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**Public Basic Schools in Southern Sudan and the Sultanate of Oman
(Comparative Study)**



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Public Basic Schools in Southern Sudan and the Sultanate of Oman (Comparative Study)

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to compare the status of public basic schools in South Sudan and that of the Sultanate of Oman (one of the Gulf countries).

Methodology: A search of the relevant literature was incorporated into the work technique. The research was carried out with consideration given to previous theoretical literature, both that which had been published and that which had not. This study focuses on conducting a literature review examining prior research on why South Sudan is left behind. At the same time, other backward countries succeed in narrowing the gap between them and the second-world countries.

Findings: The findings revealed three categories of primary schools in South Sudan. Category 1 is primary schools for children whose fathers have looted, corrupted, or stolen public treasure through illegal activities and smuggled government money to Uganda, Kenya, Australia, Europe, the U.S.A or Canada after Comprehensive Peace Agreement (C.P.A) in 2005. These children received a good education in the diaspora. They do not come home until they finish their studies and receive good jobs as stakeholders in government ministries or organizations, and they are primarily paid in hard currency. This category is excluded from our study. Category 2 is primary schools for children who left the country with their parents before or after independence and live in refugee camps in Uganda, Kenya or Egypt. They also receive a good education and enjoy free food in their centres. This category is also excluded from our research. Category 3 is primary schools for children whose parents are displaced inside the country or citizens with nowhere to go. Their children receive poor education in government primary schools and free food from organizations or World Food Program (W.F.P). However, these organizations turned South Sudan to be free nutritional zone. This primary school category is included in our study and is our concern. But in the Sultanate of Oman, the government has an evident vision and willingness to reform and develop the educational sector in the country, and a good portion is given to the development of education in the annual national budget.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy, and Practice: By conducting the comparative study, it seeks to improve educational circumstances and address flaws in the system. The research will

provide insights to the government, donors, and international organizations, prompting support and funding to develop an organized and planned educational system in South Sudan. Ultimately, this study aims to bridge the academic gap and pave the way for positive changes in the country's schooling system.

Keywords: *School, Subjects, Objects, Classrooms*

Introduction

This study compared two primary public schools in the Sultanate of Oman and South Sudan. This comparison aims to see how the Sultanate of Oman developed its schools while South Sudan is left behind with its backwardness. Therefore, our study doesn't involve statistics or figures but to find reasons for this gap in comparing these two countries. A school is an educational institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for teaching students under teachers' direction (Karen, 2002) or as a place where children go to be educated (Diane Snowball, 1994). In the Sultanate of Oman, this goal is entirely achieved with its objectives as an educational institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for teaching students under teachers' direction. But in South Sudan, the compass of goal is lost, and the school could be defined as a place where learners are grouped randomly to face uncertain fates and search for their future in darkness. Because students never learn nor achieve any goal in these primary schools. Therefore, it is essential to discuss this issue sincerely and find the reasons for the Sultanate of Oman's success and South Sudan's failure in her national educational system.

The education system in Southern Sudan has been severely affected by decades of conflict, resulting in significant challenges for its public primary education sector. Limited infrastructure, resource scarcity, and a shortage of qualified teachers are among the prominent issues schools face in Southern Sudan. Consequently, low enrollment, high dropout rates, gender disparities, and poor learning outcomes have been observed. On the other hand, the Sultanate of Oman has made substantial progress in developing its education system, including primary public schools (Atiya et al., 2019). The Omani government has prioritized education and significantly invested in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development. Public primary schools in Oman follow a comprehensive curriculum that covers various subjects, and the country has focused on improving the quality of education and student outcomes through multiple initiatives. This study will compare and analyze access and enrollment, infrastructure and resources, curriculum and teaching practices, teacher training and professional development, learning outcomes and student performance in both contexts. By exploring the similarities, differences, challenges, and opportunities within these education systems, this study aims to understand better the strengths and weaknesses of public primary schools in Southern Sudan and the Sultanate of Oman (Saleh & El-Rawas, 2015).

The first sample is Wadi (valley) el Arabeen, primary school. It is in a small mountainous village in the Interior region of Wilayat (state) Izki. This primary school has ten classes, from grade 1 to grade 5, which is co-education. Girls and boys sit in the same class, and a female teacher teaches them (they believe that woman is like a mother and is good at taking care of children at this stage) (Socorro, 2015). In grade 6, girls and boys are separated, boys join boys' primary school, and the girls remain in the same school till grade 10, which is the end of primary school classes. In this school, everything is available, enough classroom objects, school rooms and places, school subjects and people working there. It is essential to mention that the Ministry of Education is fully committed to providing everything to this school, from teaching materials (aids), places and training of teachers, which is a non-stopped process to help teachers to acquire more knowledge throughout this developing world (Edward, 2012).

The second sample is Taragok primary school. It is located in Mading de Bor town, the capital of Jonglei state. This primary school has eight classes, from grade 1 to grade 8. It is a co-education school. Girls and boys sit together in the same classroom, and male and female teachers teach them. This school has no learning spaces and learning environments for teaching students, and there is a shortage of everything, from classroom objects, schoolrooms and places, school subjects and people working in the school (Edward, 2012). It is important to note that neither Ministry of Education nor the International Organization is giving enough support to improve this school's learning spaces and learning environments. Many kinds of research have been done about South Sudan in different fields. Still, they ignore the importance of our schools' learning spaces and learning environments. Moreover, some school subjects like Art, Music, Information Technology, swimming and Drama are ignored in South Sudan's educational system (Atiya et al., 2019).

At the end of my study, students and teachers are advised to memorize the list of school objects and other school-related vocabulary words in English. Because school is an important part of our everyday lives, it is essential to talk about various elements of school life.

Methodology

A search of the relevant literature was incorporated into the work technique. The research was carried out with consideration given to previous theoretical literature, both that which had been published and that which had not. This study focuses mainly on conducting a literature review that examines prior research on why South Sudan is left behind. At the same time, other backward countries succeed in narrowing the gap between them and the second world countries. The research was carried out considering my previous experiences in the Sultanate of Oman and South Sudan. This conclusion was reached after an in-depth search using various keywords in different databases. The authors conducted basic and advanced searches on Google and other database engines.

Findings

The findings revealed that the main problem in South Sudan is ignoring the importance of education. The government doesn't prioritize educational development and is always busy with useless and distractive civil war, which takes the country backwards. Therefore, it is essential to improve learning spaces, and learning environments, build more modern schools, improve the educational system and develop the curriculum.

Classroom objects are objects that help students during the learning process. All these objects are available in El Arabeen, a primary school and help students learn. This indicates that parents can buy these items for their children (Saleh & El-Rawas, 2015). But in Taragok primary school, it is rare to find a student who owns all these items, and this is because parents cannot buy these items for their children or perhaps, their prices are not affordable.

Table 1: Classroom objects

Classroom objects	el Arabeen primary school in Izki (Sultanate of Oman)	Taragok basic school in Mading de Bor (South Sudan)
Desk	available	Available
Chair	available	available
Book	available	available
Notebook	available	available
Pencil case	available	rare
Backpack	available	rare
Scissors	available	rare
Compass	available	not available
Pins	available	not available
Clip	available	not available
Pencils	available	available
Coloured pencil (U.K)	available	rare
Coloured pencil (U.S)	available	rare
Pencil sharpener	available	rare
Stapler	available	rare
Calculator	available	not available
Ballpoint	available	available
Highlighter	available	not available

Rubber (U.K)	available	available
Eraser (U.S)	available	available
Scotch tape	available	not available
Paint	available	rare
Palette	available	not available
Paintbrush	available	rare
Protractor	available	not available
Set square	available	not available
Ruler	available	available
Glue	available	rare
Beaker	available	not available
Flask	available	not available
Test tube	available	not available
Funnel	available	not available
Binder	available	not available
Computer	available	not available
Paper	available	available
File holder	available	not available
Map	available	not available
Magnifying glass	available	not available
Clock	available	not available
Blackboard	available	available
Globe	available	not available

Electronic devices and equipment are available in El Arabeen primary school because the Ministry of Education provides everything for learning. Moreover, these items are replaced every two years. But in Taragok essential school none of these is available in the school and the worst part is that there is no electric power in this school because the government never provides the school with its needs.

Table 2: Electronic devices and equipment in school

Electronic devices and equipment in school	el Arabeen primary school in Izki (Sultanate of Oman)	Taragok basic school in Mading de Bor (South Sudan)
Computer	Available	Not available
Monitor	Available	Not available
Interactive whiteboard	Available	Not available
Speakers	Available	Not available
Projector	Available	Not available
Air conditioner	Available	Not available
Remote control	Available	Not available
Mouse	Available	Not available
Keyboard	Available	Not available
Plug	Available	Not available
Stereo/ CD player	Available	Not available
Electronic dictionary	Available	Not available
DVD/ Video player	Available	Not available
Fan	Available	Not available

School rooms and places are architecturally well planned in El Arabeen primary school, and this school is number 1631 according to the serial scheme of work in the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman. Although the school is located in a valley in a mountainous region, the government successfully provided enough space for the school. In Taragok primary school, there are not enough spaces for school, and it is poorly constructed, although it was built in 2020 for displaced people by one of the organizations.

Table 3: School Rooms and Places

School Rooms and Places	el Arabeen primary school in Izki (Sultanate of Oman)	Taragok primary school in Mading de Bor (South Sudan)
The schoolyard	Available	Available
The Principal's office	Available	Shared
The classroom	Available	Available
The music room	Available	Not available
The art room	Available	Not available
The computer room	Available	Not available
The Library	Available	Not available
The lockers	Available	Not available
The pool	Not available	Not available
The baseball field	Available	Not available
The playground	available	Not available
The toilet	available	available

School subjects are areas of knowledge that students study at a school. In El Arabeen primary school, all subjects are taught except swimming because there is neither sea near the site nor a swimming pool in the school. But in Taragok, Art, Music, Information Technology, Drama and Swimming are not taught in school, although this school is on the river Nile bank.

Table 4: School subjects

School subjects	El Arabeen primary school in Izki (Sultanate of Oman)	Taragok primary school in Mading de Bor (South Sudan)
Maths (U.K) – Math (U.S)	Available	Available
Art	Available	Available
English	Available	Available
Music	Available	Not available
History	Available	Available
Science	available	Available
Geography	available	Available
Information technology	available	Not available
Biology	available	Available
Drama	available	Not available
Swimming	not available	Not available
Physical education	available	available

In El Arabeen primary school, all staff members except the cook are available because students buy breakfast from the canteen. At the same time, they call the professor's social worker (to help solve the student's problems). But Taragok primary school has no cook, janitor, librarian, president, professor or secretary.

Table 5: People at school

People at school	El Arabeen basic school in Izki Sultanate of Oman	Taragok primary school in Mading de Bor, South Sudan
Teacher	available	Available
Classmate	available	Available
Coach	available	Available
Cook	canteen	Not available
Janitor	available	Available
Librarian	available	Not available
President	not available	Not available
Principal	available	Headmasters
Professor	social worker	Not available
Secretary	available	Not available
Students	available	available

Taragok primary school in Mading de Bor Jonglei State

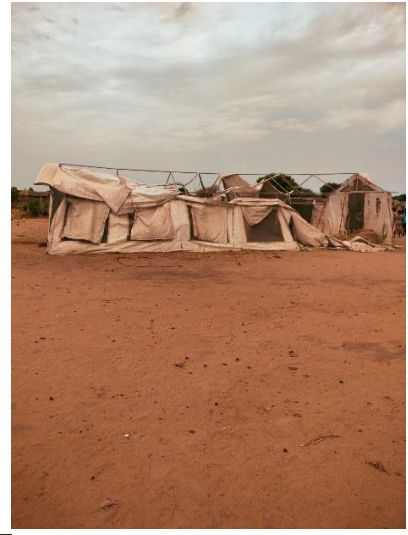
In this primary school, grade 1 to 2 students are taught under desert date trees, while grade 3 are taught in a collapsed camp. Grades 4 to 8 are taught in classes made of iron sheets. However, there are severe shortages in classroom objects, school subjects, school rooms and places, and staff and no electric devices and equipment.



Figure 1: Grade 1, Taragok primary school



Grade 2, Taragok basic school



Grade 3, Taragok primary school



Figure 2: Grade 4 and 5, Taragok classrooms



Grade 4, Taragok classroom



Grades 6, 7, and 8 Taragok classrooms



Figure 3: A female teacher punishing students

Principal in a shared office with his staff

El Arabeen primary school in Izki Sultanate of Oman

This primary school is architecturally well-built, with classroom objects, electronic devices and equipment, school rooms and places, school subjects and staff.



Figure 4: School bus El Arabeen Primary school



Figure 5: Entrance el Arabeen primary school



Inside classroom El Arabeen basic school

Conclusion

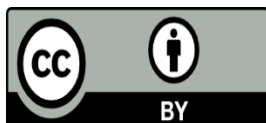
After this comparative study, the South Sudan government must know that it is its responsibility to modernize schools in the country and improve the learning environment as well as the Ministry of Education did in the Sultanate of Oman. It is senseless to depend on donators or organizations to build schools for South Sudan.

Recommendations

This research blames the U.N. and International Communities for not helping South Sudan as a young country in its miserable situation in its schools and national educational system. It considers them part of the problem, not the solution. To be clear, the U.N. and International Communities should lay down solid bases for the system of governance and education as soon as this country owned its independence in July 2011, and it was the sole responsibility of the U.N. to train new government staff in different fields. However, instead of sending massive armies consisting of several battalions from other countries to come to South Sudan only to watch the war under the fake name of peacekeeping forces mission, it would have been much better to preach peace, build schools, send pens and papers to educate children of South Sudan and no need to waste this massive budget on a useless mission. This mission did not, does not and will not stop the war in South Sudan. Therefore, the study recommends the U.N. and International communities see the importance of changing their mission under the new theme of preaching peace and upgrading the national educational system in the country.

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