

School Proliferation: Challenge of Curriculum Implementation in Nigeria.

Abayomi Babatunde Fakolujo

Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of private schools in Nigeria's secondary education system is one of the challenges facing effective teaching and learning of the curriculum over the years. The rapid growth in the number of private schools, much of it uncoordinated, has implications for fidelity to the approved curriculum in the classroom. The research investigated school proliferation as a problem to the implementation of the curriculum in secondary schools in Ondo State. A review of related literature was done, both conceptual and empirical. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population was made up of secondary school teachers and stakeholders in Ondo State. One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were selected using purposive and simple random sampling procedures in Ondo State secondary schools. Data were collected from the respondents using a well-structured questionnaire. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the instrument's reliability. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, which were used to answer the research questions. Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the formulated hypothesis. The results showed that school proliferation is a significant issue in the study area (grand mean = 3.80), the lack of teachers, inadequate instructional materials and weak supervision significantly affect the implementation of the curriculum (grand mean = 3.83); and the rapid increase in the number of private schools significantly affects the delivery of the curriculum (grand mean = 3.84). Regulatory and support measures were strongly recommended as a means of addressing these challenges (grand mean = 3.90). Furthermore, the significant positive effect of the rapid growth of private schools was found on curriculum implementation ($R = .439$, $R^2 = .193$, $F(1, 118) = 28.24$, $p = .000$), so that the null hypothesis was rejected. It was thus concluded that the rapid growth of schools has posed a great challenge to the implementation of the curriculum in Ondo State. Based on the results, it is recommended that: mandatory school registration and inspection should be implemented by the government, school curriculum compliance should be intensified, schools that do not comply with the curriculum be sanctioned, the government should train teachers for all schools, in order to ensure that all teachers are available, the government should encourage the siting of schools in an equitable manner and the government should standardize academic calendars and curriculum benchmarks for all schools.

Keywords: School Proliferation, Curriculum Implementation, Private Schools, Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

The education sector is a major concern for every nation in its developmental aspirations, and Nigeria is no exception. Primary and secondary education is the foundation for sustainable national development, and the Nigerian government has been aware of this all along. Education is a tool for producing graduates that can contribute meaningfully to the country's economic and technological development (Fasuba, 2019). This recognition, however, has not translated into the Nigerian state doing much to improve the quality of education in the public school system; in fact, it has had two clear, and possibly interrelated, consequences: firstly, the rapid and largely uncontrolled growth of private schools; and secondly, the ongoing problems of implementing curriculum policy effectively in the classroom. From the foregoing, it is very clear that the growth of private schools in Nigeria is not a new phenomenon because the very first school in the country was a private school established by Methodist missionaries in Badagry, Lagos State in 1843 (Fasuba, 2019). Later, missionaries, communities, individuals, and the government all became school owners until the educational reforms of the

1970s brought the Universal Primary Education programme (1976), which saw the Federal Government nationalise privately owned academic institutions and later implement the Universal Primary Education programme. This led to an increase in enrolments that could not be funded, causing public schools to become poorer in quality, and eventually attracting the private sector back into education provision (Mfaiga, 2018).

Private schools have since proliferated at all levels of the schooling system, usually falling into two main categories: private, high-cost schools for the more affluent individuals and families, and low-cost schools to fill the gap between public schools and the more affluent for the lower socio-economic class (Härmä, 2013). This second category of low-cost schools is most associated with the word "proliferation" because the majority of these schools are not registered with the State. The research carried out by Abdul-Hamid et al. (2017) indicated that 89 per cent of private schools in the Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos State are not registered, whereas the figures from the Lagos State government cited by Akinsanmi (2016) showed that only 4,573 out of the estimated 15,000 private schools in the State have been registered and approved. Non-registration should be seen as an offence because these schools are not subject to any form of meaningful government oversight, and they are not inspected nor held to minimum standards set by national education policy in the areas of facilities, qualified staff and curriculum delivery (Abdul-Hamid et al., 2017).

The effects of this unrestricted expansion of private schools have been well documented. Numerous private schools offer education without adequate infrastructure, such as libraries, laboratories, playgrounds, and administrative blocks, and some schools are even housed in a normal residential house (Ogbiji & Ogbiji, 2014; Odunsi, 2018). Staffing levels are often low, and staff quality is often inadequate, while the motive for establishing many of these institutions is said to be primarily commercial rather than educational (Omachonu, 2019; Atanda & Olaifa, 2022). The literature is not entirely negative, however: private schools, including low-cost private schools, are praised for helping to alleviate the strain on overcrowded public classrooms, for providing access to the families' network of proximity, and for, in some instances, outperforming public schools in academic performance, even within low-income communities (Tooley & Dixon, 2005; Uyi, 2012; Lanre-Babalola et al., 2023). This picture, then, is of a sector that is also filling a gap in the education system left by the government and bringing some quality concerns to the mainstream education system.

The second factor, curriculum implementation, is related to the actual application of a curriculum, even if well designed, in the classroom. In this sense, curriculum is defined as the totality of planned learning experiences and opportunities provided by a school for its learners (Ogar & Awhen, 2015), which requires a set of people, materials, and structures to bring it to fruition. To address this, the reform movement in Nigeria has attempted to shift the focus from an academically oriented, 'bookish' system of secondary education to one that offers students the opportunity to learn some practical, income-generating skills alongside academics, which is achieved through incorporating 34 trade subjects developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, subsequently extended in 2017 with an updated trade and entrepreneurship curriculum.

But curriculum implementation and curriculum achievement have proved to be a gap that has been hard to bridge. Adekunle (2018) noted that years after the adoption of the trade-subject model, learners had mastered trade skills but lacked the entrepreneurial skills to translate them into economic activities, a finding corroborated by Muhammad (2020). Even nearer to the locale of the present study, the situation in Katsina Local Government Area shows the wide range of these challenges encountered: teachers reported that they had no textbooks, no classrooms, no qualified teachers, and also felt underfunded to buy the materials to deliver the Curriculum; that they had little knowledge of the Curriculum itself, in part because they were not involved in its development and review; and that they had little to no support for them to acquire materials for effective delivery (Umar, 2024). This follows the general pattern of any curriculum: as Bishop (1985) observes, whenever teachers are poorly resourced, inadequately trained, or excluded from policy development, no matter how good the curriculum document is, there will be poor implementation.

The aggregate of these two lines of literature suggests that there is a link worthy of direct investigation. In Nigeria, the rapid growth of schools, especially the low-cost, largely unregistered schools, has led to a significant number of schools that are already operating without proper facilities, trained or qualified teaching staff, and minimal government supervision (Ogbiji & Ogbiji, 2014; Atanda & Olaifa, 2022). The curriculum implementation literature identifies the lack of human, material, physical and financial resources as the major

challenges in implementing any curriculum, let alone one which incorporates vocational and entrepreneurial aspects that require workshops, equipment and specially trained staff (Umar, 2024). The rapid, uncoordinated increase in the number of schools, therefore, is likely to exacerbate the challenge of implementing Nigeria's curriculum reforms, with each new under-resourced school being another arena in which the target to achieve the desired results is likely to fall short. The present study is based on this intersection between an expanding, but not uniform, school sector and the curriculum that needs resources many of these schools do not have.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the wide recognition and acceptance accorded to the role of curriculum as a tool or carrier of the national philosophy in the Nigerian educational system, there seem to be problems in the implementation of its vital educational blueprint. Today, the second education system in Nigeria is at the crossroads of two problems that are exposed in some isolation from each other. On the other hand, the country has invested a considerable policy effort in the improvement of classroom instruction by moving from the purely academic education system to the integration of academic subjects with vocational, trade based and entrepreneurial skills in the classroom, such as the introduction of 34 trade subjects by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council and the revision of the curriculum in 2017 that introduced the entrepreneurship component. Concurrently, the country has experienced an explosive, unabated growth in the number of schools, especially low-cost private schools, many of which are not registered, have inadequate facilities and do not have qualified personnel to operate the schools.

A couple of these developments are not often discussed together, and there are indeed indications that they are related. Even in existing, registered schools, curriculum implementation is found to be a challenging task, where teachers complain of lack of instructional resources, limited involvement in curriculum preparation, lack of training and chronic underfunding, leading to a lack of translation of curriculum policy into actual classroom implementation and students' under-achievement in further education or employment. In the absence of such difficulties, it can be assumed that the same would be even more pronounced in the many private schools, especially those that are poorly resourced, unregistered and low-cost, that make up a large proportion of the secondary school sector in Nigeria, described as having inadequate laboratories, libraries, playgrounds and qualified teachers.

The issue is thus twofold. Firstly, the unchecked proliferation of schools, especially those that are not registered and government-approved, continues to augment the ranks of institutions ill-equipped to teach all or any curricular content, let alone have a high percentage of vocational and entrepreneurial content, which requires workshops, equipment, and specially trained teachers. Secondly, even when the overlap is acknowledged as problematic, many of the existing studies examine the proliferation of schools and curriculum implementation as a problem each in its own right, rather than as interacting forces, and leave questions unanswered about how the increase in the number of schools influences the daily practice of curriculum delivery in schools.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the current pattern and extent of school proliferation?
2. What are the challenges faced in implementing the curriculum within this proliferating school environment?
3. How does the rapid increase in the number of private schools influence the implementation of the curriculum?
4. What measures can be adopted by educational stakeholders to mitigate the negative influence of unregulated school proliferation on curriculum implementation?

Hypothesis of the study

1. There is no significant influence of the rapid increase in the number of private schools on the implementation of the curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School proliferation refers to the rapid, and often unregulated, increase in the number of privately owned schools operating within a given area, frequently outpacing growth in the school-age population the schools are meant to serve (Balogun, 2025). Angwaomadoko (2024) traced the phenomenon in Nigeria to the historical entry of missionary-founded private schools as far back as 1843 in Badagry, and observed that the government's continued failure to guarantee quality public education has pushed parents toward a fast-growing private alternative, particularly in urban and peri-urban communities. Härmä (2013) documented that low-cost private schools have become the dominant mode of schooling for children from low-income households in Lagos, a pattern corroborated on a larger scale by Abdul-Hamid, Baum, Lusk-Stover and Wesley (2017), who reported that the majority of private schools surveyed in the Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos State were unregistered. Balogun (2025) extended this discussion, arguing that the proliferation of pre-tertiary private schools has, ironically, not always translated into better-quality facilities or human resources, and that the phenomenon has implications that extend into the quality of candidates who later transit into tertiary education.

Registration remains the principal instrument through which government seeks to monitor and enforce minimum standards among private schools, yet compliance in Nigeria remains low. Akinsanmi (2016) reported that fewer than a third of the private schools then operating in Lagos State held valid government approval, a pattern broadly consistent with the wider evidence reviewed by Day Ashley, McLoughlin, Aslam, Engel, Wales, Rawal, Batley, Kingdon, Nicolai and Rose (2014), who found that a comparable share of private schools in Lagos lacked formal government recognition. Day Ashley et al. (2014) further observed that weak enforcement of registration requirements in both Nigeria and India has, in some cases, created opportunities for officials to extort unregistered proprietors rather than bring them into compliance, undermining the very purpose of the registration process. More recent commentary has linked lapses in regulatory oversight of proliferating schools to tragic outcomes, including building collapses, and has called for strengthened quality-assurance inspection of private institutions as a matter of both safety and academic standards ("Nigeria: Regulate Private Schools, Invest in Public Schools", 2025).

Curriculum implementation is the process through which a planned course of study is translated into actual classroom practice, and it depends on the availability of trained personnel, instructional materials, adequate infrastructure and sustained supervision (Ogar & Awhen, 2015). Umar (2024), studying secondary school teachers in Katsina Local Government Area, found that shortages of human, material, physical and financial resources were the dominant barriers to effective curriculum delivery, even though teachers generally viewed the reformed, competence-based curriculum favourably. Similar resource-related barriers have been documented specifically within the private-school sub-sector: Umar and Nura (2022) observed that the drive of many private proprietors to protect their financial investment can, in some cases, support discipline and accountability among staff, but that the same commercial orientation, where unchecked, can compromise curriculum fidelity when proprietors prioritise cost-cutting over compliance with approved standards. Nyitse, Aondofa, Terngu, Terna and Daagu (2025) similarly found that while private schools can enhance the practical, skills-oriented value of education through industry-aligned curricula, they remain constrained by inadequate facilities, understaffing and weak monitoring, a finding consistent with the wider literature on curriculum delivery under resource constraint.

A number of studies have examined the internal shortcomings of proliferating private schools without directly connecting them to curriculum-implementation outcomes. Ogbiji and Ogbiji (2014) and Odunsi (2018) both reported that many low-cost private schools operate from converted residential buildings without libraries, laboratories or playgrounds, while Atanda and Olaifa (2022) found comparatively weaker quality-assurance practice in private secondary schools relative to Unity Schools in Kwara and Oyo States. Yet the picture is not uniformly negative: Tooley and Dixon (2005), and more recently Lanre-Babalola, Marcus, Onyeka, Adelu and Aderemi (2023), found that private schools, including low-cost ones, can outperform public schools academically, while Uyi (2012) and Omachonu (2019) similarly credited private schools with easing the pressure

of overcrowded public classrooms. Mfaiga (2018) and Michaelowa (2007) further linked the poor foundation laid by inadequately resourced schools to weaker outcomes at higher levels of education, while Francis (2015) traced part of the poor quality of Nigerian graduates to gaps accumulated earlier in the education pipeline.

Despite this substantial body of work, few studies have empirically tested the direct statistical relationship between the pace of school proliferation and the quality of curriculum implementation within the same locality, a gap that Balogun (2025) and Angwaomaodoko (2024) both suggest requires further primary research. It is this gap that the present study, situated in Ondo State, sets out to address by examining, empirically, whether the rapid increase in the number of private schools significantly predicts the difficulty of implementing the approved curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting the research study on school proliferation as a challenge to curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Ondo State, a descriptive survey research design was adopted. This design is considered appropriate for this study because it aims to explore and describe the features of the population, and it enables the collection of data from a large sample size, giving a representative picture of the population.

The population for this study comprised teachers and Ministry of Education staff as stakeholders in education in Ondo State. A sample size of 120 respondents (teachers and Ministry of Education staff) was selected from the population using a purposive random sampling technique. A simple random sampling technique was used to give all teachers and Ministry of Education staff an equal chance of being selected, ensuring representativeness and minimising biases. The instrument used in this study is a constructed questionnaire developed by the researchers, having a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The instrument is in two sections, namely Section A and B. Section A comprises the respondents' demographic variables, while Section B contains 40 items with four segments, each having sub-headings for each research question. Face and content validity of the instrument were carried out by experts in test and measurement. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using the test-retest method.

This method was used to obtain responses from twenty (20) stakeholders randomly selected outside the major population of the study. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained after subjecting the responses to Cronbach's alpha reliability method, and this made the instrument considered reliable for the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, and the formulated hypothesis was tested through the use of Simple linear regression analysis involving analysis of variance (ANOVA) at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the pattern and extent of school proliferation in the study area?

In order to answer research question 1, data collected on the pattern and extent of school proliferation were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and mean. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Showing the Pattern and Extent of School Proliferation

Table 1 presents the answers to the question of how and how much schools have proliferated in the study area. The mean scores for all ten (10) items exceeded the criterion mean of 3.00, with a grand mean of 3.80, suggesting that the general opinion of the respondents was that school proliferation is a clear and continuous trend in the area. The most visible dimension of proliferation in terms of respondents' perceptions is the increase in the number of private secondary schools in the past 5 years, which recorded the highest mean ($\bar{X} = 4.03$).

On the other hand, the item related to the proliferation of schools has shown a decrease in the average school enrolment per school and had the lowest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.42$), but it still falls within the "agreed" range. The results

indicate that it is well-documented that schools in the area are expanding rapidly, largely for commercial reasons, and with poor oversight, which has implications for the availability of infrastructure and teachers.

S/N	Items	S A	A	N	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1	The number of private secondary schools in this locality has increased rapidly in the last five years.	54	41	7	11	7	4.03	Agreed
2	New schools are being established faster than the demand from the school-age population warrants.	45	38	10	13	14	3.73	Agreed
3	Many of the newly established schools operate without formal approval from the relevant education authority.	55	24	12	21	8	3.81	Agreed
4	The concentration of schools in this area is unevenly distributed, with clusters in some neighbourhoods and gaps in others.	32	54	19	11	4	3.83	Agreed
5	School proprietors establish new schools mainly for commercial rather than educational reasons.	51	34	15	11	9	3.89	Agreed
6	The rate of school establishment has outpaced the availability of qualified teachers in the area.	45	40	20	7	8	3.89	Agreed
7	There is little coordination between government agencies and private proprietors on where new schools are sited.	32	51	10	12	15	3.61	Agreed
8	The proliferation of schools has led to a noticeable decline in average school enrolment per institution.	25	43	19	24	9	3.42	Agreed
9	Existing infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, libraries) is often inadequate relative to the number of schools operating.	53	38	8	12	9	3.95	Agreed
10	The trend of school proliferation in this area is likely to continue over the next few years.	39	48	15	16	2	3.88	Agreed
	Grand Mean						3.80	Agreed

Research Question Two: What challenges are faced in implementing the curriculum within a proliferating school environment?

In order to answer research question 2, data collected on the challenges faced in implementing the curriculum within a proliferating school environment were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and means. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics Showing the Challenges Faced in Implementing the Curriculum within a Proliferating School Environment

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1	Shortage of qualified subject teachers makes it difficult to implement the full curriculum.	49	48	12	10	1	4.12	Agreed
2	Inadequate instructional materials hinder effective curriculum delivery in many schools.	43	38	13	17	9	3.74	Agreed
3	Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to attend to individual learners' needs.	52	38	10	12	8	3.95	Agreed
4	Frequent movement of teachers between competing schools disrupts continuity of curriculum implementation.	30	55	14	12	9	3.71	Agreed

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
5	Inadequate supervision and monitoring by education authorities affects the quality of curriculum delivery.	48	38	17	5	12	3.88	Agreed
6	Limited laboratory and workshop facilities restrict the teaching of practical subjects.	45	37	13	15	10	3.77	Agreed
7	Schools established without proper planning often lack an appropriate curriculum implementation framework.	41	40	18	10	11	3.75	Agreed
8	Poor remuneration of teachers in newly established schools affects their commitment to curriculum delivery.	32	43	17	18	10	3.58	Agreed
9	Inconsistent academic calendars among proliferating schools disrupt standardized curriculum implementation.	63	27	9	9	12	4.00	Agreed
10	Inadequate funding restricts schools' ability to acquire materials needed for effective curriculum delivery.	29	59	15	9	8	3.77	Agreed
	Grand Mean						3.83	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 2 shows the difficulties involved in the curriculum implementation in such an environment of school proliferation. The grand mean obtained for all the items is 3.83, which is in the agreement range for all the items, meaning curriculum implementation in the study area is greatly affected by the unregulated growth of schools. The need for trained language teachers due to language shortages is another issue, which impedes the realisation of the entire curriculum, ranked highest ($\bar{X} = 4.12$), indicating teacher shortage as the greatest operational obstacle. Poor remuneration of teachers in newly established schools was the item that recorded the lowest mean ($\bar{X} = 3.58$) but not below the criterion mean. Collectively, these findings indicate that poor staffing, low supervision and poor resource availability all contribute to a lack of fidelity to the approved curriculum in the myriad of schools examined.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of the rapid increase in private schools on curriculum implementation?

In order to answer research question 3, data collected on the influence of the rapid increase in private schools on curriculum implementation were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and mean. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Showing the Influence of the Rapid Increase in Private Schools on Curriculum Implementation

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1	The increase in private schools has intensified competition that compromises curriculum standards.	51	44	11	5	9	4.03	Agreed
2	Private schools often modify the approved curriculum to attract and retain pupils.	45	38	18	9	10	3.83	Agreed
3	The rise in the number of private schools has diluted the pool of qualified teachers available to each school.	57	40	11	8	4	4.15	Agreed
4	Increased private school numbers have made it difficult for government inspectors to monitor curriculum compliance effectively.	45	39	16	13	7	3.85	Agreed

5	Some private schools prioritise examination performance over full curriculum coverage due to competitive pressure.	48	24	11	18	19	3.53	Agreed
6	The proliferation of private schools has resulted in inconsistent quality of curriculum implementation across schools.	41	41	12	18	8	3.74	Agreed
7	Parents' preference for private schools has pressured public schools to alter their curriculum delivery approaches.	44	42	9	20	5	3.83	Agreed
8	The increase in private schools has led to duplication of resources rather than sharing of curriculum-related facilities.	31	42	22	20	5	3.62	Agreed
9	Prioritisation of profit over strict adherence to the approved curriculum.	61	36	10	7	6	4.16	Agreed
10	The growing number of private schools has widened the disparity in curriculum implementation between well-resourced and under-resourced schools.	33	47	16	13	11	3.65	Agreed
	Grand Mean						3.84	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

As seen in Table 3, respondents feel that the rapid development of private schools has affected the implementation of the curriculum. The overall average (grand mean) of 3.84 suggests that overall there was some consensus on each of the 10 items concerning the impact of the development of private schools on curriculum delivery. Some private school owners sometimes put profit before the approved curriculum was the highest rated item ($\bar{X} = 4.16$), indicating a high level of perceived priority for commercial considerations over curriculum fidelity in private school settings. Majority agreement was also achieved for the lowest-rated item: some private schools have a preference for exam performance over full coverage of the curriculum because of competitive pressures ($\bar{X} = 3.53$). Overall, the results indicate that the increased competition among a growing number of private providers has resulted in changes in curriculum, quality issues, and challenges in monitoring the curricula.

Research Question Four: What measures can mitigate the negative influence of unregulated school proliferation on curriculum implementation?

In order to answer research question 4, data collected on the measures to mitigate the negative influence of unregulated school proliferation on curriculum implementation were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and mean. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Showing the Measures to Mitigate the Negative Influence of Unregulated School Proliferation on Curriculum Implementation

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1	Enforcement of approval requirements would help regulate school establishment.	48	46	11	7	8	3.99	Agreed
2	Regular inspection of schools would improve curriculum compliance.	37	45	15	12	11	3.71	Agreed

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
3	Mandatory minimum infrastructure and staffing standards should be enforced before a school is licensed to operate.	59	41	9	7	4	4.20	Agreed
4	Professional development for teachers would strengthen curriculum implementation across schools.	40	44	22	11	3	3.89	Agreed
5	Provision of incentives for schools can promote equitable distribution.	43	39	10	14	14	3.69	Agreed
6	Government and private proprietors would improve planning of new school locations.	46	44	14	9	7	3.94	Agreed
7	Standardised academic calendars across schools would support more consistent curriculum implementation.	46	41	17	8	8	3.91	Agreed
8	Improved funding and resource allocation would help schools meet curriculum delivery requirements.	43	39	17	14	7	3.81	Agreed
9	Establishing clear consequences for non-compliant schools would discourage unregulated proliferation.	58	38	11	8	5	4.13	Agreed
10	Involving communities and stakeholders in school-siting decisions would help curb the indiscriminate establishment of schools.	42	42	7	19	10	3.73	Agreed
	Grand Mean						3.90	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The opinions of the respondents on the measures that can alleviate the negative impact of the multiplication of unregulated schools on curriculum implementation are summarized in Table 4. The mean scores for all items were higher than the criterion mean, and the grand mean was 3.90, reflecting high endorsement of the measures proposed.

The mean ($\bar{X} = 4.20$) for the item on mandatory minimum infrastructure and staffing standards indicated that respondents believe this is the most important intervention to be implemented before a school is licensed to operate. The mean ($\bar{X} = 3.69$) for the item on government should provide incentives for schools sited in under-served areas was the lowest, but still an agreed mean.

The results suggest that respondents believe that more stringent regulation, more frequent monitoring, increased resources, and more involvement of stakeholders are needed to ensure curriculum quality in the context of ongoing school growth.

Hypotheses one

H0: There is no significant influence of the rapid increase in the number of private schools on the implementation of the curriculum.

To test this hypothesis, respondents' composite scores on the subscale measuring the rapid increase in the number of private schools were computed as the predictor (independent) variable, while respondents' composite scores on the subscale measuring curriculum implementation were computed as the criterion (dependent) variable. Simple linear regression analysis was adopted as the appropriate analytical tool, since the hypothesis involves the influence of one continuous (interval-level) variable on another, and was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7 below.

Table 5: Model Summary of the Regression of Curriculum Implementation on Rapid Increase in the Number of Private Schools

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.439	0.193	0.186	0.549

Source: Field Survey, 2026. Predictor: Rapid Increase in the Number of Private Schools.

Table 6: ANOVA Summary of the Regression of Curriculum Implementation on Rapid Increase in the Number of Private Schools

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.52	1	8.52	28.24	0.000
Residual	35.59	118	0.30		
Total	44.11	119			

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients of Curriculum Implementation on Rapid Increase in the Number of Private Schools

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.256	0.295		7.656	0.000
Rapid Increase in Private Schools	0.409	0.077	0.439	5.314	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2026. Dependent Variable: Curriculum Implementation.

Table 7 reveals that the number of private schools had a moderate positive correlation with curriculum implementation challenges ($R = 0.439$) explaining 19.3% of the variance in curriculum implementation ($R^2 = 0.193$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.186$). Table 6 shows that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 118) = 28.24$, $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). Table 7 also indicated that the number of private schools had a significant positive contribution ($B = 0.409$, $Beta = 0.439$, $t = 5.31$, $p = 0.000$) to the prediction of the curriculum implementation. Based on the obtained p-value, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis (H_0) that says rapid increase in the number of private schools does not have a significant influence on the implementation of the curriculum is rejected. This means that the rate of growth in private schools has a big impact on the implementation of the approved curriculum in Ondo State; the more the number of private schools grows, the more difficult it becomes to implement the approved curriculum consistently and effectively.

DISCUSSION

Results of research question one showed that the respondents strongly agreed that the proliferation of schools is a significant problem that has been happening in Ondo State, with a grand mean of 3.80; the private secondary schools growing at a high rate in the last 5 years was agreed on by the respondents. This also corroborates the report of Angwaomaodoko (2024) and Balogun (2025) that there is a significant increase in the number of privately-owned schools across the country, and is empirical evidence of the previous report by Akinsanmi (2016) and Abdul-Hamid, Baum, Lusk-Stover and Wesley (2017) who reported that a significant proportion of the newly established schools operate outside the formal government approval processes. The high degree of

agreement in establishing establishments for commercial motives is similar to what Umar and Nura (2022) have observed, which is that expansion in the private sub-sector has been motivated to a great extent by profit and not by education alone.

The results of research question two revealed that the implementation of the curriculum was greatly limited across the growing school environment studied, with a grand mean score of 3.83, and teacher shortage was the most critical factor. This confirms the findings of Umar (2024) in Katsina Local Government Area (LGA), who identified the principal constraints as human, material, physical and financial constraints to effective curriculum delivery. This is also in tandem with the findings of Ogbiji and Ogbiji (2014), who reported that many private schools are under-resourced and Odunsi (2018), who observed that many private schools face challenges in achieving the curriculum's goals of practical and competence-based learning due to under-resourcing. Nyitse, Aondofa, Terngu, Terna and Daagu (2025) also reported inadequate facilities in the majority of low-cost private schools, which hinders their ability to meet the goals of the reformed curriculum for practical and competence-based learning.

The perception of rapid growth of private schools having an impact on curriculum implementation was found to be discernible (Research Question 3), with the grand mean being 3.84, and having the highest agreement that it is possible for the proprietor to be interested in profit at the expense of strict adherence to the curriculum. The discovery adds a layer of empirical evidence to the regulatory concerns of Day Ashley et al. (2014) and, more recently, to a commentary titled “Nigeria: Regulate Private Schools, Invest in Public Schools” (2025), which attributed poor governance of the growing number of private schools to lacklustre academic performance. It also corroborates the report by Atanda and Olaifa (2022) on the low quality assurance practice among private secondary schools compared to those that are well supervised.

The hypothesis testing indicated that the statistically significant, positive contribution of the rapid increase in the number of private schools to the prediction of the difficulty of curriculum implementation ($R = .439$, $R^2 = .193$, $F(1, 118) = 28.24$, $p = .000$) resulted in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding lends immediate empirical support to the theoretical postulations of Balogun (2025) and Angwaomaodoko (2024) which hypothesized a relationship between the rate of establishment of private schools and the system's ability to provide the requisite teachers, facilities and supervisory capacity for the faithful delivery of curriculum requirements: that the rate of establishment of private schools is higher than the system's capacity to provide the teachers, facilities and supervisory capacity required for faithful delivery of curriculum. The significant coefficient confirms that school proliferation is not an incidental outcome of curriculum implementation, although other factors are also important, such as the proportion of variance explained (19.3%), which includes funding, motivation of teachers, and the ability of government to monitor.

Finally, the answer to research question four revealed high acceptance of a mix of regulatory and support measures to reduce adverse impacts of school proliferation, with enforcement of the minimum standards of infrastructure and staffing before issuing licenses being the most important measure. It reinforces recommendations by Day Ashley et al. (2014) and Umar and Nura (2022) that pre-registration inspection and more stringent licensing conditions should precede rather than follow the opening of new schools, and is congruent with the recommendations by Umar (2024) for a collective, government-led resource mobilisation model for effective curriculum delivery.

CONCLUSION

The study set out to examine school proliferation as a challenge to curriculum implementation in Nigeria, using Ondo State as a focal context. The findings showed that school proliferation is a pronounced and continuing phenomenon in ondo state, that curriculum implementation in the affected schools is significantly constrained by shortages of qualified teachers, instructional materials and adequate supervision, and that the rapid growth of private schools exerts a statistically significant, positive influence on the difficulty of implementing the approved curriculum, as private proprietors are frequently perceived to prioritise commercial considerations over curricular fidelity. Taken together, the findings confirm the theoretical concerns raised in the reviewed literature (Angwaomaodoko, 2024; Balogun, 2025; Umar, 2024) and provide statistically tested empirical evidence that the pace of private school establishment and the quality of curriculum delivery are closely linked rather than

independent educational concerns. Respondents were nonetheless optimistic that a combination of stricter enforcement of registration and licensing, regular inspections, improved funding, and closer collaboration between government and private proprietors could substantially mitigate the identified challenges. Addressing school proliferation and curriculum-implementation weaknesses therefore requires a coordinated policy response rather than treating either issue in isolation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. State and local education authorities should enforce mandatory registration and pre-licensing inspection, so that no new private school is permitted to commence operation without demonstrating minimum infrastructural, staffing and curricular capacity.
2. Government should intensify routine, unannounced supervision and monitoring visits to both registered and suspected unregistered private schools to ensure ongoing compliance with the approved curriculum.
3. Education ministries and boards should establish clear, publicised sanctions, including suspension or withdrawal of operating licences, for schools that persistently fail to meet curriculum-implementation standards.
4. Government and private-sector stakeholders should collaborate on teacher supply, for example through subsidised professional-development workshops and shared resource centres, to address the shortage of qualified subject teachers identified as the most severe implementation barrier.
5. Government should provide incentives, such as tax relief or infrastructural grants, to encourage the equitable siting of new schools and discourage indiscriminate, purely commercially driven establishment in already saturated neighbourhoods.
6. Standardised academic calendars and minimum curriculum-coverage benchmarks should be enforced across all schools, private and public, to reduce the inconsistency in curriculum delivery associated with rapid, uncoordinated school proliferation.

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