ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN OWNERSHIP AND FUNDING OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
The study aimed at investigating the role of private sector in ownership and funding of secondary education in Anambra State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted to provide the right blueprint for the study and two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study comprised all the 686 principals of the 686 private secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw 446 principals as the sample for the study. The researchers developed a structured questionnaire titled 'Private Sector, Ownership and Funding of Secondary Education Scale' (PSOFSES), and it was used to collect relevant primary data, and was validated by 3 experts. The reliability test of the questionnaire was ascertained through Cronbach Alpha method, and with a coefficient of 0.83 was considered satisfactory for the study. The researcher administered the instrument together with the help of 10 research assistants. Mean was utilized as the descriptive statistical parameter to present and interpret results that answered the research questions. The study found that the role of the private sector in relation to ownership of secondary education among others include: bearing the cost involved in the acquisition of land for setting up of the school, school buses and vehicles for operation, legal registration of the school/business name for operations, and constantly promoting the school's vision, mission, programmes and activities, as well as bearing the cost of maintenance of the school plants. It was concluded that both schools type enjoy the inherent benefits and bear potential risks, taking responsibility in sourcing for funds, allocation of funds, and utilization of funds to keep the school operational and sustainable.

Keywords: Private Sector, Ownership, Funding, Secondary Education.

Introduction

The demand for education across the globe has always been on the increase, given its invaluable impact on individuals, organisations and the society at large. This is perhaps, because education is believed to liberate and illuminate the path of every nation in pursuit of progress and development. Through education, there have been useful inventions, be it in science, technology and humanities, to make life better and easier. A more educated individual and society is understandably a more appreciable and adore society, due to how education impact the quality of life through its teachings and learning processes. This is why the education industry has been sustained, as the need for its services is steadily on the increase. The ever-increasing demand for the services from the education industry, especially at the secondary level has made it almost impossible for the government alone to satisfy the yearnings of people, hence, the need for the private sector involvement in the ownership and operations of secondary schools (Nweke, 2019). In this way, the government is the main authority in the industry which has the responsibility to approve and license private sector to establish secondary schools to run concurrently with those owned by the government, while she remains the regulator of the operations of schools.

The private sector constitutes all non-governmental bodies and individuals which engage in different activities and operations that are needed to drive the economy forward. The private sector might include individuals, religious bodies, corporation organization, including those in banking, manufacturing, petroleum, transportation and logistics, beauty and pageantry, education, hospitality, and techno-digital industries, etcetera, who contributing their quotas towards improving the society. This caliber of people could be owners of businesses and or employees, with interest in making meaningful contributions for the growth and development of the Nigerian society. Abakpa (2021) observed that at the secondary school level of education, the private sector has legal rights to own and operate schools, provided they have met the minimum requirement set by the government. Private schools are those that are owned, founded, sponsored, administered, and managed by private organizations such as religious or social groups. And by owning a school, the individual and or organization is empowered to contribute positively in the education industry.

Ownership has to do with the lawful rights to possess, use, control and transfer the rights and privileges to a third party. These rights could be tangible and intangible. It is the reality of possessing and controlling the use of tangible and intangible assets that is backed by laws of the land. The act of owners entitles the person to be able to enjoy all potential benefits and bear the losses in the course of possessing, using, administering and controlling of the assets (Orji, 2023).

School ownership on the other hand is the condition of having exclusive rights and control over a certain school. Throwing more light to this, Ileso (2021), stressed that the ownership of schools entails a number of rights conferred to the owner to operate a school within the provisions of the law, and make commendable impacts, bearing all the responsibilities cutting across registration of the school and its operations. In the context of this study, the individuals or organisations might take responsibility of ownership by bearing the cost of buying the land on which the school is built, school buses for operation, teaching materials, funding the building and maintenance, having the school registered and accredited for operations, payment of staff, as well as bear the burden for possible setbacks. All these involve a lot of funds.

Funding entails the entire act of sourcing, utilizing and accounting for funds. Corroborating this, Orji (2023), posited that funding has to do with the generation of financial resources, putting to use the funds so generated, as well as rendering a comprehensive account of when, where, for whom, what and how the sourced funds were used through the accounting, auditing and reporting systems for checks and balances. This is to say that it is a process that cuts across getting the funds, using it as well as documenting how it was used for reference purpose. Contributing to the definition, Blueheaven (2019), narrowed it down to sources of funds, which are the avenues from which money and money-related items come into the school. This study will look more closely to the sources of funds as the role the private sector play in funding of secondary education. These might include, but are not limited to: financial support from the Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A.), proceeds from school activities, appeals for fund raising, school fees, alumni contributions, charges for students' use of the school's transport infrastructure, charges for school uniforms and wears, etcetera. It is understandable that adequate funds are needed to smoothly run any establishment, including secondary schools.

Secondary education in Nigeria is that level of schooling that is undertaken after the completion of elementary or primary education but before the tertiary education. This positions secondary education as the intermediary between primary education and tertiary education. It is the education between the upper basic education (Junior Secondary Schooling, 1 to 3) and the immediate post-basic education (Senior Secondary Schooling, 1 to 3), that is meant to equip learners with relevant the right knowledge, skills, awareness and examinations needed to help them migrate to the higher institution level (tertiary education). Based on this, Orji (2023), argued that this level of education is critical, because the adolescents are nurtured here, and prepared for adulthood, and no nation can afford to take it for granted. This is the more reason that secondary education services cannot be left alone for the government, hence the permission for the private sector involvement.

In Anambra State, and for this study, the secondary schools in the private sector are broadly categorized as the mission and the non-mission schools. The mission schools are originally owned by faith-based organisations, such as churches, whereas the non-mission schools are mostly solely owned by individuals or families. The need for the private sector full participation in the provision of secondary education in the State and beyond cannot be over-emphasized. This is because they are believed to be better managed with strict supervision and monitoring of their academic activities and school programs, unlike in most government or public owned schools where there seems to be lapses leading to wide-spread loss of confidence in the effectiveness. A closer observation of public seems to show that faced that public secondary schools in Nigeria, with Anambra State inclusive, have always been faced with teachers' lackadaisical attitude to work, dilapidated and poorly maintained school infrastructure and facilities, high indiscipline among students, dirty and bushy environment, use of obsolete method of teaching, inability of aged teachers to embrace innovations in teaching, overcrowded classrooms, lack of power supply and generating set, general unattractive work environment and low morale of staff, undue bureaucracy in administration of rewards and promotions, etcetera.

It is based on the afore-mentioned lapses that many parents, including the highly ranked in government who are concerned about giving their wards the best available educational options look out for viable alternatives. Supporting this, Ehigiamusoe (2012), observed that many parents seem to be looking for quality education at whatever cost, economically and otherwise and regardless of who is providing it, as they feel let down by public school, yet cannot give up their dream of giving their children the best in terms of education. It has also been observed that since the early 1900s, private ownership and control of schools has become very popular, as they are now being looked upon to correct the ills and lapses in public schools. Giving credence to this, Agundu and Onyali (2021), asserted that it was also in response to the lapses public schools that the then Governor of Anambra State, His Excellency, Mr. Peter Obi granted approval for a return of schools to the missions-the original owners in 2009. It is not surprising that some parents in Anambra State have continued to patronize private schools, irrespective of the cost, location, years of experience, etcetera, which imply that parent feel safer to entrust their wards to schools in the private sector. Giving the foregoing, the thrust of this paper is to examine the role of private sector in ownership and funding of secondary education in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general aim of the study was to examine the role of private sector in ownership and funding of secondary education in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to identify:

1. the role of the private sector in ownership of secondary education in Anambra State.
2. the role of the private sector in funding of secondary education in Anambra State.

Research Question

These research questions were provided answers to in the investigation:

1. In what aspects does the private sector demonstrate her role in ownership of secondary education in Anambra State?
2. How does the private sector perform the function of funding of secondary education in Anambra State?

Methods

The survey descriptive research design was adopted to provide the right blueprint for the study and two research questions were formulated and answered in the study. The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. Anambra is one of the states in Southeastern zone of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the 686 principals of the 686 private secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. This was composed of 115 Mission private schools and 571 non-Mission private schools (Source: Post-Primary Schools Service Commission, PPSSC, 2023). Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw 446 secondary schools, as well as their respective principals as the sample for the study. The researchers developed a structured questionnaire titled 'Private Sector, Ownership and Funding of Secondary Education Scale' (PSOFSES), and it was used to collect relevant primary data. The instrument had 2 sections, namely: section 1 which contained principals' brief bio-data, and section 2, which contained 25 items relevant to ownership and funding of secondary education by the Nigerian

private sector. The instrument was structured on 4-points ratings, including: Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2), and Strongly Disagreed (1). Copies of the structured questionnaire titled 'Private Sector, Ownership and Funding of Secondary Education Scale' (PSOFSES) were subjected for validation by 3 experienced researchers, two from Department of Educational Management and Policy, one from Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), all in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The corrections and suggestions they made were incorporated into the instrument, before being produced for distribution. The reliability test of the questionnaire was ascertained through Cronbach Alpha method, and with a coefficient of 0.83 was considered satisfactory for the study. The researcher administered the instrument together with the help of 10 research assistants. During the survey, 446 questionnaires were printed and distributed, but 424 copies were retrieved. The 424 instruments retrieved implies that an approximately 95% recovery, which implies that the exercise was effective. Mean was utilized as the descriptive statistical parameter to present and interpret results that answered the research questions. For the research question, any item with a mean rating of 2.5 or above was remarked agree, while the item that fell below the mean rating of 2.5 was remarked disagree.

Results

Research Question 1: In what aspects does the private sector demonstrate her role in ownership of secondary education in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean rating of principals from mission and non-mission private secondary schools with regard to the role of the private sector in ownership of secondary education in Anambra State.

S/N	From my observations in the school I work, owners of the school demonstrate ownership by:	Non-Mission (n=349)		Mission (n=75)	
		Mean	Remark	Mean	Remark
1.	Bearing the cost of acquisition of land for setting up of the school	3.20	Agree	2.57	Agree
2.	Bearing the cost of acquisition of school buses and vehicles for operation	2.68	Agree	2.60	Agree
3.	Bearing the procurement of teaching materials in the school	2.80	Agree	2.49	Disagree
4.	Bearing the cost of buildings and infrastructural development of the school	2.77	Agree	2.42	Disagree
5.	Solely bearing the cost of having the school/business name legally registered for operations	2.88	Agree	2.53	Agree
6	Bearing the cost of accreditation and approval of subjects and programmes for the school	2.89	Agree	2.46	Disagree
7	Bearing the burden of remuneration and payment of employees of the school	2.70	Agree	2.34	Disagree
8	Bearing the risks and setbacks that might be suffered by the school	2.85	Agree	2.37	Disagree
9	Taking full responsibility and final decision regarding recruitment, promotion or sacking of school employees	3.21	Agree	2.44	Disagree
10	Remaining the number one promoter of the school's vision, mission, programmes and activities	2.97	Agree	2.52	Agree
11	Bearing the cost of maintenance of school plants	3.11	Agree	2.51	Agree

Table 1 showed that the Mean ratings of principals of non-mission private secondary schools for each item, 1 to 11 was statistically greater than 2.5, implying that the proposed items of the questionnaire were consented to as the ownership roles which the private sector play at the secondary level of education. On the other hand, principals of mission private schools agreed items, 1, 2, 5, 10 and 11 represent the roles they play in terms of ownership of school without interferences. This is because the mean ratings of the items were above 2.5. The result also means that both categories of principals (non-mission and mission) were in agreement that items: 1, 2, 5, 10 and 11. However, the mean ratings of mission-based private secondary school principals were less than 2.5, which implies that they disapproved items: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9. On the contrary, principals on non-mission private schools accepted the items: 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Research Question 2: How does the private sector perform the function of funding of secondary education in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean rating of principals from mission and non-mission private secondary schools with regard to the role of the private sector in funding of secondary education in Anambra State.

S/N	From my observations in the school I work, owners of the school play the role of funding it in the following ways by:	Mission (n=349)		Non-mission (n=75)	
		Mean	Remark	Mean	Remark
1.	Fixing the tuition payable by each student	3.08	Agree	2.65	Agree
2.	Deciding the amount payable for admission forms for intending students	2.90	Agree	2.90	Agree
3.	Development and general operation levies	2.87	Agree	2.53	Agree
4.	Charging accommodation/hostel fees where applicable	2.69	Agree	2.65	Agree
5.	Seeking for grants from government for capital projects in the school	2.02	Disagree	2.92	Agree
6	Charging money for school uniforms, including sporting wears	2.78	Agree	2.83	Agree
7	Charging end of the term/year festivity fee	2.56	Agree	2.69	Agree
8	Seeking for financial supports from PTA	2.66	Agree	2.67	Agree
9	Sales of agricultural proceedings from the schools' ventures	2.39	Disagree	2.44	Disagree
10	Reaching out to churches for financial supports	2.03	Disagree	2.82	Agree
11	Open appeal to philanthropists and organisations for financial assistance	2.45	Disagree	2.46	Disagree
12	Reaching out to Alumni Association of the school for financial assistance	2.47	Disagree	2.77	Agree
13	Ensuring the school operates canteens and basic commercial ventures to generate funds	2.44	Disagree	2.42	Disagree
14	Generate funds from school's transport system, such as routine school buses	2.70	Agree	2.62	Agree

On Table 2, the result revealed that all items: 1 to 14, except 9, 11 and 13 had their individual mean ratings 2.5 and above for the principals of mission-based schools. This means that the proposed items of the questionnaire, 1 to 8, 10, 12 and 14 were accepted by the principals of mission private secondary schools as the roles the main owners play in funding the schools, where as they refuted items 9, 11 and 13. Also, on the part of non-mission private secondary schools principals, the result showed that items, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 14 had individual means that is greater than or equal to 2.5, which connote that each of the items was consented to. On the contrary, items: 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 had individual mean ratings below 2.5. This implies the foregoing items were not agreed with as the ways that private school owners perform their funding roles.

Discussion of Findings

The result as reported on Table 1 revealed that the private sector, especially those of sole proprietors or proprietresses demonstrate their ownership role at the secondary level of education in Anambra State by bearing the cost of acquisition of land for setting up of the school; bearing the cost of acquisition of school buses and vehicles for operation; bearing the procurement of teaching materials in the school; bearing the cost of buildings and infrastructural development of the school; solely bearing the cost of having the school/business name legally registered for operations; bearing the cost of accreditation and approval of subjects and programmes for the school; bearing the burden of remuneration and payment of employees of the school; bearing the risks and setbacks that might be suffered by the school; taking full responsibility and final decision regarding recruitment, promotion or sacking of school employees; remaining the number one promoter of the school's vision, mission, programmes and activities, and bearing the cost of maintenance of school plants. These ownership role is commonly found among most sole businesses where the main owner benefits all and risks all. On the other hand, the Churches, and organisations that brought the mission private schools into existence were reported to also be bearing the cost of acquisition of land for setting up of the school, cost of acquisition of school buses and vehicles for operation, the cost of having the school/business name legally registered for operations,

and constantly promoting the school's vision, mission, programmes and activities, as well as bearing the cost of maintenance of the school plants.

However, due to the fact that the mission schools are partnering with the Anambra State Government, she shares different aspects of ownership responsibilities with the government, including, but are not limited to: bearing the procurement of teaching materials in the school bearing the cost of buildings and infrastructural development of the school; bearing the cost of accreditation and approval of subjects and programmes for the school; bearing the burden of remuneration and payment of employees of the school; bearing the risks and setbacks that might be suffered by the school, and taking full responsibility and final decision regarding recruitment, promotion or sacking of school employees. This is in tune with Agundu and Onyali (2021), whose study pointed out that the approval of return of schools to the missions-the original owners by the Anambra State government in 2009 was not holistic or total as the government still retained certain responsibilities and rights in such schools, thereby entering into partnership with the Missions.

Report of the study as revealed from Table 2 pointed out that both the principals in mission and no-mission affirmed that the private sector demonstrate the role of funding at the secondary level of education in the following, but not limited ways: fixing the tuition payable by each student; deciding the amount payable for admission forms for intending students development and general operation levies; charging accommodation/hostel fees where applicable; charging money for school uniforms, including sporting wears; charging end of the term/year festivity fee; seeking for financial supports from PTA, and Generate funds from school's transport system, such as routine school buses. However, the perception of both categories of principals with regard to mission and non-mission private sector's approach to sourcing for funds for the secondary level of education were different in some aspects. For instance, whereas the government-partnered or missions schools have been seeking for grants from government for capital projects in the school, and reaching out to churches and Alumni Association for financial supports, the non-mission or sole man/woman schools have not. Also, notwithstanding the foregoing different, principals of both categories of schools concurred that the owners do not really make much efforts in generating revenues through engagement and sale of agricultural proceedings from the schools' ventures; openly appealing to philanthropists and organisations for financial assistance, and indulging in operation of canteens and basic commercial ventures. The inability of the government to support the non-mission schools with grants was the reason that Nweke in 2019, advised that governments to create sound policies for the private sector to render meaningful financial support to education by establishing functional mechanisms for solicit funds from diaspora and creating conducive conditions that will bring private sector closer to schools.

Conclusion

The study first and foremost categorized private secondary schools in Anambra State into mission and non-mission. The role of the private sector in relation to ownership of secondary education was known to be demonstrated in the area of cost bearing in the acquisition of land for setting up of the school, school buses and vehicles for operation, legal registration of the school/business name for operations, and constantly promoting the school's vision, mission, programmes and activities, as well as bearing the cost of maintenance of the school plants. Both schools type enjoy the inherent benefits and bear potential risks. The private sector also demonstrate the role of funding at the secondary level of education by fixing the tuition payable by each student; deciding the amount payable for admission forms for intending students development and general operation levies; charging money for school uniforms and sporting wears; seeking for financial supports from PTA, etcetera. The private sector simply take responsibility in sourcing for funds, allocation of funds, and utilization of funds to keep the school operational and sustainable.

Recommendations

Based on findings of the study, the research advocates that:

1. Government should recognize non-mission secondary schools as partners in the business of education, just as their mission-schools counterparts, by supporting them with grants for capital

and more expensive projects. This could be done by setting up a public-private partnership education funds, from which supports can be rendered to schools in relevant needs. This will enable operators to boost their schools plants or infrastructure to a world-class standard.

2. The owners and management of both categories of school, aside from the funding sources being put to use already should explore the potentials crowd funding, alumni associations, collaborations with individual businesses and corporate for raising more funds that are not interest driven. For instance, Raj Bank currently issue credits and loans that interest free, rather with the idea sharing potential benefits and or losses as collaborators. This flexible source of funds could help to ease the financial pressure that mission and non-mission schools often face, thereby boosting their financial strength for effective operations.

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