

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CREATIVE THINKING PERFORMANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Creative thinking is widely recognised as a vital twenty-first-century competency that fosters problem-solving, innovation, and adaptability among learners. However, there is limited empirical evidence on whether school ownership influences the creative thinking performance of primary school pupils in Nigeria. This study compared the creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. A comparative descriptive research design was adopted, involving 500 pupils selected through a multistage sampling procedure, comprising 250 pupils each from public and private schools. Data were collected using a validated researcher-developed Creative Thinking Test (CTT) that measured fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. Descriptive statistics and independent-samples t-tests were used for data analysis at the 0.05 significance level. The findings showed that pupils in public primary schools achieved significantly higher overall creative thinking scores than their counterparts in private schools. Significant differences were found in fluency, originality, elaboration, and overall creative thinking, while no significant difference was observed in flexibility. The study concludes that public school pupils demonstrated stronger creative thinking performance and recommends strengthening learner-centred, inquiry-based instructional strategies to enhance creativity across both school types.

Keywords: Creative thinking; primary education; public schools; private schools; school type; Oyo State.

Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as a fundamental instrument for national development because it equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required for productive participation in society. Across the world, educational systems are increasingly expected to produce learners who possess not only sound academic knowledge but also the ability to think critically, solve complex problems, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and generate innovative ideas. These competencies have become particularly important in the twenty-first century, where rapid technological advancement, globalisation, digital transformation, and evolving labour market demands require individuals who are adaptable, creative, and capable of responding effectively to emerging societal challenges (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019, 2022; Lucas, 2022). Consequently, creativity has become one of the central goals of contemporary education because it enables learners to apply knowledge in novel situations, generate original ideas, and contribute meaningfully to economic and social development.

The increasing recognition of creativity as an essential educational outcome is consistent with Nigeria's philosophy of education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) describes education as an instrument *par excellence* for national development and emphasises that every learner should acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and competencies necessary for individual fulfilment and national progress. The *National Policy on Education* further identifies primary education as the foundation upon which the entire educational system is built and outlines objectives that include developing permanent literacy and numeracy, effective communication skills, scientific and reflective thinking, citizenship values, creativity, and lifelong learning. These objectives underscore the expectation that Nigerian schools should provide learning experiences that



nurture curiosity, originality, innovation, and independent thinking rather than limiting learning to the reproduction of factual knowledge.

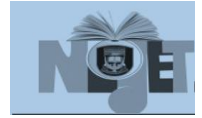
The policy emphasis on creativity reflects a broader understanding that education should prepare learners for lifelong participation in a knowledge-driven society. Nations that have achieved sustained economic growth and technological advancement have increasingly relied on educational systems that encourage innovation, creativity, and problem-solving. Consequently, educational reforms across many countries have shifted from traditional teacher-centred approaches towards learner-centred pedagogies that encourage exploration, inquiry, collaboration, experimentation, and reflective thinking (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2022). These developments have influenced curriculum reforms in many developing countries, including Nigeria, where educational stakeholders increasingly recognise that academic excellence should be complemented by the development of higher-order thinking skills capable of preparing learners for contemporary societal demands.

The importance of creativity within Nigerian education was recognised long before creativity became a global educational priority. Fafunwa (1974), one of Nigeria's foremost educationists, argued that the purpose of education extends beyond the transmission of knowledge to the holistic development of the learner. According to Fafunwa, education should cultivate intellectual competence, moral character, social responsibility, physical development, and creative ability to prepare individuals for meaningful participation in national development. His educational philosophy continues to influence contemporary thinking on curriculum implementation in Nigeria because it emphasises independent thinking, problem-solving, and innovation as essential characteristics of effective education. These principles remain consistent with the aspirations of the National Policy on Education, which advocates educational practices that promote creativity, self-reliance, and productive citizenship.

Creative thinking has therefore emerged as one of the most important cognitive abilities expected of learners at all levels of education. It refers to the ability to produce original, useful, and appropriate ideas by examining situations from different perspectives and generating multiple possible solutions to problems. Scholars generally agree that creativity is not restricted to artistic expression but extends to scientific inquiry, technological innovation, entrepreneurship, and everyday problem-solving. The OECD (2019) defines creative thinking as the competence to generate, evaluate, and improve ideas that lead to original and effective solutions. Similarly, Kaufman (2015) argues that creativity should be regarded as a fundamental component of human intelligence because it enables individuals to adapt successfully to changing environments and contribute to innovation across diverse fields.

The conceptual understanding of creative thinking has been shaped substantially by the pioneering contributions of Guilford (1967) and Torrance (1974). Guilford's work on divergent thinking identified fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration as core dimensions of creativity. Fluency refers to the ability to generate numerous ideas; flexibility involves producing ideas from different perspectives; originality reflects the capacity to produce uncommon or novel responses; while elaboration concerns the ability to expand and refine ideas. Torrance subsequently demonstrated that these dimensions could be measured through carefully designed educational tasks and argued that creativity can be developed through supportive learning experiences rather than being regarded solely as an inherited trait. These perspectives have profoundly influenced creativity research and continue to provide the conceptual basis for assessing learners' creative thinking abilities in educational settings.

The significance of creative thinking is particularly evident during primary education, which represents the foundational stage of formal learning. Primary school provides the environment in which children's natural curiosity, imagination, and exploratory behaviours can either be nurtured or constrained through classroom experiences. During this stage, learners develop the cognitive, social, and emotional competencies that



influence subsequent educational achievement and lifelong learning (Scott-Barrett et al., 2023). Consequently, instructional practices adopted at the primary level have far-reaching implications for learners' ability to think independently, solve problems creatively, and adapt successfully to changing circumstances. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) therefore emphasises that primary education should equip learners with functional knowledge, manipulative skills, scientific thinking, creativity, and the capacity for lifelong learning.

Despite these policy aspirations, concerns continue to be expressed regarding the extent to which Nigerian classrooms successfully promote creative thinking. Educational practice in many schools remains strongly influenced by teacher-centred instruction, examination-oriented assessment, and memorisation of prescribed content (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; Chukwuone et al., 2020; OECD, 2019). Although these approaches may improve pupils' performance in conventional examinations, they often provide limited opportunities for learners to investigate problems independently, generate original ideas, or participate actively in constructing knowledge. As a result, many pupils may complete primary education with satisfactory examination results but without fully developing the creative thinking skills increasingly required for success in contemporary society.

These concerns have generated increasing interest among researchers, policymakers, and educational practitioners regarding the extent to which different school environments contribute to the development of creativity among learners. In Nigeria, both public and private primary schools play significant roles in delivering basic education and operate within the same national curriculum framework. Nevertheless, differences in school management, instructional practices, class size, teacher qualifications, resource availability, parental involvement, and learning environments may influence the quality of educational experiences available to pupils. Understanding whether these contextual differences are associated with variations in pupils' creative thinking has therefore become an important issue for educational research and policy.

Recent empirical evidence has increasingly demonstrated that creativity is associated with positive educational outcomes. International studies consistently show that learners who are encouraged to think creatively demonstrate greater cognitive flexibility, improved problem-solving ability, stronger motivation, and better academic achievement than those exposed primarily to rote learning. A meta-analysis conducted by Akpur (2023) found a statistically significant positive relationship between creativity and academic achievement across diverse educational contexts, suggesting that creativity contributes not only to innovation but also to improved learning outcomes. Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, *Fostering creativity and critical thinking in university teaching and learning*, 2022) reported that educational systems that deliberately integrate creative thinking into classroom instruction are better positioned to prepare learners for the social, economic, and technological challenges of the twenty-first century.

Within the Nigerian educational context, growing attention has been devoted to understanding the role of creativity in improving pupils' learning experiences and educational outcomes. Park et al., (2023) observed that creativity among primary school pupils is influenced by multiple school- and home-related factors, including teacher support, classroom climate, parental encouragement, and the availability of stimulating learning resources. The study concluded that pupils who are provided with opportunities to explore ideas, ask questions, and participate actively in learning activities are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of creativity and improved academic performance. These findings reinforce the argument that creativity is not merely an innate ability but a competence that can be deliberately developed through appropriate educational experiences.



Similarly, Nigerian researchers have increasingly highlighted the importance of instructional approaches that promote active learning and learner participation. Chukwuone et al. (2020) reported that teachers who adopted learner-centred instructional strategies, including inquiry, collaborative learning, experimentation, and practical classroom activities, were more successful in promoting learners' creative abilities than those relying predominantly on traditional lecture methods. Their findings suggest that the quality of classroom interaction plays a critical role in the development of pupils' originality, flexibility, and confidence in generating new ideas.

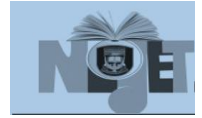
Research conducted in Nigerian schools has also shown that learning environments which encourage practical engagement contribute positively to creativity. Studies examining project-based learning, constructive play, creative arts, and recreational activities have reported improvements in learners' creative skills, problem-solving abilities, and classroom engagement when pupils are provided with opportunities to explore, experiment, and collaborate during instruction. These findings collectively indicate that creativity can be enhanced through deliberate pedagogical practices rather than being viewed solely as an inherited characteristic.

Despite these encouraging findings, educational practice in many Nigerian schools continues to be dominated by teacher-centred instruction and examination-oriented assessment. Success in many classrooms is frequently measured by pupils' ability to recall information and perform well in standardised examinations rather than by their capacity to think creatively, solve unfamiliar problems, or generate innovative ideas. This concern has been expressed by educational researchers who argue that excessive emphasis on memorisation may limit opportunities for learners to develop higher-order thinking skills required for lifelong learning and national development. The need to balance academic achievement with creativity has therefore become increasingly important within contemporary educational discourse.

One issue that continues to generate debate within Nigerian education concerns differences in learning outcomes between public and private schools. Private schools are often perceived as providing superior educational experiences because of relatively smaller class sizes, closer supervision, greater parental involvement, and better availability of instructional resources (Tooley et al., 2005). Conversely, public schools are generally regarded as serving a more diverse learner population and operating under greater resource constraints. Although these assumptions are widespread, empirical evidence has produced mixed findings, particularly when educational outcomes extend beyond conventional examination performance. Most comparative studies conducted in Nigeria have concentrated on academic achievement, school effectiveness, teacher quality, and examination results, with comparatively little attention devoted to higher-order cognitive abilities such as creative thinking.

The limited evidence currently available suggests that school ownership alone may not adequately explain differences in learners' creative abilities. Creativity develops through continuous interaction between learners, teachers, instructional methods, classroom climate, learning resources, and opportunities for inquiry and exploration. Consequently, two schools operating under the same curriculum may produce different creative outcomes depending on how teaching and learning are organised. This perspective is consistent with both the Federal Republic of Nigeria's educational philosophy and international recommendations that emphasise learner-centred pedagogy, meaningful classroom engagement, and authentic learning experiences as essential conditions for developing creativity (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; OECD, 2019, 2022).

Although Nigerian scholars have increasingly investigated creativity, much of the existing literature has focused on its relationship with academic achievement, teacher effectiveness, instructional strategies, or environmental influences. Comparatively few empirical studies have examined whether pupils attending public and private primary schools differ significantly in their creative thinking performance. More



importantly, very little evidence exists from Oyo State, despite its large concentration of both public and private primary schools operating within the same educational policy framework but under different organisational and instructional conditions. This represents an important gap in the literature because understanding whether school ownership is associated with differences in creative thinking may provide valuable insights for curriculum implementation, teacher professional development, educational planning, and classroom practice.

The present study was therefore undertaken to compare the creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether significant differences exist in pupils' overall creative thinking performance and in the major dimensions of creative thinking. The findings are expected to contribute to educational policy by providing empirical evidence on the extent to which school type influences creativity among primary school pupils. They are also expected to assist teachers, school administrators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing instructional practices that deliberately foster creativity as envisaged in the National Policy on Education. Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing body of Nigerian literature on creativity in basic education by addressing an area that has received relatively limited empirical attention.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to compare the creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State;
2. compare the performance of pupils in the dimensions of creative thinking (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration); and
3. determine whether a significant difference exists in the overall creative thinking performance of pupils in public and private primary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the mean creative thinking scores of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State?
2. To what extent do public and private primary school pupils differ in the dimensions of creative thinking (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration)?
3. Is there a difference in the overall creative thinking performance of pupils attending public and private primary schools in Oyo State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the overall creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State.



H₀₂: There is no significant difference between Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in the dimensions of creative thinking (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration).

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a comparative descriptive research design to investigate the creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to compare naturally existing groups without manipulating any of the study variables. Since school ownership could not be controlled or assigned experimentally, the comparative descriptive approach provided a suitable framework for examining differences in pupils' creative thinking performance across the two categories of schools.

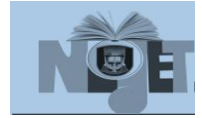
The study was conducted in Oyo State, one of the states in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Oyo State has a well-established basic education system comprising both public and private primary schools located in urban and rural communities. The coexistence of these two categories of schools provided an appropriate setting for comparing pupils' creative thinking performance. The target population comprised all Primary Six pupils enrolled in registered public and private primary schools in Oyo State during the period of the study. Primary Six pupils were selected because they represent the terminal class in primary education and were considered sufficiently mature to understand and respond appropriately to the creative thinking tasks included in the research instrument.

A sample of 500 Primary Six pupils participated in the study. The sample consisted of 250 pupils from public primary schools and 250 pupils from private primary schools. Participants were selected through a multistage sampling procedure. In the first stage, selected Local Government Areas were chosen based on accessibility and the willingness of school authorities to participate in the study. Thereafter, public and private primary schools were purposively selected to ensure adequate representation of both school types. Finally, intact Primary Six classes in the selected schools were used, and eligible pupils present on the day of data collection participated in the study. The equal representation of pupils from both public and private schools provided a balanced basis for comparing creative thinking performance.

Data were collected using a Researcher-Developed Creative Thinking Test (CTT) designed specifically for this study. The instrument was developed after an extensive review of relevant literature on creativity and creative thinking assessment. It was structured to measure the major dimensions of creative thinking, including fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The test consisted of open-ended activities that required pupils to generate multiple ideas, provide original responses, develop existing ideas, and demonstrate flexible thinking in solving simple but unfamiliar tasks. A scoring guide was developed to ensure consistency and objectivity in scoring the responses, and the total score obtained by each pupil represented the individual's overall creative thinking performance.

To establish the validity of the instrument, the initial draft was submitted to experts in Educational Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation, and Primary Education. The experts assessed the instrument for content coverage, clarity of language, appropriateness of the items for Primary Six pupils, and the adequacy of the scoring guide in measuring the intended constructs. Their comments and recommendations were carefully considered, leading to revisions that improved the quality and appropriateness of the final instrument.

The reliability of the Creative Thinking Test was established using the test-retest method. The instrument was administered to a group of Primary Six pupils drawn from schools outside the study area. After an



appropriate interval, the same instrument was re-administered to the same group of pupils, and the two sets of scores were correlated to determine the stability of the instrument over time. The reliability analysis produced an acceptable coefficient, indicating that the instrument possessed adequate consistency for measuring pupils' creative thinking performance.

Before the commencement of data collection, approval was obtained from the relevant educational authorities and the administrators of the participating schools. The researcher personally visited each school on scheduled dates and administered the Creative Thinking Test under standardised conditions. Pupils received the same instructions and were allotted equal time to complete the tasks independently. The completed scripts were collected immediately after the exercise to ensure completeness and minimise the possibility of loss or external influence. Ethical principles governing educational research were observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and the purpose of the study was clearly explained to the participating schools. Pupils were not required to provide personal identifiers, thereby ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. The information obtained from participants was used strictly for academic purposes.

The data collected were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to answer the research questions. Independent-samples *t*-tests were employed to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Decisions on the hypotheses were based on the probability values obtained from the analyses. The null hypothesis was rejected whenever the *p*-value was less than 0.05 and retained whenever the *p*-value was equal to or greater than 0.05.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

What are the mean creative thinking scores of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State?

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the creative thinking scores of pupils in public and private primary schools.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviations of Creative Thinking Scores by School Type

Creative Thinking Dimension	Public Schools (n = 250)		Private Schools (n = 250)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Dimension A	1.41	0.98	0.99	0.80
Dimension B	1.97	1.02	1.85	1.02
Dimension C	4.26	3.43	1.75	1.97
Dimension C2	1.34	0.97	0.66	1.03
Dimension D	10.35	3.47	7.48	3.16
Dimension E & F	2.11	1.81	1.11	1.28
Dimension G	2.17	1.31	1.79	1.33
Dimension H	2.22	1.84	1.86	1.73
Overall Creative Thinking Score	25.84	5.67	17.49	1.22

Table 1 shows that pupils in public primary schools obtained higher mean scores than pupils in private primary schools in almost all dimensions of creative thinking assessed. The overall mean creative thinking score for pupils in public schools ($M = 25.84$, $SD = 5.67$) was considerably higher than that of pupils in private schools ($M = 17.49$, $SD = 1.22$). These findings indicate that pupils attending public primary schools



demonstrated stronger creative thinking performance than their counterparts in private schools within the sample studied. The descriptive results further show that the largest differences between the two groups occurred in Dimensions C, C2, D, and E & F, whereas the smallest difference was observed in Dimension B.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the overall creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State.

Table 2: Independent-Samples t-test Comparing Overall Creative Thinking Scores

Variable	Public Mean	Private Mean	t	df	p	Decision
Overall Creative Thinking Score	25.84	17.49	22.76	272.11	< .001	Reject H ₀

The independent-samples *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the overall creative thinking performance of pupils in public and private primary schools, $t(272.11) = 22.76, p < .001$. Since the probability value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The result indicates that pupils in public primary schools achieved significantly higher creative thinking scores than pupils in private primary schools.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in the dimensions of creative thinking.

Table 3: Independent-Samples t-test for the Dimensions of Creative Thinking

Dimension	t	df	p	Decision
Dimension A	5.21	478.55	< .001	Reject H ₀
Dimension B	1.36	497.98	.175	Fail to Reject H ₀
Dimension C	10.04	397.08	< .001	Reject H ₀
Dimension C2	7.62	495.88	< .001	Reject H ₀
Dimension D	9.68	493.61	< .001	Reject H ₀
Dimension E & F	7.13	447.44	< .001	Reject H ₀
Dimension G	3.25	497.90	.001	Reject H ₀
Dimension H	2.22	495.82	.027	Reject H ₀

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that statistically significant differences existed between pupils in public and private primary schools in most dimensions of creative thinking.

Significant differences were found in Dimensions A, C, C2, D, E & F, G, and H ($p < .05$), whereas no statistically significant difference was found in Dimension B ($t(497.98) = 1.36, p = .175$).

Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected for all dimensions except Dimension B.

These findings demonstrate that pupils attending public primary schools consistently performed better than pupils attending private primary schools across most aspects of creative thinking measured in this study.



Discussion

The present study compared the creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that pupils attending public primary schools achieved significantly higher overall creative thinking scores than their counterparts in private primary schools. Significant differences were observed in most of the dimensions assessed, while no statistically significant difference was found in one dimension (Dimension B), indicating that the influence of school type may vary across different components of creative thinking.

The superior performance of pupils in public schools suggests that factors beyond school ownership may contribute to the development of creativity. Although private schools are often perceived as providing higher-quality education because of smaller class sizes, improved facilities, and closer supervision, these advantages do not necessarily translate into stronger creative thinking. Creativity develops through learning experiences that encourage inquiry, originality, experimentation, and divergent thinking rather than through rote memorisation or examination-oriented instruction. The findings are consistent with the view of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019), which emphasises that creativity is fostered when learners are provided with opportunities to explore ideas, solve authentic problems, and express original thinking. Similarly, Lucas (2022) argued that schools should deliberately cultivate creativity through learner-centred pedagogies rather than relying solely on traditional instructional approaches.

The findings also support the conclusions of Akpur (2023), who reported a positive relationship between creativity and educational performance. Pupils who demonstrate higher levels of creative thinking are generally better able to generate multiple ideas, adapt to unfamiliar situations, and approach learning tasks from different perspectives. These characteristics contribute to improved learning outcomes and greater engagement in classroom activities. Furthermore, the results agree with the position of Kaufman (2015), who argued that creativity represents an important aspect of cognitive functioning that is often overlooked by conventional educational assessment. The present study demonstrates that differences in creative thinking can exist even where pupils follow similar curricular content, suggesting that classroom practices, teacher effectiveness, and learning experiences may play a more important role than school ownership alone.

The absence of a statistically significant difference in Dimension B indicates that public and private school pupils demonstrated comparable performance in that particular aspect of creative thinking. This finding suggests that not all components of creativity are equally influenced by educational context. Rather, creativity is multidimensional, and different instructional experiences may affect specific dimensions differently. The findings challenge the widespread assumption that private schools consistently outperform public schools in every educational outcome. Instead, the results suggest that the quality of teaching, classroom interaction, opportunities for independent thinking, and the learning environment may exert greater influence on the development of creative thinking than ownership status alone.

Conclusion

This study examined the creative thinking performance of Primary Six pupils in public and private primary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that pupils attending public primary schools obtained significantly higher overall creative thinking scores than pupils attending private primary schools. Significant differences were found in most dimensions of creative thinking assessed, while no statistically significant difference was observed in one dimension. These findings indicate that although both categories of schools contribute to the development of creativity, pupils in the sampled public schools demonstrated stronger overall creative thinking performance.



The study therefore concludes that school ownership alone should not be regarded as the sole determinant of educational quality. Rather, the instructional practices adopted by teachers, the learning environment provided by schools, and opportunities for inquiry, imagination, and independent thinking appear to play a more important role in fostering pupils' creative thinking.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of certain limitations.

First, the study was limited to selected public and private primary schools in Oyo State; therefore, the findings may not be generalisable to all primary schools in Nigeria.

Second, the study employed a researcher-developed Creative Thinking Test. Although the instrument was validated by experts and demonstrated acceptable reliability, it may not capture every aspect of pupils' creative thinking abilities.

Third, the study adopted a comparative descriptive design, which identifies differences between groups but does not establish causal relationships. Consequently, the observed differences should not be interpreted as evidence that school type alone caused variations in creative thinking performance.

Future studies may address these limitations by employing nationally representative samples, standardised creativity assessment instruments, mixed-methods approaches, or longitudinal research designs to provide deeper insights into factors influencing creative thinking among primary school pupils.

Recommendations

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

1. Teachers in both public and private primary schools should adopt learner-centred instructional strategies that encourage creativity, including inquiry-based learning, brainstorming, collaborative problem-solving, project-based learning, storytelling, role play, and open-ended classroom activities.
2. School administrators should provide supportive learning environments that encourage curiosity, originality, experimentation, and independent thinking by ensuring that pupils have opportunities to explore ideas without fear of failure.
3. Curriculum developers should integrate creative thinking activities across all subject areas rather than restricting creativity to arts-related disciplines. Learning activities should deliberately promote fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.
4. Educational policymakers should organise regular professional development programmes to equip teachers with practical strategies for nurturing creative thinking and other higher-order cognitive skills in primary school classrooms.
5. Parents should complement school efforts by encouraging children to ask questions, solve everyday problems creatively, participate in educational games, read widely, and engage in imaginative activities at home.



6. Researchers should conduct similar studies using larger and more diverse samples drawn from different states in Nigeria. Future research should also investigate the influence of teacher characteristics, classroom climate, socioeconomic background, parental involvement, and school resources on pupils' creative thinking performance.

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