



Increased Establishment of Private Secondary Schools and Quality Education Delivery in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined increased establishment of private secondary schools and quality education delivery in Rivers State, Nigeria.. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study used a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises all the 564 government approved private secondary schools in Rivers State with 1,128 proprietors and PTA chairmen. A sample of 315 proprietors and PTA chairmen representing 28% was drawn from the population with the use of simple random sampling. The instrument used in this study was questionnaire. The reliability test was done with Cronbach's alpha. Data were analyzed with SPSS software package using mean, standard deviation and rank order to answer research questions and z-test to test hypotheses. The findings after the analysis of data revealed among others that the increased establishment of private secondary schools brings about a healthy competition towards the improvement of quality and that private schools have a body that regulates its activities internally towards the maintenance of standards. The researcher recommended among others that government should put in place a strong body that will ensure that at least minimum standards are maintained in private schools.

Keywords: Establishment, Private Secondary School, Education, Quality, Minimum Standards

1. Introduction

The fact that education is an instrument par excellence for effecting national growth and development for a sustainable economy is no longer an issue of debate. Ezeanya [1] asserted that education is a veritable tool for the total emancipation and development of an individual, the family and the nation at large. No wonder, one of the national educational goals is "the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities, and competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society" [2]

The quality of education received by the citizens determines the level of development of any nation. In other words, the success and development of a nation is greatly hinged on the quality and effectiveness of her educational sector. It is unfortunate however that the quality of education in our schools have not come up to an appreciable level. In view of the deficiencies and resolve to reposition Nigeria's education for public consumption, the federal government of Nigeria welcomes the contribution and participation of

corporate organizations and individuals in the provision of education to all citizens.

The development of private schools can be traced back to the introduction of formal western education by the Christian missionaries in the 1840s. The first organized place of learning named Nursery of the Infant Church was founded by Mr. and Mrs. William De Graft at Badagry in 1843. In 1859, the Anglican Church Missionary Society established the first secondary school – C.M.S. Grammar school, Lagos. Other earlier private secondary schools founded within that period include Methodist Boys High school, Lagos (1878), Methodist Girls High School, Lagos (1879), Boys High School, Bonny (1893), Saint Anne's School, Ibadan (1896) among others. As at 1914, a total of 11 secondary schools were in operation, all of them but one (1) were run by missionaries that is to say that, 91% of the secondary schools were managed by missions and other private individuals. According to Oguntimehin and Oni [3], there were 59 government elementary schools as at 1912 against 91 privately run schools. From the foregoing therefore, one can conveniently conclude that what has grown to be seen as the Nigeria education system began as a private venture.

During this early period, these mission schools and private schools had management boards that formulate educational policies, and philosophies, state aims and objectives, regulate curriculum, methodology of teaching, recruitment, teacher training and certification, teacher salaries and supervision in a way that suits them. There was no general government regulations regarding to the running of these schools, hence standard became questionable. As a result of this questionable education standard, government eventually took over all schools in 1973 with an intention to improve the standard of education, but only to relax its policies and allowed private participation around 1983 within the period when the supreme court ruling opened a floodgate for the establishment of private universities.

In recent time, there has been an alarming increase in the expansion of private sector involvement in the provision of education especially secondary education. There has been an increase in the rate private secondary schools spring up in Nigeria and especially in Rivers State. This increase if not properly regulated apparently will have an adverse effect on the quality of education. Education programmes keep failing to meet standards while quality is gradually giving way to quantity. According to BRACED COMMISSION (a commission that comprises the Niger Delta States of Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Delta), as at 2012, there were 451 recognized private primary schools and 514 recognized private secondary schools in Rivers state. In addition to the above numbers, there were numerous private schools that were operating unofficially because of their inability to meet up with the minimum standard for approval and registration. An information from the Rivers State Ministry of Education shows that there are currently 564 government approved private secondary schools in Rivers State. This does not include numerous government unrecognized private secondary schools operating without government approval.

On the reasons why most parents prefer sending their children to private schools instead of public schools that relatively offer free education, the researcher posited that private schools' teachers are more dedicated to work than their colleagues in government schools. There is high academic performance in private schools, there is the availability of quality teaching/learning materials, and the smaller class size of private schools encourages a proper one – on – one monitoring and supervision of the students by the teachers. In the opinion of Maduagwu [4], some vices like cultism, examination malpractices, drug problems prevalent in public schools leaves parents with no option but to see private schools as an alternative place for the education of their children.

There is no doubt that private schools have contributed immensely to the democratization of Education in Nigeria. Notwithstanding, there is a lack of strict monitoring of private schools and since the government has failed in monitoring the activities of private schools they have continued to proliferate uncontrollably and unregulated while quality continues to erode. Without quality, education

becomes a wastage. Authors are yet to agree on a uniform definition of quality. Cole (2005) in Achama and Nwogu [5] states that it is difficult to agree on a particular definition of quality. Quality to them is dependent on the perspective of those concerned. They however pointed out that quality is seen as something good and worth having.

According to Vlase (2004) in Nworgu and Eke [6], quality is abstract. However, it can be assessed through the following:

- Conformity with requirements.
- Meeting the customer requirements.
- Fitness for intended purpose.
- Providing an efficient and effective service to customers.
- Involves continuous enhancement and improvement of services.
- Guaranteed realizations of minimal standards and benchmarks.

Furthermore, Coombs (1995) in Nworgu and Eke [7] defined quality as judged in terms of students' learning achievements or the relevance of what is taught and learned and also how well this fits the present and future needs of the learners. He further pointed out two determinants of educational quality as status variables and process variables.

Status Variables: Involves the quality of school facilities like textbooks, libraries, classroom, furniture, class size, general school environment, pupil-teacher ratio, teacher training, qualification and experience.

Process Variables: are methods of teaching, supervision, management of human and physical resources.

Any education system that aims at achieving quality must be able to meet atleast the minimum standards set out by the appropriate education regulating body for the establishment of schools. According to the Rivers State Education policy Document (sept. 2009) the minimum standard for establishing a private secondary school are as follows:

- i. An applicant for the registration of a secondary school shall apply to the state Ministry of Education.
- ii. No school shall be established without due prior approval by the state Ministry of Education.
- iii. The minimum land expanse acquired for the school shall be five (5) plots with a minimum playfield of dimension 30m x 30m.
- iv. Structures for the school shall be based on an approved plan issued by the relevant Rivers State Government Authorities.
- v. The state Ministry of Education shall inspect the site/ infrastructure and grant a provisional approval if what is found on ground conforms with all applicable guidelines before the school commences.
- vi. One year after the grant of provisional school approval the state ministry of Education shall conduct a formal approval inspection to ascertain sustained conformity with guidelines and to assess the level of development of the school.
- vii. Renewal of registration inspection shall be carried out on an annual basis.
- viii. The school shall not have more than 35 students per arm.

- ix. Government shall grade schools into categories A, B, C, and D, and the approved level of school fees shall be directly related to each schools' grade bracket.
- x. To be eligible for school ownership, each prospective proprietress or proprietor shall be.
 - a). An individual of proven honesty and probity who is also public spirited.
 - b). A holder of a recognized educational and/or professional qualification not lower than the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) which is registrable with the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN).
- xi. The proprietor shall register with the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS).
- xii. The school must adhere strictly to the school calendar drawn by the state government.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Education has come to be seen as a veritable tool in the process of developing a country and its citizens. Since government on its own cannot provide or cater for the education need of the populace due to the increasing demand of education by all, government therefore encourages private sector participation.

However, the rate of growth and establishment of private secondary schools in Rivers State is becoming a source of worry to everyone that values quality education. Given the high rate of establishment of private secondary schools, can one conclude that the reason for this increase is directed at achieving quality? This and other important questions will be given consideration in this study.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- (1) To identify the influence of increased establishment of private secondary schools on quality education delivery.
- (2) To examine the level of quality control measures put in place for private secondary schools in Rivers State.

1.3. Research Questions

- (1) What influence does the increased establishment of private secondary schools have on quality education delivery in Rivers state?
- (2) What is the level of quality control measures put in place for private secondary schools in Rivers State?

1.4. Research Hypothesis

H0₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of school proprietors and parents on the influence of increased establishment of private secondary schools on quality education delivery in Rivers state.

H0₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of school proprietors and parents on the level of quality control measures put in place in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will give parents an opportunity to make proper and wise choice of schools for their children/wards.

The findings of this study will help keep the ministry of education on their toes in monitoring and regulating the establishment of private schools.

The findings of this study will no doubt serve as a source of reference to other researchers.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study is Rivers State while the content scope is increased establishment of private secondary schools and quality education delivery.

2. Research Methods

The descriptive survey design was employed for this study. The population comprised of 1,128 proprietors and PTA chairmen from the 564 government approved private secondary schools in Rivers state. Out of the 1,128 school proprietors and PTA chairmen, a sample of 315 representing 28% was selected as study participants through the simple random sampling technique which involved the use of slips of paper. Two research questions were stated and two null hypothesis were formulated.

An instrument Titled Increased Establishment of Private Secondary Schools and Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire (IEPSSQEDQ) was constructed for data collection. The instrument comprised of 14 items structured after the modified Likert scale and rated as follows: strongly agree (SA) = 4 points, agree (A) = 3 points, disagree (D) = 2 points and strongly disagree (SD) = 1 point. The average mean is 2.5.

The cronbach's alpha correlation was applied with the SPSS software package to establish the reliability of the instrument. It yielded a reliability index of 0.83 and 0.80 for the two research questions. The data collected were analyzed with the SPSS software package using mean, standard deviation and rank order, while z-test was used to test hypothesis.

3. Results

Research Question 1: What influence does the increased establishment of private secondary schools have on quality education delivery in Rivers state?

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Influence of Increased Establishment of Private Secondary Schools on Quality Education Delivery in Rivers State.

| S/N | Statements | Parents | | School Proprietors | | $\sum x^1x^2/2$ | Rank | Remarks |
|-----|---|---------|------|--------------------|------|-----------------|-----------------|---------|
| | | X | SD | X | SD | | | |
| 1. | Has a positive influence on quality education delivery | 3.21 | 0.94 | 3.43 | 0.73 | 3.32 | 3 rd | Agreed |
| 2. | Brings about a healthy competition towards the improvement of quality | 3.01 | 0.87 | 3.39 | 0.64 | 3.20 | 4 th | Agreed |
| 3. | Makes monitoring, supervision and control difficult | 2.63 | 0.96 | 2.43 | 1.01 | 2.53 | 5 th | Agreed |
| 4. | Gives parents the opportunity to choose from many options | 3.53 | 0.65 | 3.60 | 0.54 | 3.57 | 1 st | Agreed |
| 5. | Enhances access to secondary education | 3.38 | 0.71 | 3.58 | 0.55 | 3.48 | 2 nd | Agreed |

N= 315

Table 1 shows the influence increased establishment of private secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria has on quality education delivery. Majority of the respondents agrees that it gives parent the opportunity to choose from many options with the mean score of 3.57. It is also agreed that increased establishment of private secondary schools enhances access to secondary education (3.48), thirdly, it has

a positive influence on quality education delivery (3.32), also, it brings about healthy competition towards the improvement of quality (3.20), but, it is revealed that it makes monitoring, supervision and control difficult (2.53).

Research Question 2: What is the level of quality control measures put in place for private secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Level of Quality Control Measures put in Place for Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

| S/N | Statements | Parents | | School Proprietors | | $\sum x^1x^2/2$ | Rank | Remarks |
|-----|---|---------|------|--------------------|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| | | X | SD | X | SD | | | |
| 6. | Private secondary schools adhere to the guidelines set out for the establishment of schools | 2.77 | 0.99 | 3.28 | 0.78 | 3.03 | 4 th | Agreed |
| 7. | Ministry of education approves schools before establishment | 2.30 | 0.82 | 1.94 | 0.76 | 2.12 | 9 th | Disagreed |
| 8. | Schools that fail to meet up with standards are sanctioned by the ministry of education | 2.71 | 0.98 | 2.88 | 0.92 | 2.80 | 6 th | Agreed |
| 9. | Private schools have a body that regulates its activities internally towards the maintenance of standards | 2.97 | 0.92 | 3.18 | 0.78 | 3.08 | 3 rd | Agreed |
| 10. | Only qualified teachers are employed by private schools | 2.86 | 0.86 | 3.16 | 0.65 | 3.01 | 5 th | Agreed |
| 11. | Teachers in private schools are adequately supervised | 3.12 | 0.69 | 3.16 | 0.55 | 3.14 | 2 nd | Agreed |
| 12. | Students are admitted based on merit | 2.36 | 1.03 | 2.52 | 1.00 | 2.44 | 8 th | Disagreed |
| 13. | Students who fail promotion examination are not promoted | 2.55 | 1.00 | 2.93 | 0.84 | 2.74 | 7 th | Agreed |
| 14. | Students with deviant behaviours are sanctioned | 2.83 | 1.01 | 3.65 | 0.50 | 3.24 | 1 st | Agreed |

N = 315

Table 2 reveals the level of quality control measures put in place for private secondary schools in Rivers State. According to responses from respondents, students with deviant behaviors are sanctioned has the mean score 3.24. Teachers in private schools are adequately supervised (3.14). Private schools have a body that regulates its activities internally towards the maintenance of standards (3.08). Private secondary schools adhere to the guidelines set out for the establishment of schools (3.03). Only qualified teachers are employed by private schools (3.01). Schools that fail to

meet up with standards are sanctioned by the ministry of education (2.80). Students who fail promotion examinations are not promoted (2.74). Students are admitted based on merit (2.44). Ministry of education approves schools before establishment (2.12).

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of school proprietors and parents on the influence of increased establishment of private secondary schools on quality education delivery in Rivers state.

Table 3. z-test Analysis of Respondents on the Influence of Increased Establishment of Private Secondary Schools on Quality Education Delivery in Rivers State.

| Group | N | X | SD | Mean Difference | DF | Z | Z-Critical | Alpha | Result |
|--------------------|-----|-------|------|-----------------|-----|-------|------------|-------|----------|
| Parents | 154 | 15.81 | 4.45 | 0.62 | 313 | 1.266 | 1.960 | 0.05 | Accepted |
| School Proprietors | 161 | 16.43 | 4.20 | | | | | | |

Table 3 reveals that the mean score of the parents and school proprietors on the influence of private secondary schools on quality education delivery in Rivers State are 15.81 and 16.43 respectively. The mean of school proprietors is higher than that of parents by a difference of 0.62. The mean difference was subjected to an independent z-test and a calculated z-value of 1.266 was gotten. The z-test of 1.266 is

less than the critical z-value of 1.960 at the degree of freedom of 313 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses is accepted which shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of parents and school proprietors on the influence of increased establishment of private secondary schools on quality education delivery.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of school proprietors and parents on the

level of quality control measures put in place in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4. *z-test Analysis of Respondents on the Level of Quality Control Measures put in Place in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State.*

| Group | N | X | SD | Mean Difference | DF | Z | Z-Critical | Alpha | Result |
|--------------------|-----|-------|------|-----------------|-----|-------|------------|-------|----------|
| Parents | 154 | 24.49 | 8.70 | 2.23 | 313 | 2.363 | 1.960 | 0.05 | Rejected |
| School Proprietors | 161 | 26.72 | 8.08 | | | | | | |

Table 4 shows that the mean scores of the parents and school proprietors on the level of quality control measures put in place in private secondary schools in River State are 24.49 and 26.72 respectively. That means that the mean of the school proprietors is higher than that of the parents by a difference of 2.23. This mean difference was subjected to an independent z-test, a calculated z-value of 2.363 was obtained. The fact that the z-value of 2.363 is higher than the critical z-value of 1.960 at the degree of freedom of 313 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypotheses is therefore rejected. This indicated that there is a significant difference between the mean score of parents and school proprietors on the level of quality control measures put in place for private secondary schools in Rivers State.

4. Discussion

4.1. Influence of Increased Establishment of Private Schools on Quality Education Delivery

Findings from the study has shown that the establishment of private secondary schools has some level of positivity on education. It gives parents the opportunity to choose from many options considering the quality of such options, it affords parents the opportunity of selecting the best school for their wards after having considered several quality indicators; enhances access to secondary education, by the establishment of more schools, there would be democratization of education which brings about an unlimited access to education; brings about a healthy competition between schools towards the improvement of quality. It is however revealed that it poses a problem for thorough monitoring, supervision and control, with the continuous increase, it makes it difficult for the education ministries to effectively monitor all private schools within its territory.

The findings of Oguntimehin and Oni [8], revealed that private schools are contributing significantly to educational development and quality delivery. Ogbiji and Ogbiji [9], revealed that private secondary schools has increased access to secondary education and sets a stage for healthy competition between schools in the provision of quality education.

4.2. Quality Control Measures put in Place in Private Secondary Schools

Findings from the study revealed that in private secondary schools in Rivers state, Nigeria, students with deviant behaviours are sanctioned, teachers are adequately supervised, private schools have a body that regulates its activities internally towards the maintenance of standards,

private secondary schools adhere to the guidelines set out for the establishment of schools, only qualified teachers are employed by private schools, schools that fail to meet up with standards are sanctioned, students who fail promotion examination are not promoted.

These findings are in line with the statement in the National Policy on Education [10], that government shall establish efficient inspectorate service at the Federal, state and local government levels for monitoring and maintaining minimum standards.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that the increased involvement of private secondary schools in the provision of education in Rivers State has both its advantages and disadvantages, but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Private schools among other of its advantages offers quality education than what is obtainable in the government schools. Also, it gives more access to quality secondary education, it supplements the government in the provision of education to its teeming population. However, government have not shown much commitment towards the maintenance of quality and minimum standards in private schools.

Recommendations

- Government should put in place a strong supervisory body that will ensure that at least minimum standards are maintained in private schools.
- Government should introduce the use of Liaison Officers for each of its approved private schools for closer monitoring.
- All unapproved or government unrecognized private schools should be forced to close down.
- School proprietors, in as much as profit maximization is one of their major motives of owning a school should have quality as a priority.
- Parents should not patronize private schools that are operating without government's recognition.

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