

Private Sector Participation in the Development of Secondary Education in Abia State, Nigeria: Implication for National Development

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Abstract

This study investigated private sector participation in the development of secondary education in Abia State. The study was guided four objectives, four research questions and four hypotheses. The population of the study comprised 5200 persons while a sample size of 1500 private and public 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. The PSPDSEAQ had a modified four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Mean and rank order statistics were used to answer the four research questions, while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level of significance. At the end of the study, the researcher made the following findings. Private sector participates actively in the development of secondary education in Abia State. Some problems hinder effective participation of private sector in the development of secondary education in Abia State. The study recommended 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, there should appropriate legislation to provide a legal backing and streamline operation of private schools.

Keywords: Private Sector, Participation, Development, Secondary Education

Introduction

The history of education is as old as the creation of man. However, as a social animal, man by nature is a very curious being and as such, is inspired to explore his environment in his quest for knowledge. Man's quest for knowledge is unlimited and largely depends on the value system of the society. For example, the value system of education in ancient Greece was anchored around the training of the mentally and physically well-balanced citizens while the Roman placed emphasis on the military development of citizens.

Secondary education indeed occupies strategic position in the educational sector in Abia State. This is due to its important role in preparing the students for useful living in the society and for higher education. It is the educational structure that lies between the primary and tertiary education. The secondary educational system prepares the youths for political, social and economic life. This is because it is regarded as the education of youths and youth education is a central process in the building of nations. A nation's position in the world, its living standard and its level of development depends, more than ever before, on the education of its young people. To ensure that secondary education achieves its objectives, attaining high standard that can instil the desired skill in an individual to properly function actively in the society should be the major point of the schools. Therefore, the broad objectives of secondary schools are to prepare the individuals for useful living with the society and for higher education (NPE, 2004).

The private sector is that sector of the economy not owned and controlled by the government but by private individuals who have come together to pull resources and control the economy with the sole aim of maximizing profit. 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. However, there seem to be a persistent and wide-spread loss of confidence in public educational institutions. According to Ajayi (2000) public education today has been faced with various challenges ranging from mismanagement of allocated resources, to falling academic standards.

Other important reasons for loss of confidence in our educational system include poor planning and consistent lack of investment in the education system. This had led to a near collapse of the system living the education infrastructure in an appalling and dilapidated state. A casual visit to any public school in Nigeria would reveal the extent to which her various educational institutions have decayed. Educational facilities at all levels are in a bad shape, schools are littered with battered structures, worn out equipment (where they are available at all), junk and unserviceable vehicles, raggedy classroom buildings, inadequate manpower in quantity and quality, instability in the academic calendar owing to remedy the situation parents who are concerned about giving their wards the best available educational options will obviously be looking for viable alternatives and this, it seems, is manifestly the case in Nigeria. Many parents seem to be looking for quality education at whatever cost, economically and otherwise and regardless of who is providing it. There given the level of decay and the pervasive conditions of ineptitude and lack of professionalism in the public schools, many parents fell let down, but they cannot give their dream of giving their children the best in terms of education. This is where the private educational institutions come in.

According to Adebayo (2009) private ownership and control of schools in Nigeria has become very popular since the early 1900s. Privately owned schools are now being looked upon to correct the lapses in public schools. 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. This is why this research agrees with the view that education in its entirety 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 be encouraged to participate adequately in the development of education, most especially, secondary education.

Statement of the Problem

However, the issue of qualitative education has been a major concern to every stakeholder in educational sector. Most secondary schools in Abia State lack the necessary equipment and infrastructures that will help facilitate teaching and learning. They are also lacking in terms of teacher's availability and qualified manpower. Teachers are not adequately motivated. This, coupled with the dwindling resources to the educational sector, increasing population and increasing demand for education, has combined to make it difficult for government alone to provide qualitative education for the citizenry. Therefore, there is an urgent need, for a greater community and civil society participation in providing, funding and managing of educational services. Thus, there is need for all levels of government to forge participation across the challenges of education for all. This study intends to investigate how the private sector can actively participate in the development of secondary education in Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives 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. Determine ways by which the private sector can be more effectively involved in the development of secondary education in Abia State.
3. Identify the constraints to private sector participation in the development of secondary education in Abia State.
4. Strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Research Questions

In order to carry out this research, the following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. What are the reasons for the participation of private sector in the development of secondary education in Abia State?
2. How can the private sector be effectively involved in the development of secondary education in Abia State?
3. What are the constraints to the private development of secondary education in Abia State?

4. What are the strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development secondary education in Abia State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study.

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 public-school staff on how the private sector can be effectively involved in the development of secondary education in Abia State.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of private school staff and staff of public schools on the constraints to the private sector participation in the development of secondary education in Abia State.
4. 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

Historical Development of the Private Sector in Nigerian Education

The role played by the private sector in the development of education in Nigeria has remained a landmark in the historical development of Nigerian. Fafunwa (1987) traced the history of education in Nigeria to the establishment of the traditional koranic schools and grammar schools by early missionaries who saw basic literacy as a necessity for understanding their religious faith. This marked a turning point in the practice of faith because people from that point did not only embrace their faiths as a matter of indoctrination by an Imam or a Pastor but understood through their ability to read the sacred books the doctrinal basis for their faiths and affiliations. It was no longer just what “the Mallam said” or what “the pastor said”, but what “I have read” from the holy books and now I believe.

As time went by, education was not only required for understanding religious faiths, but also for self-integration into the economic activities of the then colonial administration. The first nationals that were brought into the colonial administration of that time were needed mostly for support services, hence education focused on reading, writing and basic arithmetic which we popularly refer to as the three RS. The disengagement of the colonial administration in the piloting of the affairs of the national saw yet another monumental revolution in the education of Nigeria. Education was no longer seen as a tool for just support services both as the shortest tool for full emancipation and development of the individual as well as the advancement of society osuala (1998).

Ezeani (2005), captured the new spirit in Nigerian Education when he described education as the only medium for a purposive and intelligent exertion of human body and mind in order to produce goods and services for immediate consumption and for capital outlay.

- a) Christ High School (1934) in Lagos
- b) New African College (1938) in Onitsha
- c) Western Boys’ High School (1947), Benin
- d) Adeola Odutola College, IjebuOde, (1945)

Several other schools were established. However, other schools worthy of mentioning are those schools established by communities. These include the following:

- i. Ibibio State College, Ikot Ekpene (1949)
- ii. Egbado College, Ilaro (1950)

From the foregoing, one may ask, what concrete role has the private sector played in the development of secondary education in Nigeria? The role played by the private sector in the development of secondary education has remained a landmark in the historical development of Nigeria. Individuals, groups, established most of the educational institutions and voluntary agencies and missionaries as previously noted. When the military struck in 1966, much had to be done in the Nigerian educational structure and direction. The military ushered in an era that witnessed radical and somewhat revolutionary departure from the trend and true approach to education in Nigeria that operated the dual system of educational control, the local government, private individuals and other nongovernmental organizations managed and administered education in the country while the government provided grants-in-aid to schools. One of the reasons for government take-over of schools in Nigeria was the need for government to plan the educational system as part of the national integrated plan for social and economic development.

However, the controversy surrounding the government takeover of school is not yet over. In spite of all the interventions by government and its agencies in education, the private sector has remained an active participant in the educational industry. Although, the Gowon administration in 1970 attempted to reduce the participation of the private sector in provision of education to the barest minimum, the private sector has continued to play a significant role in the development of education in Nigeria. Agu (2005) mentioned the areas where the private sector made immense contribution in the development of secondary education in Nigeria to include the following;

(a) Upholding high standards in education

Agu said that private schools have often been known to maintain, high standards in the education of the youths. This is due to maintenance of high level of discipline and commitment duty by teachers as well as close supervision of teaching, and learning activities on the part of the administration. This sets up high competition among schools as each seeks to be rated as the best in town.

Today, Schools are classified into which is good, better and best. The implication is that if one is bad or only good, it might soon loose relevance and be pushed out of existence because the children will be transferred to the better school by their parents. The researcher supporting Agu used her own school where she is a teacher to sight example. Once it is 8 o'clock, the gate is locked and the students are prevented from being seen on the road coming to school anytime as well as teachers.

(b) Upholding the ethics of education

Agu further said that education is a value-loaded enterprise and if it must retain its traditional image, those who seek to transmit it must be role models themselves. Values such as honesty, discipline, fairness, kindness, transparency, good manners are some of the qualities teachers and administrators must imbibe if they are to be effective in the education process.

(c) Combating Corruption in Education

Agu more so said that corruption has eaten deep into all facets of the Nigerian society, education is not left out. These are manifested forms such as money extortion from students by

teachers and administrators, aiding and abetting examination malpractice, illegal sale of handouts, promoting cultism and demand for sexual gratification in exchange for passing students in examination. Ezeam (2005), supporting Agu states that corruption in the political life of a people is tragedy, but corruption in the educational sector is double tragedy.

(d) De-commercialization of Education

Agu moreover, asserted that the success in the provision of education today is often measured by the number of students in our various classes or number of graduates that can quickly be rolled out of our schools.

The implications of this phenomenon are that the more students we have, the more money we can generate. According to him, the emphasis is now shifted from value adding to human lives to revenue generation. Today, nobody talks about ideal class size or teacher to student ratio. While it is a fact that nobody runs an enterprise to lose but proprietors must strike a balance between profit maximization and educational standard.

(e) Provision of Infrastructure for Quality Education

Agu said that from educational point of view, infrastructure refers to all physical things, which support educational services being provided to enhance teaching and learning activities in school. These include classrooms, hostels, laboratories, workshops, equipment, vehicle, toilets, urinary, lighting fixtures, water, teaching materials, etc. Students have shown that the availability of infrastructure in a school has positive effect on the performance of students. For example, Udoh (1990) observed that children would learn more and work harder when facilities are adequate.

(f) Globalization of Education

According to Agu, globalization is defined as the modernization of processes and methods of conveying services and information from one point to another in the shortest possible time and with relative ease. According to him in the education industry, globalization is creating both opportunities and challenges for private sector.

This perception led to several curricula conferences and subsequently government intervention initiatives which sought to inject a new spirit into education. The new spirit was the total development of man. That is; spirit, body and soul so that at the end, he is a productive member of his society.

Supply of Educational Inputs

The Private sector may also be involved in educational through the supply of educational inputs used by both private and public schools. These may include; the supplies of text books, curriculum and other learning material to public and private schools, building and operating educational infrastructure such as student hostel and the delivery of associated services to school & such as school review and inspections, health care services and canteen services etc.

Contribution by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Commercial Banks Contributions

Banks are not left out as private sector in educational development. Okoro put it that banks have introduced various ways of showing their social responsibilities in the area of education. According to him, Okeke (2003) revealed that their image building effort anchored on co-operate social responsibility would count on professional chairs endowed by banks; science lab, library and furniture supplied as well as text and exercise books donated. Okeke further said that account

would also be taken of the prizes/awards instituted for students, quiz, debating, scholarships, and grants awarded. This underpins the fact that there are varieties of educational programs, activities and responsibilities now shouldered by the banks.

The new generation banks now, in their policies believe that education is the key to the overall social economic and political development of Nigeria, and as a result they have career development programs for the educational institutions. This package includes seminars to educate and create career awareness in the mind of the student/pupils, in the areas like medicine, law, banking, engineering and other professional fields. Banks like UBA has a saving account specially meant for the educational future of the children of their customers. Okoro further said that Diamond bank blueprint on their social responsibility as published in the Banks Annual Report and Accounts (2002, p.1 1) showed that the bank is construction a ₦6million dormitory at the Madonna school for the Handicapped children Okpanam Delta State.

The building will house both the handicapped children and their care givers, the bank is also building a computer center at the Imo State University Owerri. The project, which includes structured cabling, is valued at ₦10 million furthermore, the Bank is collaborating with the Lagos Business School (LBS) in funding the institutions center for Entrepreneurship Studies (CES) a pivotal academy that is expected to help deepen the enterprise culture in Nigeria.

Social Clubs and Organizations

Information also from school service department, Zonal Board, revealed that Rotary Club of Nigeria collaborated in the area of provision of infrastructure. Schools that benefited include Okpuumubor comprehensive secondary school, and Ndi Egoro Girls' secondary school. The same Rotary Club also provided portable drinking water by sinking boreholes at schools like Girls' High School, Ogbor Hill Aba, Secondary Technical, Ogbor Hill, and Girls' Secondary Commercial School, Aba.

Parents Teachers Association (PTA)

The contribution of Parents Teachers Association to the development of secondary school education cannot be underestimated. Visually in all the secondary schools, they have made immense contributions. In Ninlan Demonstration Secondary School, Parents Teachers Association provided laboratory tables and stools. There are also many schools where PTA contributed in one way or the other.

Alumni of Schools

People that pass through one secondary school form Old Boys Association and remember their alma mater in one way or the other. Some build dormitory for their alma mater, some classrooms, some involve themselves in the development of one infrastructure or the other some even donate books for their library. All these go a long way to develop secondary education. A case was sighted where the former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, commended King's College Lagos Old Boy's Association (KCOBA) during centenary anniversary of the school through multimillion-naira projects aimed at revamping the decayed physical infrastructures of the school.

Theoretical Framework

The study will anchor on two theories namely McFetridge and Lalls' (1991) Public Interest theory of Regulation and Deregulation of economic concern in the society and Privatization Model

proposed by Varghese (2000). The Public Interest Theory of Deregulation states that regulation exists to correct market failures thereby increasing societal wealth. The theory went on to posit that market monopoly, asymmetric information and externalities are sources of the market failures which regulations controls. McFetidge and Lalls' public interest theory has the following predictions:

- i. Deregulation would occur if the market imperfection which necessitated regulations disappears. For instance, a change in technology which eliminated a natural monopoly.
- ii. Deregulation would also occur if it were discovered that a regulatory regime which had been perceived to be in the public interest no longer was.

Thus, the theory posits that one of a number of policy instruments that is available to the government to control the economy is regulation and when regulation fails, government resorts to deregulation. Therefore, theory of regulation becomes a theory of deregulation. This leads to the understanding that the Public Interest Theory as it relates to regulation and deregulation has more economic than educational inclinations since it involves the virtual elimination of price, entry and exit control, the elimination of monopoly in many individual sub-market and the absence of ownership restrictions and separation, internationalization of institutions and the enforcement of free trade agreement.

The Public Interest Theory of Educational Deregulation refers to some form of competition and abolition of obstacles in the entry and exit of suppliers of educational services which in turn means creating new synergies between public and private providers of education. This implies that the public interest theory of deregulation suggests that, opportunity should be given to parent and students to choose which school to attend because they are the immediate consumers of educational services.

The Public Interest Theory of Regulation exist to correct the imbalance and imperfections in the economy, from the decay which have been created in an era of mass participation while the Public Interest Theory of Deregulation exist to remove all forms of control when regulation fails. This relationship explains the fact that the provision of educational services has gone through service of stages, from the era of mass participation for self-consumption, regulated participation for optional consumption and the gradual deregulation of participation which is currently in vogue for self, optional and societal consumption. Therefore, it is when education has been deregulated that private individuals can come in.

The second theory that this study is hinged on is the Privatization Model proposed by Varghese (2000). The privatization model argues that funding of education should be left in the hands of the private sector. The argument here is that the cost and provision of education is determined by the price mechanism i.e., the market forces of demand and supply. Therefore, education is a private investment from which the beneficiaries will reap the benefits.

Varghese (2000) stated that the efforts to privatize education by encouraging private agencies to set up institutions of learning enjoys limited success in general education". Hence, the growth of private sector education has led to two types of distortions.

- i. The encouragement of only certain courses especially professional course.
- ii. It adversely affects equality consideration in education since admission is based more on to pay principle than on merit.

Hence, private sector may respond more to the market process than to national social concerns.

Thus, to Varghese, privatization of the education sector may lead to the promotion of certain courses at the expense of other courses and better of section of the society at the cost of those who deserve it but are economically poor students. He went further to explain that educational burden should be a shared responsibility between the government and the non-governmental agencies since education is both to the interest and benefit of the public and private.

Review of Empirical Studies

Adebayo (2009) 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 five hundred (1,500) comprising of 500 private and 1000 public schools respectively. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire while mean and standard deviation was used to analyse 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.

Agboola (2003) 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 700 managers of public and private sector establishments in Anambra State. The sample of the study was 520 respondents selected using purposive sampling, frequencies and percentages was used in answering the research questions. The findings from the study indicated that lack of awareness of the need for public - private partnership, government attitudes and also relationships with schools and then 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.

Afolabi (2005) posited 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 schools since their products could not complete favourably with the products of the private schools. Corroborating Afolabi's view, Tooley and Dixon (2005) in their study of private schools serving the poor in low-income countries discovered that higher achievement is attained in private unaided than in government schools. Children in private unaided schools usually perform better in terms of raw scores than do children in government schools in three curriculum subjects, including mathematics and English. Moreover, private unaided schools achieve these results at between half and a quarter of the per pupil teacher cost. Although teachers are paid considerably less in private unaided schools, they are not any less satisfied than their government school counterparts.

Adeogun (2001) discovered a very strong positive relationship between instructional resources and academic performance. According to Adeogun, schools endowed with more resources perform better than schools that are less endowed. This corroborates the study by Babayomi (1999) that private schools performed better than public schools because of the availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources. Adeogun (2001), discovered a low of instructional resources available in public schools and stated that our public schools are starved of both teaching and learning resources. To him, effective teaching cannot take place within the classroom, if basic instructional resources are not present (Likoko, et al, 2013).

Oguntimehin, et al. (2010) in a study titled Teachers perception of private schools' contribution to educational development in Ijebu North Local Government of Ogun State, Nigeria, discovered that private schools contributed significantly to educational development in the Local Government Areas. Thus, the performance could further be enhanced if they are properly monitored and supervised by the government.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. The population for the study comprised of 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 to randomly select respondents for the 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. A twenty-five (25) item structured questionnaire tagged "Private sector participation in the development of secondary school education in Abia state (PSPDSEAQ) and document analysis was the instrument used for the study. 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 which was administered by the researcher with the help of two (2) research assistants to the respondents.

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 was 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 2.50

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 (\bar{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		Rank Order		Remark
		N	\bar{X}	N	\bar{X}	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2	
1	To genuinely assist the Government in educational	700	3.7	800	3.58	3.64	4 th	Accepted

	financing as provided in the National Policy on Education							
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 show 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: How can the private sector be effectively involved in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Table 2: Mean (\bar{x}) and rank order statistics of respondents on how the private sector can be effectively involved in the development of secondary education.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Private School Staff		Public School Staff				Rank Order	Remark
		N	\bar{X}	N	\bar{X}	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2		
6	The private sector can assist in the enhancement of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens	700	3.44	800	3.59	3.52	2 nd	Accepted	
7	The private sector can help in the expansion of educational facilitates in response to social needs	700	2.92	800	3.4	3.16	5 th	Accepted	
8	Can assist in improving the standard and quality of education in the state	700	3.62	800	3.39	3.51	3 rd	Accepted	
9	Can offer diversified curriculum to cater for the difference in	700	3.56	800	3.76		1 st	Accepted	

	talents if those who passed through them							
10	Can also provide education in the core and prevocational subject areas	700	3.47	800	3.48	3.48	4 th	Accepted
	Total	700	3.40	800	3.52			

The results of the data show that the mean scores of the assessed variables ranged between 3.16 and 3.66 were all accepted. The data revealed that all the variables were accepted as measures through which the private sector can be effectively involved in the development of secondary education. This is because all the mean scores were above the criterion means of 2.5.

Research Question 3: What are the constraints to the private participation in the development of secondary education in Abia State?

Table 3: Mean (\bar{x}) and rank order statistics of respondents on the constraints to the 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}				
11	Education is intensive which restricts expansion	700	3.09	800	3.76	3.43		3 rd	Accepted
12	No clear-cut legislation to guide private investors	700	1.99	800	1.48	1.74		8 th	Accepted
13	Bureaucratic bottleneck in registration procedures	700	1.69	800	2.69	2.19		7 th	Accepted
14	The private participants are always after their gain	700	3.30	800	3.25	3.28		6 th	Accepted
15	The private participants do not always have enough fund	700	3.55	800	3.48	3.52		2 nd	Accepted
16	Most private participants lack the interest	700	3.5	800	3.58	3.54		1 st	Accepted
17	The socio-political situation in the country is a great impediment	700	1.30	800	1.44	1.37		9 th	Accepted
18	High interest rate of the banking system which restricts expansion	700	3.57	800	3.25	3.41		4 th	Accepted
19	Poor government assistance to private investors	700	3.5	800	3.28	3.39		5 th	Accepted
	Total	700	2.83	800	2.91				Accepted

The result in the table above shows that the mean scores of the assessed variables ranged between 1.37 to 3.54. The data revealed that items 12, 13 and 17 were rejected by the respondents on the constraints to private sector participation in the development of secondary education. This is because the items mean were less than items 11, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 were accepted by the respondents. This is because their items mean were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development of secondary education in Abia State?

Table 4: 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				Rank Order	Remark
		N	\bar{X}	N	\bar{X}	\bar{X}_1	\bar{X}_2		
20	Clearly defined legislation to guide potential investors	700	1.8	800	1.48	1.64		6 th	Accepted
21	Adequate incentives in improved access to loan	700	3.44	800	3.25	3.35		4 th	Accepted
22	Well-defined regulatory framework	700	3.70	800	3.48	3.59		2 nd	Accepted
23	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
24	There should be clear guidelines for the approval of schools	700	1.5	800	2.69	2.10		5 th	Accepted
25	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				

The data shows that the mean scores of the assessed variables ranges between 1.64 and 3.62. The data revealed that items 20 and 24 were rejected by the respondents on the strategies for enhancing private sector involvement in the development of secondary education. This is because the items mean were less than the criterion mean of 2.50. Except items 21, 22, 23 and 25 were accepted by the respondents. This is because their items mean were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50.

Test of Hypotheses

This shows that the mean, standard deviation and z-calculated scores for the hypotheses testing.

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 5: 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.

Variables	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	H ₀ 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 public-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 public-school staff on how the private sector can be effectively involved in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Table 6: z-test of difference between the mean scores of private school staff and public-school staff on how the private sector can be effectively involved in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	z-Cal	z-Crit	Level of Significant	Decision
Private School Staff	700	3.40	0.63	1498	4.08	1.96	0.05	H ₀ was Rejected
Public School Staff	800	3.52	0.49					

The table showed that the z-calculated value of 4.08 was greater than the z-critical value of 1.96 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 schools and public-school staff on how the private sector can be effectively involved in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the mean score of private school staff and public-school staff on the constraints to the private sector participation in the development of secondary education in the state.

Table 7: z-test of the difference between the mean score of private school staff and public-school staff on the constraints to private sector participation in the development of secondary education in Abia State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	DF	z-Cal	z-Crit	Level of Significant	Decision
Private School Staff	700	2.83	0.58	1498	29.41	1.96	0.05	

Public School Staff	800	0.53	0.53						Ho was Rejected
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The table showed that the z-calculated value of 29.41 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.

Hypothesis 4

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 8: 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.

Variables	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 2004:61).

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 by-products of the school system; they should equally participate in the functioning of education. Education therefore should be a shared responsibility (Nwekina, 2005).

The effectiveness of the private sector in the development of secondary education

The study found that there has been quite a huge success in the development of secondary education in Abia State by the private sector. The private sector was effective in helping to expand educational facilities and also provided education in core and also prevocational subject areas. They equally demonstrated efficiency in improving the standard and quality of education in Abia State and also offered diversified curriculum to those who passed through them. The test of hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean score of private school staff and that of public schools on the effectiveness of the private sector in the development of secondary education.

Constraints to private sector participation in the development of Secondary Education

The study revealed that the major constraints to private sector participation in the development of secondary education were the intensive nature of education which restricts expansion, high interest rate of the banking system, poor government assistance to private investors and lack of interest by most private participants. The statistical test showed that there is a significant difference between the mean score of private school staff and public-school staff on the issues. It is equally evident from the study that government assistant and supervision were lacking.

The situation that could be responsible for this is the inability of the private sector to expand to rural areas and improve on their quality. It is disheartening to note that private schools are established at every nook and cranny of the state and sometimes in private buildings without adherence to specify cautions. This situation calls for urgent government intervention and provide further justification for education of legislation to guide the operations of private schools.

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

A major conclusion of this study 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

The following recommendations are made by the study:

1. Government should establish a functional framework for the establishment, control and supervision of private schools in Abia State.
2. Appropriate legislations should be enacted to provide legal backing and streamline the operations of private schools.
3. Appropriate forms of curriculum offering should be developed and all private schools made to follow it to ensure uniform standard.
4. Private investors should be encouraged to expand to rural areas to avoid overcrowding in the cities.
5. All private schools should be duly registered and be made to charge uniform school fees.
6. There should be a data base of all private schools and their location for easy monitoring.

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