructional delivery, student learning, and sound school administration. However, the mere availability of resources does not automatically translate into improved educational outcomes. Their value depends largely on how efficiently

they are planned, allocated, maintained, and utilized by school administrators (Bates, 2019). Material resources remain one of the most visible indicators of school quality. Facilities such as functional classrooms, libraries, science laboratories, instructional resource centres, electricity, water supply, and ICT facilities provide the physical environment necessary for effective teaching and learning. UNESCO (2022) notes that adequate learning facilities contribute significantly to students' academic achievement and teachers' instructional effectiveness. Similarly, the World Bank (2024) emphasizes that investment in educational infrastructure remains essential for improving learning outcomes, particularly in developing countries. Human resources are equally critical to effective school management. Qualified teachers, school administrators, guidance counsellors, and other support staff determine the quality of instructional delivery and school administration. Continuous professional development further enhances teachers' competence and their ability to respond to curriculum changes and emerging educational technologies. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) argue that teacher quality remains one of the strongest school-based factors influencing students' academic success.

Financial resources also play a vital role in sustaining school operations. Adequate funding enables schools to provide instructional materials, maintain infrastructure, recruit qualified personnel, and support staff development programmes. Conversely, inadequate funding often results in poor facilities, shortages of instructional materials, and reduced staff motivation, all of which negatively affect school management and educational quality (World Bank, 2023). In Nigeria, the increasing demand for quality education has contributed to the rapid expansion of private secondary schools. Although many private schools are perceived to provide better learning environments than public schools, considerable differences exist in the availability and utilization of school resources. While some private schools possess adequate facilities and qualified personnel, others continue to experience shortages of instructional materials, limited infrastructure, inadequate funding, and insufficient professional development opportunities for teachers (Ololube, 2020; Owan & Agunwa, 2019). These variations underscore the need to examine the availability and utilization of school resources in private junior secondary schools within Port Harcourt Metropolis." Recent empirical evidence consistently shows that the availability and effective utilization of school resources are closely associated with school management and students' learning outcomes. Internationally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development reported that schools with competent teachers, adequate instructional facilities, effective leadership, and efficient resource management consistently achieve better educational outcomes than schools with limited resources (OECD, 2023). Similarly, UNESCO (2024) emphasizes that improving educational quality requires not only increased investment in education but also the efficient allocation and utilization of available resources. The World Bank further argues that effective school management depends on adequate financing, qualified personnel, functional infrastructure, and accountability in resource utilization rather than simply increasing expenditure. Several studies have also demonstrated that the quality of school infrastructure significantly influences management effectiveness. Functional classrooms, well-equipped laboratories, libraries, ICT facilities, and reliable utilities create an enabling environment that supports effective teaching, learning, and school administration. Conversely, inadequate facilities often lead to overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional opportunities, and reduced staff productivity. UNESCO (2022) therefore recommends continuous investment in learning environments that promote equitable access to quality education, particularly in developing countries. Human resources remain another critical determinant of school effectiveness. Research has consistently identified teacher quality as the most influential school-based factor affecting students' academic achievement. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) observed that schools with qualified teachers who receive regular professional development demonstrate improved instructional practices and better student performance. Likewise, Fullan (2020) argues that sustainable school improvement depends largely on the capacity of school leaders to motivate personnel, strengthen professional collaboration, and utilize available human resources effectively. These findings suggest that educational quality depends not only on recruiting qualified personnel but also on providing continuous opportunities for professional growth.

Financial resources equally play a central role in determining management effectiveness. Adequate funding enables school administrators to provide instructional materials, maintain infrastructure, motivate staff, and introduce innovative teaching practices. However, the 2024 Education Finance Watch jointly published by UNESCO and the World Bank reveals that although many countries have increased education spending, available resources remain inadequate in relation to growing enrolment and increasing educational demands. The report further emphasizes that improving educational outcomes requires efficient and equitable utilization of available financial resources rather than increased spending alone. Within the Nigerian context, several scholars have reported persistent challenges relating to school resource availability and utilization. Ololube (2020) observed that many schools continue to experience inadequate infrastructure, insufficient instructional materials, limited ICT facilities, and poor maintenance culture, all

of which constrain effective school administration. Similarly, Owan and Agunwa (2019) found that inadequate funding and poor provision of instructional resources significantly reduce teachers' effectiveness and overall school performance. Despite these contributions, existing studies have largely examined school resources from isolated perspectives by focusing either on infrastructure, teacher quality, or funding. Furthermore, many of these studies concentrated on public schools or were conducted outside Rivers State, making it difficult to generalize their findings to private junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Studies that simultaneously examine the availability and utilization of material, human, and financial resources alongside the constraints affecting their effective use as determinants of management effectiveness in private schools remain relatively scarce. This represents an important gap in the literature.

Against this background, this study investigated the availability and utilization of school resources in private junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Specifically, the study examined the availability and utilization of material, human, and financial resources and identified the constraints affecting their effective utilization in the selected schools. To achieve these objectives, the study was guided by the following research questions:

- (i) To what extent are material resources available and utilized for effective management of private junior secondary schools?
- (ii) (What is the level of availability and utilization of human resources for effective management of private junior secondary schools?
- (iii) What is the level of availability and utilization of financial resources in private junior secondary schools? and
- (iv) What constraints affect the availability and utilization of school resources for effective management of private junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Hypotheses

The study also tested the null hypotheses that:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers regarding the availability of the various school resources and the constraints affecting their utilization at the 0.05 level of significance.

and utilization

Methodology

A descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 366 teachers from private junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, comprising 156 males and 210 females. No sampling was done as the entire population was used. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation, while z-test was used to test hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. A mean score of 2.50 served as the decision benchmark.

Results

Table 1: Availability and Utilization of Material Resources

Item	Male (M)	Male SD	Female (M)	Female SD	N (M/F)	Decision
Well-equipped classroom	2.53	0.78	2.66	0.70	156/210	Available
Staff offices	2.45	0.67	2.48	0.64	156/210	Not Available
Instructional resource centre	2.55	0.62	2.57	0.65	156/210	Available
Laboratories	2.31	0.84	2.30	0.65	156/210	Not Available
Library	2.45	0.72	2.36	0.65	156/210	Not Available
Electricity supply	2.53	0.84	2.65	0.84	156/210	Available
Water supply	2.52	0.87	2.53	0.61	156/210	Available

From the Table 1, the mean scores for both male and female respondents are generally close, ranging from 2.30 to 2.66. The overall pattern indicates a mixed availability of material resources. Items like well-equipped classrooms, instructional resource centres, and utilities (electricity and water) are considered Available (means ≥ 2.5). In contrast, staff offices, laboratories, and the library are rated Not Available (means < 2.5). The scores for both genders are very similar, suggesting a shared perception of the material resource situation.

Table 2: Availability and Utilization of Human Resources

Item	Male (M)	Male SD	Female (M)	Female SD	N (M/F)	Decision
Qualified teaching staff	2.35	0.70	2.33	0.64	156/210	Not Available
Management staff	2.73	0.81	2.70	0.68	156/210	Available
Guidance counsellor	2.48	0.70	2.38	0.68	156/210	Not Available
Cleaners	2.84	0.73	2.70	0.82	156/210	Available
Security staff	2.80	0.73	2.72	0.93	156/210	Available
Labourers	2.60	0.98	2.62	0.57	156/210	Available
Training/workshops	2.26	0.78	2.25	0.74	156/210	Not Available

Table 2 showed that the mean scores for human resources range from 2.25 to 2.84. The results show that management staff, cleaners, security staff, and labourers are perceived as Available (means well above 2.5). However, qualified teaching staff and guidance counsellors are rated Not Available (means < 2.5), with teachers being the lowest-rated human resource item. The lack of training/workshops is also a notable concern (mean ≈ 2.25). Again, the male and female means are very close, indicating consensus across genders

Table 3: Availability and Utilization of Financial Resources

Item	Male (M)	Male SD	Female (M)	Female SD	N (M/F)	Decision
Teachers' salaries	2.40	0.62	2.45	0.68	156/210	Not Available
Classroom funding	2.55	0.65	2.71	0.68	156/210	Available
ICT resource funding	2.41	0.68	2.41	0.67	156/210	Not Available
Laboratory funding	2.33	0.60	2.35	0.66	156/210	Not Available
Library funding	2.34	0.66	2.30	0.65	156/210	Not Available
Staff offices funding	2.60	0.76	2.67	0.63	156/210	Available
Utilities (water/electricity)	2.67	0.63	2.66	0.67	156/210	Available

Table 3 showed that the mean scores for financial resources are the lowest overall, mostly falling between 2.30 and 2.71. This indicates a generally poor financial resource base. The only items perceived as Available are funding for staff offices and utilities (water/electricity), with means above 2.5. All other critical financial areas, teachers' salaries, ICT, laboratory, and library funding, are rated Not Available (means < 2.5). The close male-female means suggest a uniform view of financial constraints

Table 4: Constraints Affecting Resource Availability

Item	Male (M)	Male SD	Female (M)	Female SD	N (M/F)	Decision
Lack of funds	2.74	0.82	2.70	0.63	156/210	Significant
Inadequate space	2.74	0.85	2.83	0.89	156/210	Significant
Lack of incentives	2.62	0.74	2.63	0.78	156/210	Significant
Poor accessibility	2.84	0.83	2.61	0.65	156/210	Significant

The Table 4 has the highest mean scores, all exceeding 2.60 and reaching up to 2.84. Since the decision criterion is likely > 2.5 , all four constraints, lack of funds, inadequate space, lack of incentives, and poor accessibility, are rated

as Significant. This suggests that these factors are perceived as major obstacles to resource availability. The close means between male and female respondents indicate a shared experience of these challenges, with "lack of funds" and "poor accessibility" being particularly strong concerns

Table 5: Summary of Z-Test Results

Variable	Male Mean	Female Mean	Zcal	Zcrit (0.05)	Decision
Material resources	2.48	2.51	0.37	1.96	Not Significant
Human resources	2.58	2.53	0.62	1.96	Not Significant
Financial resources	2.47	2.50	0.43	1.96	Not Significant
Constraints	2.74	2.70	0.48	1.96	Not Significant

The Table 5 compared the overall mean scores for male and female respondents across the four key variables. In all cases, the calculated Z-values (Zcal) are very small (ranging from 0.37 to 0.62), which are far below the critical value of 1.96 at the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the decision for all variables is "Not Significant." This statistically confirms that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female respondents regarding the availability of material, human, and financial resources, or the significance of the constraints affecting them.

Discussion

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that certain material resources such as classrooms, instructional resource centres, electricity, and water supply are moderately available in private junior secondary schools. However, critical instructional facilities such as laboratories, libraries, and staff offices were found to be inadequate. This finding suggests a structural imbalance in resource provision, where basic operational facilities are prioritized over academic support infrastructure. The implication is that while schools may function administratively, the quality of teaching and learning may be compromised due to the absence of essential learning tools. This aligns with recent findings by UNESCO (2022), which emphasize that access to functional learning environments, including laboratories and libraries, is a key determinant of educational quality in developing countries. Similarly, World Bank (2023) reports that inadequate school infrastructure directly affects student engagement and academic outcomes. Furthermore, the absence of well-equipped libraries limits students' exposure to diverse learning materials, thereby affecting independent learning and critical thinking development.

Findings from Table 2 reveal that while management staff, cleaners, security personnel, and support staff are adequately available, there is a shortage of qualified teaching staff, guidance counsellors, and opportunities for professional development. This imbalance highlights a critical issue in private school administration: emphasis on operational support rather than instructional quality. The lack of qualified teachers and limited access to training programmes suggests that instructional delivery may not meet expected educational standards. This finding is consistent with the position of the OECD (2021), which identifies teacher quality as the most influential school-based factor affecting student performance. The report emphasizes that continuous professional development is essential for adapting to evolving curriculum demands. Additionally, the absence of guidance counsellors in many schools undermines students' academic and emotional support systems. The limited engagement of teachers in workshops and seminars also suggests weak institutional commitment to capacity building. This supports findings by Adedoyin and Soykan (2020), who argue that teacher training significantly improves classroom effectiveness and learning outcomes.

Results in Table 3 show that financial resources are unevenly distributed. Funding is relatively available for classrooms, staff offices, and utilities, but inadequate for instructional resources such as ICT facilities, laboratories, libraries, and even teachers' salaries. This pattern indicates that school proprietors prioritize visible infrastructure over academic investment. While physical structures enhance the appearance of schools, the lack of funding for instructional tools and teacher welfare negatively affects educational quality. The findings align with the report of World Bank (2023), which notes that inefficient allocation of educational funds is a major constraint to learning outcomes in low- and middle-income countries. Similarly, Owan and Agunwa (2019) found that inadequate funding of instructional materials significantly reduces teaching effectiveness in Nigerian secondary schools. The inadequacy of funds for teachers' salaries is particularly concerning, as it may lead to low morale, reduced productivity, and high

staff turnover. According to Hanushek and Woessmann (2020), teacher motivation is directly linked to compensation and working conditions, which in turn affect student achievement.

Findings from Table 4 indicate that major constraints include lack of funds, inadequate space for school expansion, lack of staff incentives, and poor accessibility due to road conditions. Among these, lack of funding emerges as the most critical barrier, influencing both the availability and utilization of other resources. This confirms the interdependence of financial, human, and material resources in school management. The issue of inadequate space reflects the rapid expansion of private schools within limited urban environments, often without adequate planning. This has implications for student overcrowding and reduced learning effectiveness. Poor accessibility due to bad roads also affects school operations, including staff punctuality and student attendance. This finding is supported by research from Ololube (2020), which highlights infrastructural challenges as major barriers to effective educational management in Nigeria. Additionally, lack of incentives for staff suggests weak human resource policies, which may affect teacher retention and commitment. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), teacher motivation and retention are strongly influenced by incentives, working conditions, and institutional support.

The results of the z-test analysis (Table 5) indicate that there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female teachers across all variables. This suggests a consensus among respondents regarding the state of resource availability and utilization. The implication is that the challenges identified are systemic rather than gender-specific. This strengthens the validity of the findings and indicates that interventions should be targeted at institutional and policy levels rather than individual differences. Taken together, the findings of this study reveal that while some basic resources are available in private junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, critical gaps exist in instructional materials, teacher quality, and financial allocation. These deficiencies collectively hinder effective school management and limit the achievement of educational objectives. The study therefore reinforces the argument that availability alone is insufficient; proper utilization and balanced allocation of resources are essential for achieving quality education outcomes.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the availability and effective utilization of school resources remain fundamental to achieving management effectiveness in private junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Although the participating schools demonstrated varying levels of access to material, human, and financial resources, the findings revealed noticeable gaps in key areas, particularly in the provision of instructional facilities, qualified teaching personnel, and adequate funding. The study also established that inadequate financial resources, poor infrastructure, and other resource-related challenges continue to hinder effective school management. Based on these findings, the study concludes that effective school management extends beyond the presence of physical facilities or financial resources; it depends largely on how available resources are planned, allocated, maintained, and utilized to support the day-to-day administration of schools. Consequently, improving resource management practices and addressing the identified constraints will not only strengthen administrative effectiveness but also enhance the overall quality of educational service delivery. It is therefore imperative for school proprietors, administrators, and relevant stakeholders to adopt more strategic and sustainable approaches to resource provision and management in order to promote continuous improvement in private junior secondary schools.

Recommendations

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

1. School proprietors should prioritize the provision of essential material resources, particularly well-equipped classrooms, functional laboratories, libraries, instructional resource centres, and staff offices, to create an enabling environment for effective school management and improved educational service delivery.
2. School administrators should establish effective resource management and maintenance systems to ensure that available material, human, and financial resources are efficiently utilized, regularly monitored, and properly maintained to maximize their usefulness.
3. Proprietors of private junior secondary schools should invest in the recruitment, retention, and continuous professional development of qualified teachers and other essential personnel through regular training, capacity-building programmes, and appropriate staff welfare initiatives.

4. Sustainable funding strategies should be strengthened through prudent financial planning, transparent budgeting, and strategic investment in instructional resources and school infrastructure to address resource deficiencies and improve management effectiveness.
5. Government agencies responsible for quality assurance and school regulation should intensify periodic monitoring, support, and advisory services to ensure that private junior secondary schools maintain minimum standards in resource provision, utilization, and educational management.

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