

SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN PUBLIC AND CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTHERN SENATORIAL ZONE OF PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Schools management strategies are important to achieving academic goals in secondary schools. Effective implementation of schools management strategies are associated with better academic goals outcome for schools. In Nigeria, there are two basic types of secondary schools: public and private. Public schools are owned by government and run by its agents, while private schools are owned by individuals, organizations or corporations. The Catholic Church runs one of the most popular network of secondary schools in Nigeria. There is a general sense that this ownership status of schools can influence the effectiveness of implementing schools management strategies. It is therefore imperative to examine how well public and Catholic schools perform in regards to schools management strategies. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study employed a sample of 325 teachers in 68 public secondary schools and 68 teachers in eight Catholic secondary schools in Plateau Northern Senatorial zone of Plateau State, Nigeria. The Schools Management Strategies Questionnaire (SMSQ) was developed with 46 likert-scale items to examine six schools management strategies employed by public and Catholic schools in the study area: academic goal setting, teaching quality control, discipline management, students' motivation and resources management. The results show that respondents agreed both public and Catholic schools are performing well in all three schools management strategies. However, the independent t-test results show that Catholic schools are faring better than public schools in implementing all three schools management strategies. The study recommends that schools management be encouraged to adopt global best practices in managing strategies. Government is also enjoined to provide greater support to both public and Catholic schools for more effective implementation of schools management strategies.

Keywords: Effective schools, schools management strategies, academic goals setting, teaching quality control

INTRODUCTION

The goal of schools is to ensure the development of the individual learner. This therefore becomes the responsibility of schools management to ensure that this goal is met. School management refers to a team of persons saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that the rules and regulations of schools are properly adhered to in a manner that will promote quality teaching and learning in order that the goals of education are achieved. Schools management therefore, devise strategies to guide the students towards achieving these goals. Otuom (2018) defined school management as a "functional group (planning, Coordination and orientation) that interacts positively in an appropriate environment within and outside the school in accordance with a public policy created by State in accordance with the objectives of the society and State." The importance of schools management is underscored by the World Bank (2018), which reported that the quality of education that students receive is directly

linked to how the schools are managed. The strategies put in place by the school management in order to achieve the goals are therefore critical.

School management strategies refer to a set of plans, which encompasses standards, processes and procedures that are put in place by the school management to guide the realization of the set goals and objectives of the school including academic achievement of students. These include, but not limited to, setting of clear and achievable academic goals, teaching quality control and disciplinary management for both staff and students, motivation for students, and efficient management of human, material and financial resources available at the disposal of the school management teams. The strategies are meant to provide the conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning to enable the students achieve high academic achievements. If the strategies fail to provide this enabling environment for learning, the academic achievement of students will suffer. Successful implementation of schools management strategies is therefore a sine qua non of schools management.

There are two basic forms of secondary school education in Nigeria: public and private. Public schools are owned and run by government and its appointed agents. Private schools are owned by individuals or organizations such as Churches, Mosques and communities. Catholic secondary schools are among the most popular private secondary schools in Nigeria. There is a sense and an understanding that Catholic and public secondary schools, due to their ownership, arguably have different outcomes in school management structure and strategies. The combination and quality of implementation of the strategies are of immense importance to the achievement of academic goals set by schools yet an in-depth examination of the execution of schools management strategies is often overlooked. This study investigates the effectiveness of the implementation of schools management strategies in Catholic and Public secondary schools in Plateau North Senatorial Zone of Plateau State. This zone is the area covered by the Catholic Archdiocese of Jos, which owns and operates 9 secondary schools and many primary and technical schools. It is also the most urbanized area of Plateau State, with Jos the State capital, and Bukuru, the second largest urban area in the state. It therefore has the largest number and concentration of public schools in Plateau State. Three schools management strategies common to all schools were selected for study. These are academic goal setting, teaching quality control, discipline management, students' motivation, and schools' resources management. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. determine if the implementation of schools management strategies differed significantly between public and Catholic secondary schools in Northern Senatorial zone of Plateau State.
2. determine how effective public and Catholic secondary schools practice academic goal setting strategy in Northern Senatorial Zone, Plateau State;
3. determine the extent to which public and Catholic secondary schools control the quality of teaching in Northern Senatorial Zone, Plateau State;
4. ascertain the effectiveness of the implementation of discipline management strategy by public and Catholic secondary schools in Northern Senatorial Zone, Plateau State;

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Management strategies commonly adopted in public and Catholic secondary schools in Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State are not significantly different.
2. Adoption of academic goal setting strategy in public and Catholic secondary schools in Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State is not significantly different.

3. Practice of teaching quality control strategy in public and Catholic secondary schools in Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State is not significantly different.
4. Practice of discipline management strategy in public and Catholic secondary schools in Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State is not significantly different.

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts the Effective School Theory propounded by Lezotte in 1999. The theory indicates that an effective school is one in which educational quality and equity guarantees academic successes by students in measured achievement terms. Lezotte's theory presents seven correlates of an effective school. These are: safe and orderly environment, climate of high expectations for success, instructional leadership, clear and focused mission/vision, opportunity to learn and student time on task, frequent monitoring of student progress, and positive home-school relations. These correlates are basic strategies that set the template for effective school management. The strategies are not mutually exclusive but are interdependent and work together to produce schools that are effective and guarantee high academic achievements of students.

This study is embedded in this framework by adapting several components of the effective schools correlates that are deemed relevant to the study. These include safe and orderly environment, represented as discipline management, climate of high expectations for success represented as motivation of staff and students, instructional leadership and opportunity to learn and student time on task, both represented as teaching quality control, and clear and focused mission/vision represented as academic goal setting. Added to these is resources management. It has been pointed out that effective management of human, material and financial resources by school management is an essential strategy to improve the academic environment for better achievement of academic goals (Everard, Morris, & Wilson, 2004). The effectiveness of a school is anchored on the ability of the schools management team to implement these strategies in order to achieve set goals and objectives.

According to Jackson and Andala (2022) effective school management boards contribute a lot to educational quality and enhance retention. Reverse-wise, schools that lack effective managerial strategies produce students with poor test scores (Ntakirutimana, Mutegi & Wanjala, 2021), and with higher grade repetition even when they have the necessary schools' equipment, school materials and adequate libraries (Willms, 2016). There is a general sense that effective schools' management strategies are associated with high students' academic achievements. In essence, schools that practice better management strategies are expected to produce students with better academic achievement, which makes an understanding of schools management strategies and their implementation crucial to achieving schools academic goals.

Depending on needs and expectations, as well as capability and competence, different schools' management teams may implement strategies more effectively than others. These strategies include setting up of clear, specific and measurable goals and objectives for the school, teacher quality control including teacher motivation (Gindo, Anagaw & Sapu, 2020), discipline and effective classroom management (Owan et al., 2018), conducive atmosphere for learning (Kisigot, Ogula & Munyua, 2022), proper guidance and counseling to improve students' self-efficacy (Obumse & Nwokedi, 2020), among others.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is well-suited for the study as it provides a structured framework for gathering quantitative data, thereby supporting a data-driven approach. This design enables the collection of detailed numerical data, essential for examining the influence of management strategies within the educational system as it ensures that the data collected is representative and aligned with the study objectives.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population consisted of all the secondary schools in the four Local Government Areas out of six in Northern Zone of Plateau State that have both Catholic and public secondary schools. Data from the Plateau State Ministry of Education and Archdiocese Education Office showed there are 84 of public with 1,095 teachers, and 9 of Catholic secondary schools with 281 teachers for a combined total of 1,376 teachers.

The sample sizes for the schools and teachers were determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for known population and are thus presented:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

Where n = sample size; N = population of study; e = level of significance (0.05)

This resulted into 76 schools and 310 teachers. Of the 76 schools, 68 were public schools and 8 were Catholic schools. Similarly, using a sampling fraction of 310 out of 1376 (0.2253), the distribution of teachers were 247 for public schools, and 63 for Catholic secondary schools. However, a total of 325 questionnaires were administered (257 for public and 68 for Catholic schools) to offset for any possible non-response. All the questionnaires were returned fully completed and used for analysis. A simple random sampling technique, using the hat and draw method, was employed in sampling the schools from the LGAs and also the teachers from the sampled schools based on proportionality for the LGAs using list of schools and then list of teachers obtained in sampled schools.

Instruments for Data Collection

The study used a structured questionnaire, titled the "School Management Strategies Questionnaire" (SMSQ), to collect data. The SMSQ items were structured in form of Likert-scale having five response options. These items measured respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with various statements, with five response options of 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 2 = Disagree (D); 3 = Neutral (N); 4 = Agree (A) and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). The mean score is therefore 3.00. Mean values of 3.00 or greater are indicative of agreement and those below 3.00 indicate disagreement with statements. The questionnaire items covered three strategies: academic goal setting, teaching quality control, and school discipline management, which were administered to teachers to achieve the objective of this study.

The SMSQ was subjected to face and content validity of three experts. The Kendall Coefficient of Concordance of the instrument was 0.820, and a p -value of 0.135, which showed that the three experts were in agreement with the validity of the instrument. The construct validity was established through factor analysis. Principal Component analysis (PCA) was employed and the KMO value was returned as 0.824, which shows sampling adequacy, while the Bartlett's measure of sphericity value was 0.000, which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 to indicate significance and therefore

suitability of the data for analysis. Eigen values for PCA was put at 1.0. This is the rule of thumb that ensures no under- or over-extraction of factors or components. Fourteen components were extracted with Eigen value of 1 or greater and they accounted for at least 81.061% of variances in the distribution of responses to the items.

The pilot test involved 45 respondents. The results were first recorded in a spreadsheet and then imported into SPSS for analysis. A Cronbach's Alpha test was performed. Since the Cronbach's test was 0.937, the questionnaire was considered to have met the standard for internal consistency reliability. The data were collected with the help of four trained field assistants through a face-to-face administration of questionnaires.

Descriptive statistics were employed to answer the research questions. This included frequency, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation while the t-test for independent samples were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for independent t-test is that if the p-value is less than (<) 0.05 (level of significance), the null hypothesis is rejected. The analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26.

RESULTS

Management Strategies Commonly employed in public and Catholic secondary schools.

Table 1.

Management Strategies Practiced in Public and Catholic Secondary Schools.

Strategy	Public Schools			Catholic Schools			Decision
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Academic Goal Setting	257	3.99	0.95	68	4.58	0.61	Agreed
Teaching Quality	257	3.69	1.05	68	4.28	0.76	Agreed
Discipline Management	257	4.09	0.88	68	4.43	0.64	Agreed
Students Motivation	257	4.06	0.73	68	4.48	0.61	Agreed
Resources Management	257	3.4	1.29	68	4.38	0.65	Agreed
Average Mean and SD	257	3.84	0.98	68	4.43	0.66	Agreed

Table 1 shows results of the average scores of the three management strategies commonly employed in both public and Catholic secondary schools in the Northern Zone of Plateau State. The results show that respondents agree that both public and Catholic secondary schools practice the schools management strategies well. Table 1 shows that whereas academic goal setting is regarded as the most effective strategy practiced by Catholic schools, discipline management is considered the most well-practiced management strategy in public schools. In Catholic schools, teaching quality control has the least mean values, while the strategy with least mean value for public schools is resources management.

The results further show that resources management and teaching quality strategies have the largest standard deviations of 1.29 and 1.05, respectively for public schools. These indicate that some public schools practice the strategies better than others or that the teachers have wide divergent views on how the strategies are implemented. The standard deviation values for Catholic schools are all below 1.00, which shows more internal consistency in assessment of their performances than in public schools.

Overall, the mean score for all the management strategies practiced by public and Catholic secondary schools is 3.84, and 4.43 for Catholic schools, both being greater than the 3.00 threshold. The mean standard deviation is 0.98 and 0.66, respectively.

All the standard deviation values fare below 1.00, which shows a higher level of agreement in responses than for public schools. The implication is that the results show that Catholic schools are practicing all the management strategies quite well. There is also agreement by respondents of some consistency in the practice since the standard deviation values are relatively low. Teaching quality control management strategy, which has the lowest mean score value also has the highest standard deviation value of 0.76. This suggests that some of the Catholic schools have much better teaching quality control than others. The overall mean score for all strategies is 4.43 with a moderate standard deviation of 0.66.

Though the results show agreement among respondents that both public and Catholic schools are performing well in implementation of the schools management strategies, the mean values for all strategies for Catholic schools is much greater than for public schools. This suggests that Catholic schools practice schools management strategies more effectively than public schools. The result of the hypothesis confirms this (Table 2).

Table 2. Results of the Independent Samples t-test Analysis on Schools Management Strategies adopted by Public and Catholic Schools

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig.
Mean	Equal variances assumed	6.257	0.037	-3.491	8.000	0.008
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.491	4.901	0.018

The result of the hypothesis test, using Independent t-test is presented on Table 2. The data used in testing the hypothesis was collected from the pilot test of the questionnaire (SMSQ). The questionnaire was administered to 325 randomly sampled teachers, 257 of them from public and 68 from Catholic secondary schools. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances test value of 0.037, shows that the variances are not equal, with the p-value of 0.018. Consequently, it is concluded that management strategies in public and Catholic secondary schools in Northern zone of Plateau State significantly differ, with Catholic schools practicing the schools management strategies significantly better than public schools.

Academic Goal Setting Strategy

For both public and Catholic secondary schools, all the 18 items scored mean values above 3.00, which is the cut-off mean score for agreement with items. The results show that both public and Catholic schools are putting some premium on academic goal setting as an important strategy to enhance students' academic achievement. Item 1, on clear goals set by management at the beginning of every school year, scored the highest in both public and Catholic schools with mean scores of 4.39 and 4.86, respectively.

Table 3
Mean scores of items on Academic Goal Setting Strategy.

SN	Items	Public Schools		Catholic Schools		Decision
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Management sets clear goals/objectives at beginning of year	4.39	0.72	4.86	0.35	Agreed
2.	Teachers involved in setting the goals and objectives	4.02	0.99	4.51	0.67	Agreed
3.	Teachers know the goals and objectives	4.24	0.77	4.73	0.45	Agreed
4.	Students know the goals and objectives	3.93	1.00	4.48	0.69	Agreed
5.	Parents know the goals and objectives	3.72	1.02	4.46	0.64	Agreed
6.	Teachers' Lesson Notes, Records of Work with Schemes are checked	4.36	0.77	4.79	0.41	Agreed
7.	Management evaluates performance of teachers regularly	4.18	0.94	4.58	0.67	Agreed
8.	Management checks teachers' punctuality in classroom	4.26	0.84	4.84	0.37	Agreed
9.	Teachers benchmark / visit other schools and learn from colleagues	3.55	1.14	4.13	1.02	Agreed
10.	Teachers complete the syllabus on time	4.11	0.92	4.52	0.62	Agreed
11.	Teachers performance are checked	4.06	0.91	4.71	0.49	Agreed
12.	Teachers involved in decision on best strategies to improve teaching and learning	3.94	0.96	4.63	0.58	Agreed
13.	Parents involved in planning to improve students' academic performance	3.68	0.96	4.35	0.70	Agreed
14.	Management purchases and maintains teaching and learning materials	3.86	1.04	4.71	0.52	Agreed
15.	Management makes decision on who to admit in the school	3.95	1.05	4.57	0.76	Agreed
16.	Management makes decision on staff recruitment for the school	3.83	1.22	4.68	0.59	Agreed
17.	Management supports staff development activities	3.77	0.99	4.44	0.82	Agreed
18.	Management builds teamwork among teachers to ensure they support one another	3.98	0.79	4.51	0.69	Agreed
Average Mean and SD		3.99	0.95	4.58	0.61	Agreed

Other items with high mean scores are those meant to ensure these goals are achieved. Public schools performed well in item 6 on checking teachers' lesson notes and schemes of work regularly (4.36), item 3 on ensuring teachers knew the goals and objectives well (4.24), item 8 on management checking the punctuality of teachers in the classrooms (4.26), item 7 on evaluating the performance of teachers (4.18), item 10 on management supervising teachers on-time completion of syllabus (4.11), item 11 on management holding regular meetings with teachers to update performances (4.06), and item 2 on management involving teachers in setting the goals and objectives for the school academic year (4.02). Lowest mean scores were obtained for item 9 on management encouraging teachers to visit and learn from colleagues in other schools (3.55), and item 13 also on management getting parents involved in strategic planning to improve students' academic performances (3.68), and item 5 on management ensuring parents know the goals and objectives of the school academic year (3.72).

Respondents scored Catholic schools very highly on academic goal setting with all items having mean scores above 4.00. The lowest mean scores were on item 9, on management's encouragement to teachers to visit and learn from colleagues in other schools (4.13), and item 13 on management involving parents in strategic planning to improve students' academic performances (4.35). These are items that public schools also scored low in. Catholic schools scored highly on items 1, 3, and 6, which are on setting clear academic goals (4.86), getting teachers to know the goals and objectives (4.73) and regular checking of lesson notes and records of work with schemes (4.79), respectively. These items also scored relatively high in public schools. Other items that scored highly include item 8 on management supervising teachers' punctuality in classroom (4.84), item 11 on regular meetings between management and teachers on performance updates (4.71), and item 14 on management purchasing and maintaining adequate teaching and learning materials (4.71).

Generally, both public and Catholic schools have similar academic goal setting practices as they scored similarly in many of the items. The main difference however is that Catholic schools scored higher in all the items than the public schools, which suggest that the Catholic schools are doing more to achieve their academic goal setting strategy. There is also a much higher level of consistency in responses for Catholic schools than for public schools. For example, the largest SD value for Catholic schools is in item 9, on management encouraging teachers to benchmark and visit other schools to learn from their colleagues. The SD value of 1.02 suggests that some schools are practicing this management strategy much better than others. For public schools, the variations in practice is much across many items with standard deviations above 1.00. Items 4 (3.93, SD = 1.00), 5 (3.72, SD = 1.02), 9 (3.55, SD = 1.14), 14 (3.86, SD = 1.04), 15 (3.83, SD = 1.05), and 16 (3.77, SD = 1.22) indicate large variations between schools in practice of academic goal setting strategies. This further strengthens the idea that Catholic schools practice academic goal setting strategies better than public schools.

Result of the hypothesis test shows a Levene's test value of 0.287, which is greater than the level of significance at 0.05, indicating that the variances are equal. The p-value is 0.000, which means that the difference in managing academic goal strategy between public and Catholic schools is significant on favour of Catholic schools.

Table 3. Independent t-test analysis on Academic Goal Setting Strategy between Public and Catholic Schools

Levene's Test for Equality of
Variances

		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Equal variances assumed	1.168	.287	-8.402	34.000	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.402	32.083	.000

Teaching Quality Control Strategy

Table 4 presents the results of the analysis on mean scores of items on teaching quality control in public and Catholic secondary schools in Northern Zone of Plateau State. Results of analysis on teaching quality control management strategy show that public schools have two items above the 4.0 minimal mean score value for agreement. These are items 2 and 9 on teachers being qualified to teach their assigned subjects (4.09) and the cordial relationship between teachers and students (4.03), respectively. Item 8 on adequate welfare package for teachers has the lowest mean score value (3.07), which is a marginal score for agreement.

Table 4. Mean scores of items on Teaching Quality Control Strategy

SN	Items	Public Schools			Catholic Schools		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Teachers are satisfied with their Work	3.39	1.21	Agreed	4.17	0.87	Agreed
2.	Teachers are well qualified to teach their assigned subjects	4.09	0.96	Agreed	4.60	0.55	Agreed
3.	Teacher absenteeism is minimal	3.85	0.95	Agreed	4.49	0.74	Agreed
4.	Teaching quality is very high	3.91	1.04	Agreed	4.62	0.58	Agreed
5.	Classroom control and quality is very high	3.80	1.04	Agreed	4.46	0.64	Agreed
6.	The teachers have appropriate workload sizes	3.45	1.15	Agreed	4.21	0.85	Agreed
7.	There are opportunities for career development for teachers	3.59	0.98	Agreed	4.05	0.94	Agreed
8.	Adequate welfare package is provided for teachers	3.07	1.26	Agreed	3.84	0.94	Agreed
9.	Teacher-Student relationship is cordial and good	4.03	0.81	Agreed	4.51	0.62	Agreed
	Average Mean and SD	3.69	1.05	Agreed	4.28	0.61	Agreed

The implication is that many respondents disagree with the statement, meaning that a large number of teachers in public schools feel their welfare is not sufficiently taken care of. These are issues that could bring disaffection and which could eventually affect students' academic achievements.

The trend in teaching quality control strategy is similar but higher in Catholic schools. As in the public schools, the lowest mean score was in item 8 on adequacy of welfare packages provided for

teachers (3.84). This is the only item with a mean score below 4.00. The highest mean scores were in item 4 on high teaching quality (4.62), item 2 on teachers being qualified for the subjects they have been assigned to teach (4.60) and item 9 on positive teacher-students relationships (4.51). Other items with high mean scores include items 3 and 5, which are on minimal absenteeism of teachers from duty posts (4.49) and high classroom control and quality (4.46).

Catholic schools scored higher in all the items than the public schools. Unfortunately, teachers in both public and Catholic schools scored the item on opportunities for career advancement low, relative to other items. This may be a cause for concern because it can affect the level of satisfaction of teachers with their jobs and subsequently can affect their output. It may be important to point out that the public schools have higher standard deviations in all the items, which means that their responses, school by school, and respondent by respondent, may have wide variations. Of the 9 items, five of them have standard deviations greater than 1.00. While none of the items has a standard deviation of 1.00 or above in Catholic schools, four of the items have standard deviations above 0.8. These also mean that there are large variations in practice between schools.

Overall, Table 4 shows that the mean score of 4.28 for teaching quality control strategy among the three management strategies, is the lowest and should be of concern to authorities. This is because it relates directly to the quality of education that the students receive and their potential academic achievement. With standard deviation of 0.76, the highest among management strategies, there is an apparent wide variation in practice between schools.

Between public and Catholic schools, the hypothesis analysis (Table 5) shows that there is a significant difference in teaching quality control strategy management. The p-value for the assumption of equal variance (Levene's test value is 0.489, which is larger than 0.05) is lower than 0.05 level of significance and the null hypothesis is rejected. Since the mean score values of Catholic schools is greater than public schools, the implication is that Catholic schools are managing teaching quality control strategy better than public schools.

Table 5. Results of Independent t Test for Differences in Teaching Quality Control between Public and Catholic Schools

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Equal variances assumed	.495	.492	-4.440	16	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.440	15.302	.000

Discipline Management Strategies

The results on discipline management shows that Catholic schools had higher mean scores than public schools in all the three strategies. The least mean scores for both public (3.95) and Catholic (4.13) schools were obtained in item 5, on the involvement of student leaders in decisions on discipline matters. The standard deviation values are also the lowest for the items in both public and Catholic schools. The highest mean scores for public (4.46) and Catholic (4.78) schools were in item 3, on the students knowing that they will be punished if they misbehaved. This item also has the lowest standard deviation value which means that in both public (0.59) and Catholic schools (0.42), there is general

agreement on this item across schools. In both school types, students were generally adjudged as well-behaved in school environment and in the classrooms.

In public schools, items 6 and 1 have the lowest mean scores of 3.21 and 3.24, with standard deviation of 1.29 and 1.32, respectively. Item 6 is on the adequacy of classrooms and laboratories equipment, and item 1 is on availability of textbooks to students. Others that scored relatively low mean scores are item 4 on school having enough laboratories (3.31, SD = 1.32), item 2 on adequacy of classroom sizes (3.34, SD = 1.30) and item 8 on teachers having required and sufficient teaching aids (3.37, SD = 1.19). The high mean scores were in item 7 on well-ventilated and clean classrooms with mean score of 3.79 and standard deviation of 1.14; and, item 3 on school having a functional library (3.57, SD = 1.30).

Catholic schools reported mean scores of more than 4.00 for all items. The highest mean score of 4.81 is for item 3 on existence of a functional library in the school. The standard deviation value of 0.40 is the least of all items in the instrument, which shows the high level of agreement between respondents on the item. The next highest scores of 4.56 were for item 2, which is on classrooms sizes being adequate and comfortable (SD = 0.64), and item 7, which is on clean and well-ventilated classrooms (SD = 0.62).

Table 5
Mean Scores of Items on Discipline Management Strategy

Discipline Management		Public		Catholic		Decision
SN	Items	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Students are well behaved in the school environment	3.98	0.92	4.45	0.56	Agreed
2.	Students are well behaved in classrooms	4.02	0.79	4.43	0.64	Agreed
3.	Students know they will be punished for Misbehaving	4.46	0.59	4.78	0.42	Agreed
4.	Student leaders are involved in decisions about students disciplinary matters	3.95	1.13	4.13	0.87	Agreed
5.	Parents are involved in decisions about students disciplinary matters	4.02	0.98	4.37	0.73	Agreed
Average Mean and SD		4.09	0.88	4.43	0.64	Agreed

The results (Table 5) of the test for differences in discipline management between public and Catholic schools shows that the p-value is 0.000. The level of significance is 0.05. The decision rule states that if the p-value is less than the level of significance, the null hypothesis should be rejected. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that the difference in students' motivation between public and Catholic schools is significant.

Table 5. Results of Independent t-test for Differences in Discipline Management between Public and Catholic Schools

Discipline Management	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T	df	Sig.
	F	Sig.			

							(2-tailed)
Mean	Equal variances assumed	.000	.991	-2.443	8.000	.040	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.443	7.918	.041	

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

There is a general sense that students' academic achievements are associated with their respective schools' management strategies. In essence, schools that practice better management strategies are expected to produce students with better academic achievement. Several studies have linked schools management strategies to academic achievement of students. For example, Jonas and Mkulu (2022) associated students' academic achievement with schools management strategies in Tanzania. Jackson and Andala (2022) also found a positive and significant relationship between schools management strategies and students' academic achievement in Rwanda. Suleiman (2023) also found that schools management strategies including teaching quality and parental inclusion were directly related to students' academic achievement in Somalia. Other studies (Gindo, Anagaw, & Sapu, 2020; Senguo & Ilomo, 2020; Tsereteli, Martskvishvili, & Aptarashvili, 2011) showed similar results as well. Several studies in Nigeria also aligned with these international studies. Olaitan (2024) found similarly in Taraba state, Nigeria that teaching quality and classroom discipline are related to students' academic achievement. Ebimiere, Uloaku and Nweke (2020) and Owan et al. (2018) also found a relationship between schools management strategies and academic achievement of students in Rivers state, Nigeria, and Calabar, Nigeria, respectively.

Analysis of adoption and practice of schools management strategies shows that the Catholic schools are more efficient than the public schools in all three strategies. The strategies assessed are academic goal setting, teaching quality control, discipline management, students' motivation, and schools resources management. In all of these strategies, the Catholic schools outperformed the public schools. Catholic schools are privately owned and there are layers of accountability that the public schools do not necessarily have in place. For example, the Catholic Archdiocesan Education Board rigorously supervises the schools management teams in all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Jos and ensures their smooth operation. They also exercise oversight functions on all aspects of the school administration and students' academic achievement. Importantly, because they are in direct contact with the school authorities, they make adequate provisions for school resources to ensure success.

Analysis of responses from teachers show that Catholic schools have better libraries, laboratory and classroom equipment, better welfare packages for staff, better disciplined and motivated students, and managed resources better than public schools. According to Bakwaph and Anyanwu (2024) application of principles and mechanism of Catholic education in administration would yield good schools management. These principles emphasize faith, high moral standards, academic rigour and self-discipline, along with the recruitment of conscientious teachers steeped in Catholic principles and willing to impart same to the students. This is commonly referred to as Catholic identity. In such an environment, it is conceivable that schools management would discharge their duties creditably which should ensure effective schools management strategies. Catholic identity generally refers to the underlying principle of Catholic education, which is to educate the "whole child" academically, morally, and spiritually to attain both academic excellence and Christ-centric education (Kitinji et al., 2022).

Public schools, on the other hand are often regarded as corrupt. The issue of corruption has also been linked with mismanagement of resources at public schools as well (Agwu, 2022). It is however difficult to prove such allegations even as they are not within the purview of this study. Suffice it to say

that the results of the study show that public schools are performing well in ensuring proper management of schools management strategies. Across board, the results show that respondents believe the public schools have performed above average, even though Catholic schools exercise stronger implementation of schools management strategies across all three strategies than public schools.

CONCLUSION

The study found that Catholic schools have better schools management strategies implementation than public schools in Northern Senatorial Zone of Plateau State. This may be attributed to the additional layers of oversight and supervision of schools management by the Catholic Archdiocesan Education Board, which is saddled with the responsibility to ensuring quality assurance in Catholic schools in the study area. One of the significance of this study lies in the fact that it empowers school administrators to understand better what does not seem to be working properly in terms of schools management strategies and to be able to re-strategize in the face of dwindling resources and greater demand for academic excellence.

However, both public and Catholic schools experience similar challenges in implementing schools management strategies. These include shortages of funds, high cost of education in Nigeria, poor educational infrastructure and facilities and insecurity, among others. These need to be tackled to provide a conducive environment for schools management to ensure proper execution of strategies for better achievement of set academic goals. School management teams must still be encouraged to adopt global best practices in schools management strategies such as highlighted in this study but be conscious of other factors that may not have been captured in the study. Schools should also stick to the right processes in order to uphold the integrity of the schools, the students' academic achievement and educational system in Nigeria as a whole.

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