

# ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*The study investigated the relationship between Organizational Identity and Public and Private Senior Secondary School Effectiveness in South West Nigeria. To put the study on course, three hypotheses were formulated. In the same vein, three separate instruments were designed and constructed to collect pertinent data namely the School Identity Questionnaire (SIQ), the School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SEQ) and Performance Records of Students in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). While the first instrument measured identity, the other two simultaneously measured effectiveness. There was a total sample of 2,400 students from 120 sample schools at 20 students per 20 schools in each of the six South West States – Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. Also, a total of 120 principals participated in the study. The Questionnaires were subjected to content and construct validity as well as split-half reliability test. The reliability coefficient for the SIQ was found to be 0.86 and for the SEQ was 0.90. The data were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis employing the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis to test Hypotheses 1 and 2, and the Analysis of Variance to test Hypothesis 3. Results of the analysis indicate that there is no significant relationship between organizational identity and school effectiveness in the two categories of schools separately, public and private. However, a significant relationship was found to exist between organizational identity and school effectiveness in private schools only when WASSCE Results were used as a measure of effectiveness. Results also show that a significant difference exists in organizational identity and school effectiveness between public and private senior secondary schools irrespective of the instrument used in measuring effectiveness. Recommendations were then made, in the light of the results, among which are that some degree of autonomy should be given to senior secondary schools for them to grow and develop their identity and effectiveness and, that the identity and effectiveness should regularly be monitored and measured for school improvement purposes.*

**Key words:** organizational identity, secondary school, school effectiveness.

## Introduction

Given the choice, parents and children have preference for certain schools than others. Perhaps what informs the choice is the important factor of attraction which itself is factored on the uniqueness of a school that separates it and makes it distinct from others. By implication, then, no two schools are exactly alike and exactly attractive. That is, each school has its own identity by which it is identified and separated from others, no matter how close they are in every sphere.

With the introduction of free secondary education in South West Nigeria in 1979, at the beginning of the second republic, products of primary schools transited to secondary schools to which they were allocated by the government, not necessarily to schools of their choice and not minding whether such schools are effective or not. Parents who could afford it then registered their children in private schools believing that private schools offer a better choice than public schools in the matter of attraction and in the matter of effectiveness.

However, in the choice of the private schools one wonders what parents' considerations were. Do the private schools have their own identities to warrant attraction and effectiveness? And the government schools, too, in their present state, are there no outstanding ones that have identities and that are effective enough in spite of the fact that parents have little or no choice in picking them for their children? After all, there is little evidence that parents do lobby for the posting of their children to preferred schools. Some parents even seem to go as far as securing the change of schools of allocation to the preferred ones. What then is the status of secondary schools in South West Nigeria today in terms of identity, both public and private? What is the status of these categories of schools in terms of school effectiveness? And, do public and private senior secondary schools in South West Nigeria differ in terms of identity and effectiveness?

Public Secondary Schools in this instance are secondary schools owned, financed and run by the governments while Private Secondary Schools are those owned, financed and run by private individuals and organizations or bodies such as religious organizations and communities. Moreover, today, secondary schools are of a two-tier system of Junior and Senior Secondary Schools each of a 3-year duration programme. In this study, the senior secondary schools are the focus. However, the two-tier system of Junior and Senior Secondary Schools is yet to be fully operational in all the schools, particularly in the private schools which still house the two types of schools under one umbrella physically, structurally, by way of headship and control, by way of other personnel and by way of school name. Yet, of all the States under study, it is only in Lagos and Ondo States that all public secondary schools have been completely separated into Junior and Senior Secondary Schools. In a few other States, like in Ogun State, some secondary schools have been so completely separated leaving others as single entities (of Junior and Senior Secondary Schools combined into one) while in other States all the secondary schools are yet to be so separated.

Also in this study, the variables of interest are organizational identity which is the independent variable and school effectiveness which is the dependent variable. Organizational Identity refers to a sense of sameness or continuity of an organization despite environmental changes. Memories of the past as well as hopes and aspirations for the future provide evidence in the present of this sense of organizational identity. It is also the state of being what is asserted. School Effectiveness separately refers to the performance of the organizational unit called school. The performance of the school can be expressed as the output of the school.

## **Literature Review**

Beyond the dictionary meaning, the word identity has been variously defined, described and conceptualized by different authors and scholars in different relevant fields of human endeavor.

Basically, Hornby (2004) defines the word identity as "the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others". According to Nickelly (1977), identity can be described as "the agreement between how we view ourselves and how others view us". Typically, humans characterize themselves based on structural features of a group membership or with the help of characteristics that an individual associates with him/herself. In other words, identity is formed by different characterizations of oneself (Puusa and Tolvanen, 2006) in the social environment and in the psyche of members of the society. Indeed, the society has a large impact on identity.

Be that as it may, identity is further explored in the various fields of study that have had to include it in their dictionary and labelling it differently. This has led to ambiguous and confusing approaches to identity which in turn has led to rather restrictive interpretations of the concept. Thus, discussions on use of identity present different meanings, from fundamental and abiding sameness, to fluidity, contingency, negotiated and so on. In this context, organizational identity as a term is captured and separately defined and explained. According to Jeyavelu (2011):

organizational identity has captured the imagination of many organizational scholars and practitioners as it is expected to explain the hereto unexplainable variance in variables as broad and different as organizational performance, strategy, culture, empowerment, creativity, entrepreneurship, change, etc. (p. 1).

Albert and Whetten (2004), who are noted to have introduced the very first definition of organizational identity in 1985 (Puusa and Tolvanen, 2006), proposed that an adequate statement of organizational identity satisfies the following criteria:

- (1) features that are somehow seen as the essence of the organization: the criterion of claimed central character;
- (2) features that distinguish the organization from others with which it may be compared: the criterion of claimed distinctiveness;
- (3) features that exhibit some degree of sameness or continuity over time: the criterion of claimed temporal continuity.

Scholars have predicated virtually all recent treatments of organizational identity on these definitional pillars (Gioia, Schultz and Corley, 2000). Puusa and Tolvanen (2006) then summarize these three criteria of organizational identity as what is central, distinctive and enduring in an organization, when considering its past, present and the future.

On School Effectiveness, it is a rather difficult concept to define, and once defined, is of a nature that is rather difficult to measure. Thus, in the last decade, there was a burgeoning literature on school effectiveness. In addition, as the work of educational administrators / planners has moved from increasing school enrolment to the improvement of quality of schooling, so the administrator / planner has had to become more interested in school effectiveness (Whetten, 2006).

According to Erlendsson (2002), effectiveness is the extent to which objectives are met. Thus, effectiveness is the extent to which an activity fulfills its intended purpose or function. In general, an effective school is roughly the same as a good school (Scheeren, 2000). Also, school effectiveness refers to the performance of the organization unit called the school. The performance of the school can be expressed as the output of the school which in turn is measured in terms of the average achievement of the students at the end of period of formal schooling (Scheeren, 2000). Effectiveness can thus be described as the extent to which the desired level of output is achieved which includes student attainment at the end of schooling.

The question of school effectiveness is tasking because not only do schools differ in performance; the difference in performance is also of different levels and categories. Thus, organizational theorists often adhere to the fact that effectiveness of an organization cannot be described in a straight forward manner. In like manner, the effectiveness of a school organization should not be looked at from a single perspective of performance. Instead, a pluralistic attitude is taken with respect to interpretation of the concept and question. By that, it is assumed that the interpretation chosen depends on the organizational theory of the specific interest of the group posing the question of effectiveness (Cameron and Whetten, 1983).

However, in most school effectiveness studies, productivity is the predominant criterion of effectiveness in actual practice. And, one of the characteristics of an organization by means of which productivity is actualized is the identity transformational process.

## Methodology of Research

The study is a correlational and an *ex-post facto* research designed to examine the degree of relationship between organizational identity and public and private senior secondary school effectiveness in South West Nigeria and, to examine the after-the-fact treatment of organizational identity as it affected school effectiveness. The study hypotheses then included the following:

1. There is no significant relationship between organizational identity and public senior secondary school effectiveness in South West Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between organizational identity and private senior secondary school effectiveness in South West Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference in organizational identity and effectiveness between public and private senior secondary schools in South West Nigeria.

Information obtained from the States' Ministries of Education on the Study Population indicate that the latter included the 141 public senior secondary schools and 114 private secondary schools in Ekiti State; the 318 public senior secondary schools and 208 registered and approved private secondary schools in Lagos State; the 179 full-fledged public senior secondary schools and 125 others still in operational combination with the Junior Secondary Schools in Ogun State; the 285 public senior secondary schools and 286 private secondary schools in Ondo State; the 558 public secondary schools in Osun State; and the 317 full-fledged senior secondary schools as well as the 165 ones that are still combined with the Junior Secondary School Section and, the 236 approved private secondary schools in Oyo State. Information on the number of private secondary schools in Ogun and Osun States were not readily available. The study population also consisted of all the 2, 847 principals of the South West Nigeria senior secondary schools plus the number of principals of those private schools of Ogun and Osun States whose figures were not readily available.

The study sample was purposively drawn to consist of 10 public and 10 private schools in each of the States totaling 20 schools per State and giving a grand total sample number of 120 schools. Furthermore, from each of the 120 sample schools were drawn randomly 20 student participants of the current SS3 students giving a total of 2,400 participants. The 120 principals of the sample schools also participated in the study.

There research instruments included the School Identity Questionnaire (SIQ), the School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SEQ) and, Performance Records of Students in WASSCE. The SIQ was to measure identity, the SEQ to measure effectiveness and the Performance Records to measure effectiveness again but by way of students' academic performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

The School Identity Questionnaire (SIQ) and the School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SEQ) were both subjected to content and construct validity. The construct validity of the SIQ was established by correlating scores obtained from five randomly selected schools (which were not part of the main study) to correlation analysis with scores on an adapted version of Halpin and Croft's Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire, OCDQ (Abari, 1994) which is considered to be of a similar construct. Similarly, for its construct validity, scores on the SEQ were correlated with scores on an adapted form of a school effectiveness questionnaire (the teacher/staff version) authored by Baldwin, Coney III, Fardig and Thomas (1993). The correlation coefficient between SIQ and OCDQ was found to be 0.94 while between the two versions of SEQ it was 0.98.

The School Identity Questionnaire (SIQ) and the School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SEQ) were subjected to the Split-half method of reliability and the Spearman Brown Reliability Coefficient Correcting Factor Treatment. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.86 for the SIQ and 0.90 for the SEQ. The third instrument, the Records Observation, is considered reliable and consistent having been designed to collect primary source data obtained through the West African Examinations Council.

Of a total of 2400 copies of the two questionnaires that were administered, 1,200 each, 1,112 copies or 92.7% of the SIQ were retrieved while 1000 copies or 83.3% of the SEQ were retrieved.

The scores for the respondents in each sample school were pooled and averaged for each variable, identity(X) and effectiveness(Y1) and then converted and rounded up to the nearest whole percentage. The percentage of students with a credit pass in at least five subjects including English Language and Mathematics in the School Certificate Examination in five years, 2005 - 2009 were obtained from the records. The average of this to the nearest whole number for each school was taken as another measure of effectiveness (Y2). The scores were then subjected to both descriptive and statistical analysis.

## Results of Research

The aggregate scores for each of the variables, organizational identity (X) and school effectiveness (Y), with respect to public and private senior secondary schools for each of the States that constitute South West Nigeria are as presented in Table 1. There are two separate scores for the variable of school effectiveness as described earlier, one as obtained from the SEQ (Y1) and the other as obtained from the Record Observation on WASSCE Results (Y2).

**Table 1. Scores on Organizational Identity and Effectiveness of Public (Pu) and Private (Pr) Senior Secondary Schools in South West Nigeria.**

State	X(Pu)	X(Pr)	Y1(Pu)	Y1(Pr)	Y2(Pu)	Y2(Pr)
Ekiti	74.	76	84	85	16	26
Lagos	77	76	75	77	23	38
Ogun	76	80	82	83	08	33
Ondo	77	82	87	85	14	23
Osun	83	84	79	85	09	16
Oyo	92	89	82	86	08	17
Average	<b>78</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>

X= Organizational identity; Y1=School Effectiveness Questionnaire; Y2= WASSCE Results

Table 1 shows some close trend in the scores on organizational identity(X) though while the mean is 78 for public senior secondary schools, it is higher for the private ones with a value of 81. School Effectiveness (Y1) by the Questionnaire returns a mean of 82 for the public and a higher mean of 84 for private senior secondary schools. From the WASSCE Results (Y2), a mean of 13 obtained for the public secondary schools which is less than that of private secondary schools with a mean of 26.

The Hypotheses were tested using the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistical tool for Hypotheses 1 and 2, and the Analysis of Variance for Hypothesis 3.

**Table 2. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis of Organizational Identity and School Effectiveness (by Questionnaire) of Public Senior Secondary Schools in South West Nigeria.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r- cal	r-tab	Decision
Organizational Identity	60	79.87	7.4435	0.046	0.275	NS
School Effectiveness	60	81.53	6.7357			

NS=Correlation is not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2, indicates that there is a negligible positive and non-significant relationship between organizational identity and public senior secondary school effectiveness with reference to SEQ ( $df = 58, r = 0.046, p > 0.05$ ). This implies that the hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant relationship between organizational identity and public senior secondary school effectiveness in South West Nigeria.

In a similar vein, the WASSCE results data on effectiveness were employed to also test the hypothesis.

**Table 3. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis of Organizational Identity and School Effectiveness (by WASSCE Results) of Public Senior Secondary Schools in South West Nigeria.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r- cal	r-tab	Decision
Organizational Identity	60	79.87	7.4435			
WASSCE Results in Public Schools	60	12.8833	10.8066	-0.078	0.275	NS

NS=Correlation is not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 shows a negligibly negative and non-significant relationship between organizational identity and school effectiveness based on WASSCE results. Thus, the hypothesis is again accepted ( $df = 58, r \text{ cal } -0.078, p > 0.05$ ) and there is no significant relationship between organizational identity and public senior secondary school effectiveness in South West Nigeria.

**Table 4. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis of Organizational Identity and School Effectiveness (by Questionnaire) of Private Senior Secondary Schools in South West Nigeria.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r- cal	r-tab	Decision
Organizational Identity	60	81.05	5.4506	0.260	0.275	NS
SEQ in Private School	60	83.65	6.3455			

NS = Correlation is not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 indicates that there is a positively low and non-significant relationship between organizational identity and school effectiveness in private senior secondary schools in South West Nigeria ( $df = 58, r \text{ cal } 0.260, p > 0.05$ ). This implies that there is no significant relationship between organizational identity and private senior secondary school effectiveness in South West Nigeria and the hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 5. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis of Organizational Identity and School Effectiveness (by WASSCE Results) of Private Senior Secondary Schools in South West Nigeria.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r- cal	r-tab	Decision
Organizational Identity	60	81.05	5.4506			
WASSCE Results in Private School	60	27.97	18.76	-0.444	0.275	*

\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 shows a moderate, negative and significant relationship between organizational identity and school effectiveness in private senior secondary schools based on WASSCE results. Thus, the hypothesis is not accepted ( $df = 58$ ,  $r_{cal} -0.444$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and there is a significant relationship between organizational identity and private senior secondary school effectiveness in South West Nigeria using WASSCE results as the measure of effectiveness.

**Table 6. Analysis of Variance in Organizational Identity and Effectiveness (by Questionnaire) Between Public and Private Senior Secondary Schools in South West Nigeria.**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	449.483	3	149.828	3.510	2.60
Within Groups	10074.367	236	42.688		
Total	10523.850	239			

\* Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 6 shows that a significant difference exists in the means of organizational identity and effectiveness by Questionnaire between public and private senior secondary schools in South West Nigeria;  $df = (3,236)$ ;  $f_{cal} 3.51 > f_{tab} 2.60$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This indicates that the hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 7. Analysis of Variance in Organizational Identity and School Effectiveness (by WASSCE Results) Between Public and Private Senior Secondary Schools in South West Nigeria.**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	223107.283	3	74369.094	537.13	2.60
Within Groups	32675.900	236	138.457		
Total	255783.183	239			

\* Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The result shows that a significant difference exists in the means of organizational identity and effectiveness by WASSCE results between public and private senior secondary schools in South West Nigeria ( $df = (3,236)$ ;  $f_{cal} 537.13 > f_{tab} 2.60$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the hypothesis is also rejected.

## Discussion

Results show that for public schools, organizational identity may bring about effectiveness but does not impinge positively on students' academic performance. This finding is in agreement with the observation of Tanriogen, Kiran and Cobanoglu (2010) that "because organizational identity is accepted as a strong impact on organizational processes, it is also expected to affect school effectiveness". However, these authors, citing Gudstafson (1995), also observe that, even though organizational identity has so important impact on organizational effectiveness, there is limited research on the subject matter. This still seems to be the position up till today making this study timely and important.

Moreover, these days, public schools have increased tremendously in number including the student population of the schools, such that one does not necessarily have to be on the

look out far and beyond before securing an effective secondary school with a positive identity. Hardly, then, can a school be singled out among the lot in a State let alone in a region more so that the State Governments have placed every public school on the same pedestal. Thus, the relationship between identity and effectiveness (as measured by the Questionnaire) in public schools, becomes fragile. It is more fragile, tending to be negative, when effectiveness is looked at from the point of view of students' academic performance (by WASSCE Results).

Private senior secondary schools present some little difference from the results obtained with respect to public schools. The nature of these schools (private and public) could account for these little differences. That notwithstanding, an entirely different picture is presented when effectiveness is measured by WASSCE Results. This result being significant, plus the negative calculated r-value obtained, indicate that the more a school grows in identity, the less its effectiveness in students' academic performance and vice-versa. This further implies that the noise that a school makes in its name through its input does not necessarily mean that the students perform well in external examinations such as those conducted by the West African Examinations Council. That is, the hood does not make the monk. This is mostly true of private senior secondary schools which tend to market the schools making use of every possible gimmick. Moreover, as observed by Moradeyo (2009), a number of the private schools are one-shop schools masquerading under the name 'international' and are run by people who have no business in educational engagement.

However, some nuisance variables such as examination malpractices which are observed to be rampant among the private schools could be responsible for the finding of significant negative relationship between school identity and school effectiveness in terms of WASSCE Results.

The differences in the results between public and private schools are further expressed in the results obtained in testing hypothesis 3. Here, the results show that significant differences exist in organizational identity and school effectiveness between public and private senior secondary schools even when effectiveness is measured both by the Questionnaire and the WASSCE Results. The implication of this is that public and private senior secondary schools differ in organizational identity as one can possibly be distinguished from the other in several respects of the factors that constitute identity – in academic competence, co-curricular activities, school facilities, school climate and school leadership. Public and private schools also differ significantly in terms of their effectiveness as shown by the results. These groups of schools differ significantly, therefore, in terms of school mission, instructional leadership, school progress, high expectation, home-school relations and, of course, in terms of academic achievement. Moreover, public and private schools differ in the relationship between organizational identity and school effectiveness as could be observed from the results of the test of hypotheses 1 and 2 and as discussed in the previous paragraph.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

A cursory look at the findings of the study leads to the conclusion that Organizational Identity and Effectiveness bear some relationship to one another in public and private senior secondary school in South West Nigeria. The strength, direction and significance of the relationship however vary depending on the nature of the school, whether public or private. The strength, direction and significance of the relationship also depend on the measuring instrument for School Effectiveness, the School Effectiveness Questionnaire or WASSCE Results. From these results of the study could also therefore be concluded that Effectiveness is a rather difficult concept to measure and that, whereas productivity is the predominant criterion of measuring Effectiveness, it is only just one of the desired levels of output for measuring the variable. Thus, Effectiveness cannot be looked at from a single perspective of academic performance or



“student achievement at a point in time but by changes in achievement over a longer period of time – that is, by taking a longitudinal study” (Australian Government, 2011). In the words of Teddie and Reynolds (2000), though “effectiveness is typically defined in terms of achievement alone, many critics have stated that multiple criteria should be used in defining it”.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it is hereby recommended as follows, that:

1. Senior Secondary Schools should as much as possible and as soon as practicable be allowed some degree of autonomy in order to improve upon their identity and effectiveness. That is, they should be allowed self-exploration autonomy; every school should endeavour to create its own identity and carve a niche for itself. This would enable the schools to develop on their own and evoke healthy competition among them in all domains of knowledge. This recommendation is as applicable to the public schools as it is to the private schools as proprietors of the latter need not be over bearing on the school but allow the school to establish its own identity.

2. Organizational Identity and School Effectiveness of schools should regularly be analyzed and measured and, therefore, monitored for progress. This would continuously put the schools on their toes, working hard enough to achieve school goals and objectives, and working hard enough for identity negotiation, to develop a consistent set of behaviours that would reinforce their identity.

3. Specific and particular attention must be paid to good students’ academic performance which is the ultimate in any educational institution and system. In this wise, all the necessary and needed inputs – the human, material and fiscal resources - must be made available in quantity and quality.

4. The community, neighbourhood and old students’ associations should readily partner with the school in the matter of identity and effectiveness as these groups of people are more or less directly concerned with and affected by the school and its progress.

5. Governments should consider giving prospective pupils the choice of public schools to attend. Schools are then likely to strive and struggle to create the much needed identity for themselves, albeit, through academic excellence.

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Received: *January 18, 2012*

Accepted: *March 08, 2012*

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