



WWJMRD 2020; 6(5): 10-17
www.wwjmr.com
International Journal
Peer Reviewed Journal
Refereed Journal
Indexed Journal
Impact Factor MJIF: 4.25
E-ISSN: 2454-6615

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Reasons and Strategies for Private Sector Participation in the Development of Secondary Education in Abia State

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Abstract

This study investigated private sector participation in the development of secondary education in Abia State. The researcher formulated two objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses to guide the work. The population of the study comprised of 190 secondary schools. The sample size of 1500 private and secondary school staff were drawn through stratified random sampling technique. An instrument called “private sector participation in the development of secondary school education assessment questionnaire (PSPDSEAQ)” was used for data collection. Means, and rank order statistics were used to answer the two research questions, while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis. The following findings were made: private schools non-governmental organizations, business owners/wealthy individuals, MTN Nigeria and other networks, Banks, Parents Teachers Association (PTA), old students association, Shell Petroleum and other oil companies, and publishing houses fall under private sector that participate in the development of secondary education in Abia state. Private sector participates actively in the development of secondary education in Abia State. The study recommends that government should encourage private sector to participate fully in the development of secondary education without any hitch, since private sector also need the product of schools to remain in business, they should consider investment in education as an important responsibility to themselves and to the society. In addition, government should establish a functional framework for the establishment, control and supervision of private schools in Abia State, Appropriate forms of curriculum offering should be developed and all private schools made to follow it to ensure uniform standard. Private investors should be encouraged to expand to rural areas to avoid overcrowding in the cities.

Keywords: Private Sector, Participation, Development, Secondary Education

Introduction

The history of education is as old as the creation of man. Man, as a social animal, is very curious by nature and as such, is inspired to explore his environment in his quest for knowledge. In shaping man’s interest to know, many factors come into play. Man’s quest for knowledge is unlimited and to a large extent depends on the society’s value system. For example, the value system of education in ancient Greece was anchored around the training of physically and mentally well-balanced citizens while the Romans emphasised on the military development of citizens.

Secondary education is the second tier of education. It is indeed that tier of in an educational structure that is in between the primary and tertiary education structure. It is that system of education that actually prepares the youths for social, political and economic life. This is a type of education that is referred as the education for the youth which is indeed a central process in the building of nations. Secondary education occupies strategic position in Abia State because of the important role it plays in preparing the students for useful living in the society and for higher education. To ensure that secondary education achieves its major goal, attaining high standard and qualitative learning should be the focus of schools (Okoroma, 2005).

Education is a key contributor to development and the crucial role of the private sector cannot be overemphasized. The private sector refers to that sector of the economy not owned

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and controlled by the government. They include the wealthy private individuals, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as UNESCO, SPDC, and other oil companies, private schools, religious societies and organizations, World Bank, IMF, Parents Teachers Association (PTA), Alumnus of schools etc. Some of these organized private sectors are playing active and valid roles in developing various programmes in the key focus area of education as well as complimenting the efforts of the government by participating in the funding of secondary education in Abia State. This is because the greatest potential for development lies in education which spawn's manpower resources, economic and social development (okoro, 2005).

There is growing evidence that private sector participation in education can improve effectiveness in developing countries. The active participation of private sector could partially have the greatest impact of expansion of opportunities, improving cost effectiveness of educational delivery as well as improving the quality of education in Nigeria. The privatization exercise introduced by former president Chief Olusegun Obasanjo has been very effective in stimulating growth, access, quality improvement and investment in other sectors of the economy. Therefore, there is no reason, why the same effect cannot be expected in the educational level. If the private sector in Nigeria should think about education differently as an opportunity for entrepreneurship, innovation, competition and compensation based on productivity, it can bring to the educational sector high performance standards and private sector skills and help to address the problems mitigating the educational sector.

However, there are numerous issues that have plagued the Nigerian educational system. And these issues need to be handled by both the private sector and the government. This is education as a whole is capital intensive and the government alone cannot adequately cater for it especially in the face of dwindling researches and increasing population. Hence private enterprises should highly be encouraged to adequately participate in the development of education, most especially, secondary education.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of qualitative education has been a matter of concern, not only to the government but also to the entire society. Most secondary schools in Abia State lack the necessary equipment and infrastructures that will help facilitate teaching and learning. Teachers are not adequately motivated. This, coupled with the dwindling resources increasing population and increasing demand for education, has combined to make it difficult for government alone to provide all that the citizens required in terms of educational needs. Therefore, there is need, for a greater community and civil society participation in providing, managing and funding education. Thus, this entails the need for all levels of government to forge participation across the public and private sectors in the provision, management and financing of education in order to meet the challenges of education for all.

Aim and objective of the Study

The overall aim of the study is to investigate private sector participation in the development of secondary education in Abia state with a view of achieving the following objectives:

1. Identify reasons for involving private sector in the development of secondary education in the Abia State.
2. Strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Research Questions

1. What are the reasons for the participation of private sector in the development of secondary education in Abia State?
2. What are the strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development secondary education in Abia State?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the mean score of private school staff and public-school staff on the reason for involving the private sector in the development of secondary education in Abia State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of private school staff and staff of public schools on the strategies for enhancing private involvement in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Literature Review

The Concept of Privatization

Privatization which is a method of reallocating assets and functions from the public sector to the private sector. It is a factor that could play a serious role in the quest for growth and improvement (Adnan, 2005). The theory behind privatization is that enterprises, such as administration, teaching, support and even cultural functions run far more efficiently and offer better services to consumers when owned by stockholders instead of the government. According to Rosenau (2000) the concept privatization has been applied to three different methods of increasing the activities of the private sector in providing public services

1. Public sector choice and financing with private sector production of the services selected;
2. Private sector choice, financing and production of a service;
3. Private sector choice, financing and production of a service;

The second aspect of privatization refers to joint activity of the public and private sectors in providing services. While the third form of privatization means that government reduces or eliminates the regulatory restrictions that are imposed on private firms that are providing specific service.

The proponents of privatization argued that whereas government producers, who contract with the government to provide a service have more at stake, thus, encouraging them to perform at a higher level for lower cost. Although private firms may pay lower wages and fringe benefits than local governments, the major cause of the cost difference between the private and governmental sector is employee productivity. Private firms may be more likely to experiment with different and creative approaches to service, provision, whereas government tends to stick with the current approach since changes often create political difficulties.

There is also the efficiency objective which is to create a better management system for the enterprises and to set a

market environment. The financial objective is that state-owned enterprises should be sold at their highest value so as to generate revenues to the state. Furthermore, an equity objective which involves returning property to those who had been deprived of it by the nationalization process, thereby giving priority to employees for buying shares in their enterprises or even giving away state assets to the citizens.

The Concept of Private Enterprises and the Development of Secondary Education

Private enterprises are businesses or industries that are managed by independent companies or private individuals not controlled by the State. They include private individuals, business organizations, multinational companies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), etc. The concept of private enterprise participation in education sector has been a major issue today in our educational system. The concept simply suggests an active involvement of the private sector in the development of education particularly our secondary education.

In recognition of the important position occupied by secondary education as a central process in the building of nations vis-à-vis the active involvement of the private sector in the effective development of secondary education. The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) recognizes the private sector as crucial stakeholders. UNESCO acknowledges that the private sector is more than a mere funding source to support projects that are implemented under the umbrella of the Decade. As Philip Muller-Wirth (2001, p. 16) states; "Rather than financial contributors, the more specific resources and capacities of the business community will be required to achieve the decades contributions objectives".

The Meaning of Development and Education

Ezeani (2005) stated that the concept of development has always eluded the Nigerian society because each time it is talked about, people always think about what they can see, feel and touch. The question then is whether development is simply having enough glittering structures, robust facilities and landed properties. The problem however, with this perception of development is that it is rather too simplistic, fragmented and externally focused.

The Nigerian principal (2007) further said that applied to education; development is the deliberate cultivation of innate potentials of man as well as change in social values, evolution and legitimization of new and specialized structures, better facilities, better methodologies, better curricula, better teachers, students, graduates and better performance in production life and ultimately better citizenship. Anything short of this is not development but growth. Achieving human development is linked to a third perspective of development, which views it as freeing people from obstacles that affect their ability to develop their own lives and communities. Development therefore is empowered; it is all about local people taking control of their own lives, expressing their own demands and finding their own solutions to their problems. Thus, hearing about development helps us to understate the causes and solutions to problems and also helps us to be better informed in addressing not just the superficial poverty related issues but the deeper-rooted causes as well.

Education has rightly been described as the bedrock for

meaningful development of a community or even a nation. Any person or nation which invests its resources in the development of education is not only wise but has foresight. Agu (2005) observed that the greatest resources which any nation can process is not physical structures or facilities but human resources who have been adequately trained and have acquired intellectual capacities, skills, values and attitudes which make them productive members of their societies.

In Nigeria as in most countries, education is seen as a national tool for achieving a part of the national goal. To achieve national goal, there are also educational goals. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) the educational goals are:

1. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
2. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
3. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around.
4. The acquiring of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competence as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to development of the society One of the purposes of education is to enable man understand better and utilize profitably the environment in which he lives. Also, education is to enable man to fully express his potential.

According to Nzewunwa (2001), viewed education as an act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind and character, or physical ability of an individual. Agada (2004, p.15) stated that education is a means by which society provides for the transmission of its culture to the young ones. It is also a means whereby the culture or the total way of life of the society can be advanced. He further said that education may be defined as the inculcation of values, knowledge, skills and attitudes by means of intuitions that have been created for this purpose.

Looking at school as a social system, he said that there is a flow of vital information from the school to it as supra system and back to the school. Through its continual interchange of information, the school system is able to bring about modification needed for the system to reform appropriately to changes in its environment and so be able to adapt to instability, change and uncertainty in its environment. It is reasonable to conclude that the school system that offers social service for the following reasons: The school consists of clearly defined population working to achieve its goal.

1. This is a system of social interaction comprising of another dependence of parts, such social interaction include communication, cooperating, competing and so on.
2. There is a differentiation from the environment.
3. Schools are open system because forces from their environment such as values, politics and history, their interdependence affect them with parents and the community.
4. It possesses its own unique culture such as shares, beliefs and orientation including values, social norms and roles.

Education does not exist in isolation and cannot function efficiently without supportive role of other sub systems within its environment. Okoro (2005) aptly stated that educational system is an open system with the larger system, which is the environment. There are some other interrelated sub-systems within the society, such as the local community, the industries, the employees of labor, social and religious organizations and political system. The educational system influences and is influenced by this sub-system as they interact among each other. They make up the external environment.

The Importance of Secondary Education

Secondary education is that education structure that exists between the primary and higher level of education. It is the second tier of education and the education 'for young people'. It is the education of youths and the education of youth has major concern for nations and families throughout history.

Youth education according to Alvarez (2003), is a central process in the building of nations and a nation's position in arid, its standard of living and its level of development depends more than ever before on the education of its young people. Thus, it is only through education that young men and women can come to participate productively in the political and economic life of their and equally become citizens of the global village. Alvarez further stated that although secondary schools are pivotal to national and personal development, many countries even Nigeria has tended to ignore secondary education. Enrolment rates for secondary education have stagnated in countries that have been allowed to adapt to a changing world.

The challenge of educating young people for a changing world goes beyond improving the indicators of school enrolment. The secondary education itself is in question. The type of educational experience that is currently available for young people ponds little to the economic and social needs of our society even less to the needs of the future. Even in educationally advanced societies, the low quality of secondary education is a fundamental political issue. For instance, in the United States several policy analysts agree that "correcting failure - particularly at secondary schools - is the most important task facing the nation".

Finally, besides the efforts of private proprietors, community schemes which that were aimed at mobilizing community efforts for the provision of educational facilities also paved ways in the development of secondary education in Nigeria and Rivers State too. The communities established secondary schools' cultural organizations and ethnic unions through communal efforts established educational institutions. Such includes the Kalabari National College Buguma that was established in 1938.

The Need for Private Sector Participation in the Development of Secondary Education

The relevance and importance of secondary education and the need to upgrade and improve the quality of our education system, increase in population and economic recession all calls from the need to involve the private sector in the development of secondary education. To attain quality in education, many things are involved: good curricula, text books, school facilities and equipment, trained personnel and good teacher's welfare etc. all these

require huge financial expenses. And that is why government rightly stated in the National Policy on Education that education is an expensive social service as such requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for it to be successful. Hence, the government welcomes and encourages the participation of the local communities, individuals and other organizations to partake in the development of education.

Even in the international level, the need to involve the private sector in educational development projects has been seen, for instance, a few months after a Johannesburg summit on sustainable development in December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) from 2005 -2014. In it, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was tasked with overseeing this Decade One of the key objectives of UNESCO for the decade is to build relationships with civil society in all countries, as well as with the private sector due to its increasing importance in the field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

According to UNESCO, "The private sector is indeed considered a crucial stakeholder in the Decade, especially as concerns public awareness raising and training" UNESCO also acknowledged that the private sector is more than a mere funding source to support projects that are implemented under the umbrella of the Decade. More specific resources capacities of the business community will be required to achieve the ambitious objectives of the Decade.

Furthermore, education planners have seen the need to involve the private sector in the development of education. This was acknowledged when in the Education for All (EFA) working group and high level group meetings in 2004, it was noted that the private sector has become an important stakeholder of the EA. According to them, a wide variety of initiative exists worldwide that involve the private sector in the provision of educational services and goals. The private sector is key in addressing the quality dimension of education through specific capacities for innovation and change. Thus, the various participants of the EFA projects stressed the relevance of private sector involvement in the teaching and learning of 'Soft Skills' (team working, citizenship, entrepreneurship, career development).

Many participants underlined that private sector involvement in education should not supplement public provision of education. However, sole participants observed 'negligence' with respect to public schools and terrible 'inequities' between public and private schools. Thus, besides its specific value added in terms of contributing innovation and change to improving the quality of education, the private sector is seen as a crucial catalyst in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public provision of education. This is achieved through direct influence by the private sector upon the governance, management, accountability and transparency of public education programmes; but also, through considerable cost savings in the public sector generated by new teaching method.

Also, as a number of concrete examples demonstrate the benefits of private sector involvement in education, one of the main issues raised according to USAID was the need to assemble these 'flowers' to become a 'bouquet'. Thus, in

this connection, the role of Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) is considered crucial. And as brokers, IGOs need to help disseminate and share the knowledge about the success stories and the potentials of A private sector involvement in education amongst all stakeholders, including government, the private sector, NGOs, academic and in particular, the teachers. As catalyst, a main responsibility of NGOs is to help government establish suitable frameworks for a sustainable private sector involvement in education.

Strategies for Enhancing the Rate of Private Sector Participation in the Development, of Secondary Education

There is a range of ways in which the private sector can participate in the development of secondary education. These include the traditional form of private participation which are the delivery of education services through privately owned schools. Other number of ways for enhancing the rate of private participation in the development of education includes:

- Private Sector Management and Operation of owned school
- Under contract to the state (that is contract schools).
- Catering, cleaning, security and recruitment
- Providing scholarships or vouchers whether publicly or
- Privately financed for students to attend private schools
- Providing inputs into the educational process, including curriculum materials and educational building, infrastructure such as school buildings.

Review of Empirical Studies

Estokeren (2005) studied Performance of Science Students in Private and Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt. The study adopted descriptive research design. The sample population was made up of one thousand eight hundred and fifty (1,850) comprising of 850 private and 1000 public schools respectively. The data was collected using structured questionnaire while mean and standard deviation was used to analyze data on research questions and Z-test for the hypothesis. Major findings of the study revealed that poor performance of students was as a result of inadequate teachers. The study recommends that for optimal teaching and learning process to flourish in schools, competent and experienced teachers are required in both private and public secondary schools.

Akudo (2008) investigated Public-private Partnership in Managing Secondary schools' infrastructural development in Anambra State: limiting factors and improvement strategies. The study identified limiting factors in public - private partnership in managing secondary education for infrastructural development in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study; population of the study was made up of all the 526 managers of public and private sector establishments in Anambra State. The sample of the study was 310 respondents selected using purposive sampling, frequencies and percentages was used in answering the research questions. Major findings of the study indicated that lack of awareness of the need for public - private partnership, government attitudes and relationships with schools and lack of structures are the major limiting factors in public – private partnership in education. It was recommended that government should

implement the identified strategies and eliminate the limiting factors in public - private partnership in managing secondary school education.

Afangideh (2009) studied private sector participation in the funding and management of inventions in secondary schools in Akwa -Ibom state. The study examined private sector participation in the funding and management of interventions in the education system focusing on sources of funds, modes of funding, management and impediments to the funding and management of interventions. Two research questions and two null hypotheses was used to guide the study. The design for the study was a descriptive survey. The population comprised of four hundred and eighty-seven (487) public and private schools in Akwa-Ibom state. One hundred and ninety-four (194) principals comprising of 94 from public schools and 100 from private schools respectively were drawn from the population.

Results from data analysis show that private sector are more interested in funding and managing interventions than their public sector counterparts. Recommendations were made for the establishment of sound and effective community relation in order to attract private sector interests in secondary schools.

Methods

The study adopted a survey design. It involves a systematic collection of data on the items of the subject based on which decision was taken. The survey design was adopted because it requires the use of mainly questionnaire to elicit data (responses) that describes the opinion of some group of people. The target population comprised of all the 190 Secondary Schools in Abia State with 156 Private Secondary Schools and 34 Public Secondary Schools. The stratified random sample and sampling technique was used in this study. A total of one thousand five hundred (1500) respondents comprising of seven hundred (700) Private School staff from the 156 Private Secondary Schools and eight hundred (800) public school staff from the 34 Public Secondary Schools were randomly selected for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a twenty-five (25) item structured questionnaire tagged "Private sector participation in the development of secondary school education in Abia state (PSPDSEQ) and document analysis. The items in the questionnaire where be answered on a 4-point rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with scores ranging from 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The data for the study was gathered with a 4-point rating scale structured questionnaire, which was administered by the researcher, and two (2) research assistants. The completed copies of questionnaires were collected in person by the researcher within two weeks. A total of 1500 copies of questionnaires were administered. Mean score and rank order statistics was used to answer the research questions while z-test will be used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected from the respondents was scored and the following values assigned to the points rating scale, with a criterion mean of 250

Strongly Agree	- (SA) = 4 Points
Agreed	- (A) = 3 Points
Disagreed	- (D) = 2 Points
Strongly Disagreed	- (SD) = 1 Point

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the reasons for the

participation of private sector in the development of secondary education in Abia State?

Table 1: Mean (x) and rank order statistics of respondents on the reasons for private sector participation in the development of secondary education

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Private School Staff		Public School Staff		\bar{X}_1 \bar{X}_2	Rank Order	Remark
		N	\bar{X}	N	\bar{X}			
1	To genuinely assist the Government in educational financing as provided in the National Policy on Education	700	3.7	800	3.58	3.64	4 th	Accepted
2	To help government expand educational provision and make it more viable to the citizens	700	3.87	800	3.73	3.8	1 st	Accepted
3	To help improve the quality of education	700	3.89	800	3.46	3.68	3 rd	Accepted
4	To encourage private entrepreneurs in educational development	700	3.89*	800	3.61	3.75	2 nd	Accepted
5	To act as source of employment to citizens	700	3.92	800	3.08	3.5	5 th	Accepted
Total		700	3.86	800	3.50			

The results of the data shows that the mean scores of the assessed variables ranged between 3.5 and 3.8 were all accepted. Judging by the individual scores, the data revealed that all the variables geared towards the reasons for private sector participation in the development of secondary education. This is because all the mean scores were above the criterion mean of 2.5.

Research Question 2: What are the strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development of secondary education in Abia State?

Table 2: Mean (\bar{x}) and rank order statistics of respondents on strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development of secondary education

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Private School Staff		Public School Staff		\bar{X}_1 \bar{X}_2	Rank Order	Remark
		N	\bar{X}	N	\bar{X}			
6	Clearly defined legislation to guide potential investors	700	1.8	800	1.48	1.64	6 th	Accepted
7	Adequate incentives in improved access to loan	700	3.44	800	3.25	3.35	4 th	Accepted
8	Well-defined regulatory frame-work	700	3.70	800	3.48	3.59	2 nd	Accepted
9	Regular monitoring of approved private schools to help stop the establishment of mushroom schools	700	3.47	800	3.76	3.62	1 st	Accepted
10	There should be clear guidelines for the approval of schools	700	1.5	800	2.69	2.10	5 th	Accepted
11	Regular inspection of facilities used at schools	700	3.47	800	3.25	3.36	3 rd	Accepted
Total		700	2.90	800	3.03			Accepted

The data shows that the mean scores of the assessed variables ranges between 1.64 and 3.62. The data revealed that items 6 and 10 were rejected by the respondents on the strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development of secondary education. This is because the mean scores were less than the criterion mean of 2.50. Except items 7, 8, 9 and 11 were accepted by the respondents. This is because there mean scores of 3.35,

3.59, 3.62 and 3.36 respectively were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the mean score of private school staff and public school staff on the reason for involving the private sector in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Table 2: z-test of differences between the mean scores of private and public school staff on the reason for involving the private sector in educational development.

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	z-Cal	z-Crit	Level of Significant	Decision
Private School Staff	700	3.86	0.35	1498	5.96	1.96	0.05	Ho was Rejected
Public School Staff	800	3.50	0.49					

The table showed that the z-calculated value of 5.96 was greater than the z-critical value, at 0.05 level of significance with the degree of freedom 1498. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of private school staff and private school staff on the reason for involving the private sector in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of private school staff and staff of public schools on the strategies for enhancing private involvement in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Table 4: z-test of the difference between the mean scores of private school staff and staff of public schools on the strategies for enhancing private involvement in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	z-Cal	z-Crit	Level of Significant	Decision
Private School Staff	700	2.90	0.60	1498	4.46	1.96	0.05	Ho was Rejected
Public School Staff	800	3.03	0.52					

The table showed that the z-calculated value of 4.46 was greater than the z-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with the degree of freedom 1498. This implies that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of private school staff and public-school staff on the constraints to private sector participation in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Discussion of Findings

Reasons for involving the private sector in the development of secondary education

The study revealed that the major reasons for involving the private sector in the development of secondary education in Abia State were to assist government in financing education, to assist the government expand educational provisions and make it more viable to the citizens and improve the quality of education. This finding was evident in the high mean rating of the respondents on all the variables assessed. The present finding confirms and buttresses the policy statement that "the financing of education is a joint responsibility of the federal state and local government and the private sector" (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004:61). The findings further affirm that government resolves to welcome and encourage the participation of local communities, individuals and other organizations in educational provision (FRN 2004:6 1).

The test of hypothesis also revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean score of public school staff and private school staff on the reasons for the involvement of the private sector in educational development. The present finding has several implications to educational development, National development and even to the private sector. Education inherently serves both the public and private interest and therefore, should not be left in the hand of government alone. This is because the private sector also benefits from the products of the school system. The schools have been a source of supply of the semi-skilled and skilled man power that is needed by both the public and private sectors in the production processes. Hence the private sector makes use of the bye-products of the school system; they should equally participate in the functioning of education. Education therefore should be a shared responsibility (Nwikina and Amussah, 2005).

Strategies that will enhance private sector participation in the development of secondary education

The study found that measures that can help improve private participation in education include well-defined regulatory framework, regular monitoring of approved private schools, adequate incentives in improved access to loans and regular inspection of facilities used by schools. The statistical test shows that there was a significant difference in the mean score of both private and public-school staff. Over the years, it has been difficult for the government to adequately fund education, so for adequate sector to be meaningfully involved, they must be assured of how to recoup their money and make profit. All these are to

be entrenched in a well-defined law and the inauguration of supervising agency that will ensure that private schools adhere to the prescribed minimum standards in their operations. Thus, for any private investment in education to yield the desired result, government must be prepared to play a leading role by creating the enabling environment for their operations. Except this is done, the call for private participation in educational financing will remain a far cry.

Conclusion

The role of private enterprises in the development of secondary education in Abia State was the focus of this study. In doing this, the reasons for private sector involvement and the measures to help improve their participation came into focus. The study found that the private sector involvement in educational development was a means of assisting government in the funding and expansion of education to reach the citizens and reduce inequality of access much as been achieved in this regards due to a number of factors which include: uncoordinated operations, bureaucratic bottleneck and high interest rate which have considered high cost of investment in education by private investors. A major conclusion of the study therefore is that the policy framework for private sector participation in education has not been fully implemented, at most private participation appears to be unregulated and uncoordinated. Thus, the dreams of assisting government in educational expansion and equality of access to citizens have remained stillborn as the presence of private secondary schools have helped to worsen the gap in inequality through exorbitant school fees.

Recommendations

1. Government should establish a functional framework for the establishment, control and supervision of private schools in Abia State.
2. Appropriate forms of curriculum offering should be developed and all private schools made to follow it to ensure uniform standard.
3. Private investors should be encouraged to expand to rural areas to avoid overcrowding in the cities.

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