



Teaching Personnel's Perception of Private Primary Schools' Contribution to Educational Growth in Ijebu-North Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Abstract. This study investigated the perception of teachers of private and public primary schools on the contribution of private primary schools to educational development in Ijebu-North Local Government Area, Ogun State. A research question was drawn and two null hypotheses were formulated. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Twenty-four (24) approved private primary schools, having twenty-four (24) head teachers and three hundred and eighty-five (385) teachers; and one hundred and one (101) public primary schools with 101 head teachers and one thousand, one hundred (1,100) teachers made up the population. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling technique. It comprised twenty-four (24) (100%) approved private primary schools and their 24 (100%) head teachers and three hundred and ten (310) (i.e. 80.5%) teachers; as well as fifty (50) (i.e. 49.5%) public primary schools and their 45 (i.e. 44.6%) head teachers and five hundred and fifty (550) (i.e. 50%) teachers. A questionnaire, entitled: 'Private Primary Schools' Contribution to Educational Development Questionnaire (PPSCEDQ)' was used in collecting information. The analysis of data revealed, among others, that private primary schools were contributing significantly to educational development in the local government area. The performance could, however, be further enhanced if they are adequately monitored and supervised by the government.

Keywords: Educational development; Private primary schools

1. Introduction and Overview

Education is an instrument per excellence for effecting national growth and development. The aims and objectives of Nigerian education system include: the inculcation of national consciousness and unity, inculcation of the right type of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and the acquisition of

the appropriate skills, abilities and competence, both mental and physical, for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) Clearly, the success of any nation is greatly dependent on the effectiveness and efficiency of her educational system.

Primary education in Nigeria, as in other countries of the world, is regarded as the foundation of the formal education structure. The main objectives of this level, as contained in the *National Policy on Education*, are: inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively; the laying of sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking; citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society; character and moral training and development of sound attitudes; developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment; giving the child the opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity and providing basic tool for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) Primary education is the bedrock upon which the rest of the education system is built. It stands to reason, therefore, that if the foundation is weak, the superstructure, i.e. secondary education, post-secondary education and tertiary education, will be badly affected.

The development of private primary schools in Nigeria dates back to the introduction of western education by the Christian missionaries. (Nwagwu, 1998) The first institution of learning, named: 'Nursery of the Infant Church,' was founded by Mr. and Mrs. William de Graft at Badagry in 1843. It could be conveniently agreed that what has grown to be the Nigerian education system began as private venture, funded and managed by people from outside the country. For about four decades i.e. 1843 – 1882, the colonial government in Nigeria paid no attention to the educational needs of the people and the field was left entirely to the missions. (Fafunwa, 1991) This period can, therefore, be justifiably termed the era of exclusive missionary education in Southern Nigeria.

As at 1912, government had established fifty-one (51) public primary schools. The mission schools receiving grants, or financial aid, from government were ninety-one (91). Between 1950 and 1960, there was a sudden growth in the establishment of private nursery schools even by the indigenes. After independence, there was further indigenous participation in private educational enterprise as a result of social pressure and demand for knowledge. Ironodi (2000) noted that many of these schools were not structured to follow strict government regulations regarding the running of educational institution and standard became questionable.

As a result of doubtful educational standard and quality, government decided to restrict the establishment of private schools. After the end of civil war in 1970, there were closure and/or take-over of private and/or mission schools by the government. East Central State was in the forefront followed by other states.

Directives were given as to the process of establishment and management of schools.

Second Republic, 1979 – 1983, witnessed a renewed wave in private participation in educational enterprise. The re-emergence of private schools was the aftermath of the public worries over the level of corruption and indiscipline that pervaded all sectors of the Nigerian society including the education sector. In a military *coup d'état* on 31st December, 1983, the civilian government was sacked. Just as some sanity was being brought into government and public activities, there was another *coup d'état* on 27th August, 1985. (Nwagwu, 1998) It was during this period that Nigerian education system suffered unprecedented collapse. In the spirit of free enterprise under the 'Structural Adjustment Programme' and the public yearnings for qualitative education, private individuals were allowed to establish and operate private schools.

Adeniji (2005) observed that the initial zeal toward private primary school was to seek for a change necessitated by the failure of public primary schools. The areas of failure in public primary schools are: politicization of the entire educational system with successive government using education as a veritable weapon to catch votes from the electorate; instability in school calendar occasioned by incessant strike action embarked upon by teachers; and inadequacy of funding, classrooms, infrastructures and facilities and staff training programmes.

Public schools were regarded to have performed below expectation. This study was conducted to find out the perception of teachers in the primary education system as to the extent they agreed that the private schools are a better alternative.

2. Statement of the Problem

In every city or town in Nigeria, one noticeable trend is the proliferation of private primary schools. In 1980's there were only two (02) private primary schools in the whole of Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State. Presently, the local government has twenty-four (24) registered private primary schools in addition to others that are yet to be approved which are much more than those given approval. Given the high rate of increase in the number of private primary schools, can one conclude that these schools are making significant contribution to the educational development? Or is their existence or increase counterproductive? These important questions would be given consideration in this study.

The teachers' perception of the private primary schools' contribution to educational development was the main focus. The study was meant to sensitize the government about the trend at primary school level so as to take proactive steps in improving academic standards.

3. Statement of Research Question and Research Hypotheses

3.1 Research Question

Have private primary schools any significant contribution to educational development?

3.2 Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There will be no significant difference between the perception of teachers of private and public primary schools on the private primary schools' contribution to educational development.

Ho2: There will be no significant difference between the perception of head teachers of private and public primary schools on the private schools' contribution to educational development.

4. Methodology

The descriptive study employed ex-post facto survey design. Twenty-four (24) approved private primary schools, having twenty-four (24) head teachers and three hundred and eighty-five (385) teachers; and one hundred and one (101) public primary schools, having one hundred and one (101) head teachers and one thousand, one hundred (1,100) teachers made up the population.

The sample, using stratified random sampling technique, comprised twenty four (24) (or 100%) head teachers and three hundred and ten (310) (or 80.5%) teachers in the approved private primary schools; and fifty (50) (or 49.5%) head teachers and five hundred and fifty (550) (or 50%) teachers in the public primary schools. A research question was stated and two null hypotheses were formulated. A questionnaire entitled: 'Private Primary Schools' Contribution to Educational Development Questionnaire (PPSCEDQ),' was constructed and validated to gather information. In addition, the demographic data inventory was designed to collect necessary information on personal characteristics of each respondent.

The face and content validity of the questionnaire were ensured by giving it to colleagues for their suggestions and modification. Two (02) private primary schools with two (02) head teachers and twenty-four (24) teachers in the Obafemi-Owode Local Government Area, Ogun State, were used for the pilot study. A test-retest reliability of two weeks interval on the questionnaire yielded a correlation-coefficient of 0.73. The data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentages and student t-test.

5. Results

RESEARCH QUESTION: Have private primary schools any significant contribution to educational development?

Table 5.1:
Frequency, Percentages and Descriptive Statistics of the Responses of Teachers to the Items of the Questionnaire on the Comparison Between Private and Public Schools

Responses	Private teachers (n = 310)			Public teachers (n = 550)		
	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Mean	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Mean
If not for the private primary schools, primary school level would have collapsed	291 (93.9%)	19 (6.1%)	1.9387	262 (47.6%)	288 (52.4%)	1.4764
Pupils' academic performance of private primary schools is better than that of public primary schools	285 (91.9%)	25 (8.1%)	1.9194	353 (64.0%)	198 (36.0%)	1.6400
Sending my child/ward to public primary schools is an avenue to wasting resources	154 (49.7%)	156 (50.3%)	1.4968	233 (42.4%)	317 (57.6%)	1.4236
Private primary schools have adequate infrastructures	227 (73.2%)	83 (26.8%)	1.7323	399 (72.5%)	151 (27.5%)	1.7255
Supervision of teachers by the head teacher is more thorough in private primary schools than in the public primary schools	218 (70.3%)	92 (29.7%)	1.7032	427 (77.6%)	123 (22.4%)	1.7764
Private primary school teachers are more qualified than their counterparts in the public primary schools	113 (36.5%)	197 (63.5%)	1.3645	206 (37.5%)	344 (62.5%)	1.3745
The attention given by private primary school teachers to their pupils is more than that of public primary school teachers to their pupils	252 (81.3%)	58 (18.7%)	1.8129	459 (83.5%)	91 (16.5%)	1.8345
The emergence of private primary schools brought decency to teaching/learning activities	244 (78.7%)	66 (21.3%)	1.7871	339 (61.6%)	211 (38.4%)	1.6164
The level of commitment to work by public primary school teachers is low	255 (72.6%)	85 (27.4%)	1.7258	244 (44.4%)	306 (55.6%)	1.4436
The emergence of private primary schools had made the government to be more responsible to their duties	205 (66.1%)	105 (33.9%)	1.6613	264 (48.0%)	286 (52.0%)	1.4800
Private primary school pupils usually perform better than their counterparts in public primary schools during academic competition	239 (77.1%)	71 (22.9%)	1.7710	360 (65.5%)	190 (34.5%)	1.6545
Individuals should be encouraged to establish private primary schools	210 (67.7%)	100 (32.3%)	1.6774	332 (60.4%)	218 (39.6%)	1.6036

The result in Table 5. 1 above revealed that a greater percentage of private primary school teachers (93.9%) agreed that if not for the private schools, the primary school level of education system would have collapsed while the greater percentage (52%) of public school teachers disagreed. Both the public school teachers (91.9%) and private school teachers (64.0%) agreed that academic performance of private primary schools is much better than that of their public primary school counterparts. The better performance of private primary school pupils could also be as a result of better supervision being exercised by the private primary school head teachers as revealed in item 5.

The better performance of the pupils of private primary schools could also be attributed to the care of the class teachers to their pupils. The responses of teachers are similar. 81.3% of teachers in private schools and 83.5% of teachers in public schools agreed that the attention being given by private primary school teachers to their pupils is more than that of public primary school teachers to their pupils. About 66.1% of private school teachers agreed that the emergence of private primary schools had made the government to be more responsive to her duties whereas only 48.0% of the public primary school teachers agreed. Both the public school teachers (60.4%) and private school teachers (67.7%) agreed that individuals should be encouraged to establish more private primary schools.

Table 5.2:
Frequency, Percentages and Descriptive Statistics of the Responses of Head Teachers to the Items of the Questionnaire on the Comparison Between Private and Public Schools

Responses	Private head teachers (n = 24)			Public head teachers (n = 50)		
	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Mean	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Mean
If not for the private primary schools, primary school level would have collapsed	24 (100.0%)	-	2.00000	50 (100.0%)	-	1.0000
Pupils' academic performance of private primary schools is better than that of public primary schools	24 (100.0%)	-	2.00000	50 (100.0%)	-	1.0000
Sending my child/ward to public primary schools is an avenue to wasting resources	16 (66.7%)	8 (33.3%)	1.66670	30 (60.0%)	20 (40.0%)	2.0000
Private primary schools have adequate infrastructures	21 (88.3%)	3 (11.7%)	1.88330	16 (32.0%)	34 (68.0%)	1.3200
Supervision of teachers by the head teacher is more thorough in private primary schools than in the public primary schools	16 (65.6%)	8 (34.4%)	1.65000	50(100.0 %)	-	1.0000
Private primary school teachers are more qualified than their counterparts in the public primary schools	13 (55.0%)	11 (45.0%)	1.55000	-	50 (100.0%)	1.0000
The attention given by private primary school teachers to their pupils is more than that of public primary school teachers to their	16 (65.0%)	8 (35.0%)	1.65000	33 (66.0%)	17 (34.0%)	1.6600

pupils						
The emergence of private primary schools brought decency to teaching/learning Activities	24 (100.0%)	-	2.00000	33 (66.0%)	17 (34.0%)	1.6600
The level of commitment to work by public primary school teachers is low	22 (91.66%)	2 (8.33%)	1.90000	34 (68.0%)	16 (32.0%)	1.6800
The emergence of private primary schools had made the government to be more responsible to their duties	16 (65.0%)	8 (35.0%)	1.65000	16 (32.0%)	34 (68.0%)	1.3200
Private primary school pupils usually perform better than their counterparts in public primary schools during academic Competition	19 (78.3%)	5 (21.7%)	1.78330	33 (66.0%)	17 (34.0%)	1.6600
Individuals should be encouraged to establish private primary schools	16 (65.0%)	8 (35.0%)	1.65000	33 (66.0%)	17 (34.0%)	1.6600

The results in Table 5.2 indicated that the total number of head teachers in both private and public primary schools agreed that if not for the private primary schools, primary school level would have collapsed. Similar responses of private school pupils being better than the public school pupils in academic performance were also recorded. Almost the same responses: private (65%), public (66%), were recorded in item 7 which states that attention given by private primary school teachers to their pupils is more than that of public primary school teachers to their pupils. All the head teachers (100%) in private primary schools agreed that emergence of private primary schools brought decency to teaching/learning activities while 33 (66%) of the public school head teachers agreed. Both the public primary school head teachers (66%) and private primary school head teachers (65%) agreed that individuals should be encouraged to establish private primary school.

6. Testing of the Hypotheses

Ho1: There will be no significant difference between the perception of teachers of private and public primary schools on the private primary schools' contribution to educational development.

Table 6.1:
Perceived Contribution of Private Primary Schools Between Teachers of Private and Public Primary Schools

Status	No.	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	df	t _{cal}	t _{cri}	p-value
Teachers (private)	310	35.3288	3.87555					
Teachers (public)	550	32.8102	4.23490	2.51861	858	7.9209	1.960	< .05

The results in Table 6.1 above revealed that there is a significant difference in teachers' perception of the contribution of private primary schools to educational development. The calculated value of 7.9209 was found to be significantly higher than the critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis 1 was, therefore, rejected.

Ho2: There will be no significant difference between the perception of head teachers of private and public primary schools on the private schools' contribution to educational development.

Table 6.2:
Perceived Contribution of Private Primary Schools Between Head Teachers of Private and Public Primary Schools

Status	No.	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	df	t _{cal}	t _{cri}	p-value
Head Teachers (private)	24	36.2833	3.53717					
Head Teachers (public)	50	29.9200	2.94743	6.36333	72	10.123	1.960	< .05

The results in Table 6.2 indicated that there is a significant difference between head teachers of private primary schools and their counterparts in public primary schools as regards their perception of the contribution of private primary schools to educational development. The calculated t-value of 10.123 was found to be higher than the table value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis 2 was, therefore, rejected.

7. Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the private primary schools are contributing significantly to educational development. Item 1, Tables 1 and 2 refer. 553 (64.3%) out of 860 respondents agreed that if not for the private primary schools, primary education system would have collapsed. Similarly, 637 (74.1%) agreed that academic performance of private schools is much better than that of public primary schools. That private schools have an edge over public primary schools could be attributed to the incessant strike actions usually embarked upon by the public primary school teachers. Strike action by staff is completely strange to private primary schools.

The finding is complementary to that of Afolabi (2005). His study revealed that students who attended private primary schools performed better in Mathematics and English language (at the junior secondary school) than those who attended public primary schools. He went further to conclude that his findings seemed to discredit the standard of education in public primary schools, since their products could not compete favorably with the products of the private primary schools. Babayomi

(1999) and Adeogun (2001) in their separate studies explained that better academic performance by pupils in private schools was as a result of availability and usage of instructional materials by the private primary schools teachers.

Also, this study revealed that the better performance of the private school pupils was not as a result of more qualified teachers in the private schools as reflected in item 6 in Table 1 but as a result of better supervision from the school heads. Adequate and thorough supervision cannot be compromised in any privately-owned organization. In Nigeria, a private primary school is not only an educational or social venture but, in addition, it is a profit-making venture. Understandably, the head teacher pays serious attention at supervision.

Results of this study equally showed that the null hypothesis which stated that there will be no significant difference between the perception of teachers of private and public primary schools on the private primary schools' contribution to educational development was rejected. This implied that private school teachers perceived the contribution of private schools to educational development differently from their public schools' colleagues. The private school teachers perceived that private primary schools contribute to educational development higher than how the public school teachers perceived it. Similar perception was recorded for the head teachers of private and public primary schools. This study has clearly showed that private primary schools are contributing significantly to educational development in Nigeria as perceived by the school teachers and head teachers.

8. Conclusion

Private schools have been playing prominent role in the development of the Nigerian education industry. As a result, they should be protected by law so that no government will decide in future to seize privately-owned schools as it happened in the early 1970's. Irondi (2000) observed that European countries have similar educational environment that protects private and independent schools. In France, the state provides financial aid to many private schools. Also in places like United Kingdom, Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, Spain and Denmark, private schools are in partnership with public schools to achieve collective objective of engineering economic, political and social growth.

9. Recommendations

Admittedly, every private enterprise aims at making profit, financial gain should not be the ultimate goal of education industry. This is because education is a public good that has to be enjoyed by every citizen in a nation. There is the need, therefore, for closer monitoring and supervision by the governmental agencies. The Federal Ministry of Education as well as the State Ministry of Education should have a separate department for private education in order to monitor these private institutions. The department should be saddled with the responsibilities such as

registration/certification of those that comply with the laid-down regulations for the establishment of schools; maintenance of minimum standard, pupil-teacher ratio and average class size and payment of minimum wages, allowances, etc.

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