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Deregulation of Funding and Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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Abstract

The study examined deregulation of funding and quality assurance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted the correlational design as the working design. The population comprised 247 principals from the 247 public secondary schools in Rivers State and a sample size of 185 principals drawn with multistage sampling approach representing 75% of principals. The principals responded to two structured validated instruments titled Deregulation of Funding Questionnaire (DFQ) and Quality Assurance Questionnaire (QAQ) designed by the researcher. The reliability coefficient of the instrument using cronbach alpha method was 0.73. Simple regression was used to answer the research question while t-test associated with simple regression was used to test the null hypotheses. Findings of the study showed that deregulation of funding predicted 3.50% of quality assurance in public secondary schools and there was a significant contribution between deregulation of funding and quality assurance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. It was concluded that deregulation of funding predicts 3.50% of teachers' performance in secondary schools in Rivers State. The remaining 96.50% cannot be accounted by deregulation of funding. There was also a significant contribution between deregulation of funding and quality assurance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. It was therefore recommended that private sectors and individuals should be willing to participate in funding and provision of facilities in secondary schools for quality assurance to be achieved.

Keywords: Deregulation, Funding, Quality assurance, Public secondary schools

Introduction

Fund, according to Ogbonnaya (2012) means the total amount of money that is saved or made available for specific purposes. There are two sources of fund; the short term and long term sources. The short term sources of funds are funds needed for a short period of time. It must be raised within the shortest possible time in order to be useful to the school or educational institutions. Funds are of different forms such as physical cash, credit facilities, allowances or discount received, differed expenses, and undistributed profits amongst others. When there is delay in raising fund, it will no longer be beneficial to the educational administrator. Short term sources of funds are grouped into internal and external sources. Internal sources of fund are the ones available within the organization e.g. retained earnings, depreciation and so on., while the external sources of funds are those outside the school or educational institution which requires contact with other external bodies e.g. UNESCO, UNICEF and so on and loans from commercial banks, exchange programmes embarked upon by different institutions.

Maiyashi (2003) agreed that good education funding is necessary for economic growth and suggested that the government should let people realize that it cannot do it alone. Maiyashi further submitted that the government has not performed up to expectation in terms of funding education in Nigeria, since the federal government has not allocated up to 17% of its annual budget in any given year. He advised that the government should create awareness and avenues for communities to assist in financing education, noting that African citizens must continue to demand education as a right from their government. According to him, education must be well funded if we want economic growth and quality assurance and this will be easy if deregulation of funding secondary schools is put to play.

Deregulated funding of education means government's relaxation of their involvements in education funding. When partially operationalized, deregulated funding of education assumes the status of joint venture funding or what is popularly referred to as the 'public/private partnership' (PPP) in Nigeria's economic parlance. Private sector involvement is needed for proper funding of secondary schools so as to assure quality education. When the education sector is being permitted to deregulate, government relaxes its function in funding education and gives room to private persons, communities, non-governmental organizations such as churches and social clubs to support the funding of education while the government provides policy guideline (Afangideh, 2010). Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2007) noted that the rate at which the private sector participates in the provision of education has to be checked as a way of reutilizing our education system. Interestingly, both dimensions of funding deregulation are operational in Nigeria while government regulates to ensure quality. Apart from the question of total funding, it has been observed that when private individuals are allowed to fully participate in funding secondary schools, they still insist on government assistance in the form of instructional materials and other school facilities. Hence Edwin (2004) insisted on a fair share of the dividends of the Universal Basic Education Programme of the Federal Government for every Nigerian child that attends a private school. It is obvious that when secondary schools funding is being deregulated and the private sector is involved, quality assurance will be achieved because proper funding of the education sector is the key to quality education. Hence funds are needed for the following to ensure smooth running of secondary schools: payment of staff salaries, the procurement of instructional materials, the transportation cost of running schools, the erection of new buildings and maintenance of existing ones, administration of examinations, certification, procurement and installation of heavy scientific and technological equipment, maintenance and sustenance of the schools and external communications (Afangideh, 2008)

Funds for the running of school activities: Financial resources refer to money or fund that is made available to the education sector. Financial resources are made of monetary input into a system (Ebong, 2006). They are the lubricant of any programme. The adequate provision of fund to the education sector will help in achieving its goals and objectives hence when the secondary schools are properly funded, quality assurance will be ensured. Ekundayo in Ayeni (2009), stated that resources in education refer to the totality of everything which the education system needs for its smooth running. These include human, physical, material and financial resources. In the same vein, Maduagwu and Nwogu (2006), stated that throughout the world, individuals and government have acknowledged education as a form of investment in human beings which yields economic returns. He further stressed the importance of funding in any education system and maintained that for schools to function effectively, they need sufficient money; money is needed to buy textbooks, establish new buildings, pay teachers' salaries, acquire science equipment and maintain other services that are required by a school to its functions as an educational institution. Maduagwu and Nwogu (2006) stated that international agencies can participate in the funding of

secondary education through making fund available to the schools for the following purposes: (a) purchase of instructional material, (b) purchasing of textbooks, (c) sponsoring of students extracurricular activities such as excursion, (d) granting of scholarships, (e) electricity supply, (f) payment of teacher's salaries, (g) organizing seminars/workshops and so on.

Funds for the procurement of instructional materials: Instructional materials are those tangible materials that aid the process of teaching and learning and make the pupils to learn fast. Arogundade in Ayeni (2009) noted that teaching without instructional materials is like tea without sugar. Effective teaching-learning process cannot be guaranteed where there are no instructional materials to be use. Therefore, there is need for the adequate provision of teaching or instructional materials in quality and quantity for effective teaching and learning to take place. Children at the upper basic learn faster through observation and imitation. If they are seeing what they are being taught, it will instill in them the spirit to put it in practice thereby developing and bringing out the talent in them and making them more creative. instructional materials are those things or materials that help to facilitate the teaching and learning process in the classroom and make the student to understand well whatsoever topic is being taught. They include charts, models, pictures, computer sets, radio and television and so on. In subjects like agriculture, they include fertilizer, seeds, farm tools, soil samples, feed samples and so on; in subject like social studies, they taught at this level of education (Nakpodia, 2011).

Fund for the support of payment of teachers' salaries and other welfare packages: In the school system, teachers are the managers, coordinators, organizers and directors of other resources in the whole process of teaching and learning in the classroom. Without them, the process of teaching will not take place and there will be no learning outcome and also the productive force of the society will be low. Teachers are fundamental resources to the development of the school system. Their demands are crucial to the success of any educational programme. He went further to state also that teachers are the most important refined human species that skillfully identify, develop and nurture the potentials of productive citizenry for meaningful creation of wealth, pleasures and services which will sustain quality life.

Therefore, there is need for them to be well motivated just as the sayings goes the labourers deserve their wages. When teachers are being paid their salaries and others wages at the right time, they are forced to put in their best in teaching. But if they are not being paid, they find it very difficult to enter the classroom to teach. They convert the time for academic activities into money making activities by bringing items from home to be sold to the children. According to Achimugu (2002), the issue of non-payment of teachers' salaries as at when due is a general problem facing both the public and private educational institutions in Nigeria. This usually has a negative effect on the performance of the teachers in the classroom and also on the entire system as most times, the teachers embark on strike as a means or strategy to protest the non-payment of their salaries.

He further stressed that apart from their complaints about low and irregular payment, the working environment of the teachers is not conducive for serious academic exercise.

Non-Governmental Organizations or International agencies can participate in the funding of public secondary schools for quality assurance through the provision of money in order to support the government for the payment of teachers' salaries and other welfare packages that will motivate them in their teaching (Achimugu, 2002). This is necessary because when schools are properly funded and teachers are well paid, it encourages them to equip the children with the right type of values, skills, knowledge for lifelong learning that will help them to find new solution to their environmental, economic and social issues and as such, quality will be assured. Sponsoring of student's excursion activities: International agencies can also participate in the funding of public secondary education by sponsoring of students excursion programme. Onuka (2004) explained excursion to be an activity organized by a school (not including work experience) during which students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities. He further stated that field trip or excursion trip for students is a journey by a group of students to a place away from their normal environment. Excursions are defined as educational experiences conducted during school hours to correlate with the regular classroom instructional program. It should be an integral part of classroom instruction. The experiences gained during excursion should give relevance and meaning to knowledge. Excursion activities also help children to learn as they see things that are being taught to them outside their physical learning environment as this will also help to ensure quality. Granting of funds for teachers professional development programmes: Professional development refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. Moreover, professional development and other organized in-service programmes are designed to foster the growth of teachers that can be used for their further development in their profession as qualified teachers (Okebukola, 2002). Professional development and in-service training simply consist of workshops or short term courses that offer teachers new information on specifics of their work. The teacher's professional development programme involves in-services educational training, international conferences, workshops and seminars, mentoring of new teachers, staff- training and computer-based training. Therefore, since these programmes enhance teacher's development which will be transformed to develop the students, it is imperative for Non-governmental organizations to participate in ensuring that these programmes operate in full capacity with the provision of financial support to run these programmes so as to ensure quality in schools (Ajayi, 2005). Quality assurance according to Roberts (2001) has recently been scrutinized both intensively and extensively. Quality assurance is rooted in the industry as it was first used in the industry of the Western World, as a proof that a product

met certain acclaimed quality (Aiya, 2014). Hence deregulating the funding of secondary schools is necessary so as to achieve quality assurance.

Statement of Problem

With the government alone, secondary schools are suffering as they are encountered with poor funding, poor staff personnel, poor supervision of school activities, monetization of examination administration, absence of staff development programmes for teachers, poor basic school facilities and so on. On the contrary the education stakeholders are of the view that if private participation is encouraged, a lot of these challenges will be minimal and to them deregulation is the best option. These challenges faced by secondary schools if not properly handled will deprive the aim of government in achieving the goals of secondary education. From the researcher's observation, it was noticed that effectiveness of deregulation of funding is poor and it has affected quality assurance in secondary schools. In other words, does deregulation of funding actually have a relationship with quality assurance?

Research Questions

The following research question was used to guide the study;
To what extent does deregulation of funding contribute to quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated for this study
Ho1: There is no significant contribution of deregulation of funding to quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

This study used the correlational design. Answer was sought to the research question and the research hypothesis was tested for result that was inferred on the population of the study. The population of the study comprised of all the principals from the 247 public secondary schools in Rivers States. From which a sample of 185 principals was drawn using the multistage sampling approach. The principals responded to two structured validated instruments titled deregulation on funding Questionnaire (DFQ) and quality assurance Questionnaire (QAQ) designed by the researcher and its reliability coefficient was 0.73 using cronbach alpha methods. Simple regression was used to answer the research question while t-test associated with simple regression was used to test the null hypothesis.

Research Question 1

To what extent does deregulation of funding contribute to quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4.1: Simple regression analysis on the extent deregulation of funding relates to quality assurance.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard error of the estimate
1	0.186	0.035	0.029	5.590

0.035x100=3.50%. This shows that deregulation of funding predicts 3.50% of quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers State. The remaining 96.50% cannot be accounted by funding.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant contribution of deregulation of funding to quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4.2: t-test associated with simple regression analysis on the extent deregulation of funding relates to quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	57.498	3.556		16.168	
Deregulation of funding	0.236	0.093	0.186	2.527	0.012

The table showed the probability value to be 0.012 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence there was a significant contribution between deregulation of funding and quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on the above, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The findings revealed that respondents agreed to the fact there is a significant relationship between deregulation of funding and quality assurance and from the findings of other researchers, it is clear that Deregulated funding of education means government's relaxation of their involvements in education funding. From observation and findings of the study, it is obvious that when the education sector is being permitted to deregulate, government relaxes its function in funding education and gives room to private persons, communities, non-governmental organizations such as churches and social clubs to support the funding of education. In support of this, Maiyashi (2003) agreed that good education funding is necessary for economic growth and suggested that the government should let people realize that it cannot do it alone. He also went further to say that education must be well funded if we want economic growth and quality assurance and this will be easy if deregulation of funding secondary schools is put to play. In line with this, Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2007) opined that private sector participation in the provision of education has to be checked as a way of reutilizing our education system. Interestingly, both dimensions of funding deregulation are operational in Nigeria while government regulates to ensure quality. It is obvious from findings that when funding is being deregulated in secondary schools, teaching and learning becomes easy that even the principals will be willing to manage their schools because of availability of funds and with this, quality assurance can be achieved. This can only be achieved if the government is ready and willing to deregulate the funding of secondary schools and since findings of the study revealed that there is a significant contribution of deregulation of funding to quality assurance, it therefore means that the government needs to deregulate the funding of secondary schools so that there will be availability of funds that will ensure quality is achieved in our secondary schools.

Conclusion

The study concluded that funding predicted 3.50% of quality assurance in secondary schools and there was a significant contribution between deregulation of funding and quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were highlighted based on the findings of the study.

1. Government should deregulate educational services to enhance teaching and learning in secondary schools in Rivers State.

2. Private sectors and individuals should be willing to participate in funding and provision of facilities in secondary schools for quality assurance to be achieved.

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