

## THE IMPACT OF PROLIFERATION OF PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN OGUN STATE

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the impact of proliferation of private secondary schools on the quality of education in Ogun State. To give direction to the study, two null hypotheses were postulated. The sample for the study comprised of 200 civil and public servants in the employment of Ogun State Government who were randomly selected. The instrument used for data collection was self- developed questionnaire. Data collected were analysed statistically with chi-square method at 95% confidence level. The results of data analyses showed that access to secondary education has not improved with proliferation of private secondary schools ( $X^2 = 18.93$ ;  $df = 12$ ;  $P = 0.09 > 0.05$ ) and that the proliferation of private secondary schools contributed to better performance of students in public certificate examinations ( $X^2 = 24.56$ ;  $df = 12$ ;  $P = 0.00 < 0.05$ ). Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that the private owners of secondary schools should see the establishment of their schools first of all as service to humanity by charging moderate fees for all and sundry to have access to quality education.*

**Key words:** *proliferation, private secondary schools, quality of education*

### **Background to the Study**

In most countries, the ownership of educational institutions (schools) is dual venture. It is usually a venture operated by the public and private sectors, the Government constitute the public sector while individuals, group of persons, mission bodies and organisations constitute the private sector. Schools that are run by the Government are called public schools while those not operated by Government are known as private schools. In most states, the educational sector is structured under three major levels – namely the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. There is also the pre-primary school level in some countries, Nigeria inclusive otherwise called early childhood schools.

Basically, this work is concerned with the secondary school, which is the second level in the educational structure. It is the level that offers children the opportunity to receive education after the primary stage and before the tertiary education. It occupies a middle level between the primary and tertiary levels of education. According to Adesina (1984:I) secondary school occupies a very strategic position in any nation's educational system with its consumer and producer status. It determines the fate and dictates the pace of education at the primary and tertiary levels. In Nigeria, the broad goals of secondary education include the preparation of the individual for useful living within the society and for higher education (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2013: 18). Today, the management and ownership of secondary schools in Nigeria is a joint responsibility of both the public and private sectors.

Formal secondary school education in Nigeria started in 1859 in Lagos. It was pioneered by the private sector – the Church Missionary Society (CMS). As indicated by Fafunwa (1974), other Missionary Organisations joined in opening and running of secondary schools. It was in 1899 that the first public secondary school was opened in Lagos and was called “Kings College”. By 1959 – a hundred years after the first secondary school was opened, the number of secondary schools in Nigeria had risen to 700 (Adesina 1984:2). Apparently, this was a huge increase and most of the schools were privately owned.

After independence in 1960, there was further private participation in the educational enterprise as a result of social pressure and demand for knowledge. Unfortunately, many of the private schools were not well structured to follow strict government regulations. As a result, the standard became questionable. Therefore, the government decided to restrict the establishment of private schools. By 1970, after the Nigerian Civil War directives were given as to the process of establishment and management of schools. This led to the closure or takeover of private schools (mostly Mission Schools) by the Government (Taiwo, 1980). The period of the second Republic (1979 – 1983) witnessed a renewed wave in private participation in education. The re-emergence of private schools was the aftermath of the public worries over the level of corruption and indiscipline that pervaded almost all sectors of the Nigerian society, including the educational sector. The spirit of free enterprise ushered in by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under the military regime led by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (1984-93) gave further impetus to private individual/groups to establish and operate schools.

Ostensibly, the zeal for private schools was to seek for a change necessitated by the failure of public schools. The quest has been wide spread in Nigeria. From North to South, East to West, individuals and groups raced to open and operate schools. This was even given more impetus in 1999 with Federal Government’s introduction of Private Partnership Initiative in education. This development is believed to have opened wider doors for more private investors to establish schools in the country to argument government’s efforts to meet the increasing demand for education in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, however, this has been abused and has led to proliferation of both primary and secondary schools across the Country.

In Ogun State the story is the same. There are no less than one thousand private secondary schools in the state. Conservatively, the number of private secondary schools in the state outweighs the number of public secondary schools by more than 80%. Salami and Nweke (2012) writing on rising number of private schools pointed out that in most places, many of the private schools are in one room apartment. Basically, the indiscriminate establishment of private secondary schools has aroused the worries of concerned citizens and has called for critical examination. Hence, this study is undertaken to examine the problems and consequences of the proliferation of private secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Proliferation of private secondary schools in Nigeria and in Ogun State in particular constitutes some problems. The development has contributed to the neglect suffered by public schools. Most of the private schools are not within the reach of the common citizens since they charge very high and exploitative school fees. This negates the claim by private schools that their assistance have increased or improved accessibility to secondary school. Private Secondary owners and operators have been accused of promoting and accentuating examination malpractices. Some of the private schools are used as special examination Centres

where by students pay special amount so as to be assisted to pass their certificate examinations in bright and flying colours.

Ostensibly, the nefarious actions of most private schools do not foster educational growth and therefore is a bane to national development.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of this theoretical framework here is to provide an organised knowledge and economy of expression relating to the behaviour of the phenomenon under study and to serve as a guide to explore reality to the relevance of the phenomenon. The theory that is considered here is structural – functionalism (Chauhan, 1978).

The Structural – Functionalism Theory emerged from the effort of pioneer sociologists to explain the structure and functioning of human society. The theory perceives the society as a social system and the institutions in the society as sub-system. According to structural functionalists, the parts that develop in living bodies and social bodies each serve a function or purpose.

The relevance of the theory to this study is that secondary schools are social bodies or social institutions, and in relation to the theory, they serve a function or purpose in the society. To functionalists, schools as educational institutions provide the skills needed by an individual to contribute to societal growth and development. Functionalists assign to the school the moral duty of inculcating the traditions which reflect the spirit of the nation. Schools are expected to provide avenue for an individual to gain knowledge, abilities to think and to acquire habits, skills, interests and attitudes which characterize a person who is socially accepted, personally adjusted and responsible.

The concern of this study therefore is to examine if private secondary schools in Nigeria are indeed helping to produce products who fit into the above description and who are capable of impacting positively to the society.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study was carried out to examine the impact of proliferation of private secondary schools on the quality of education in Ogun State. Specifically, the study was carried out to determine if:

1. Proliferation of private secondary schools has improved access to secondary school education in Ogun State.
2. The proliferation of private secondary schools has contributed to improved performance in public certificate examinations in Ogun State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were raised for the study:

1. The proliferation of private secondary schools has not significantly improved access to secondary school education in Ogun State.
2. The proliferation of private secondary schools has not significantly contributed to improved performance in public certificate examinations in Ogun State.

## Methodology

**Research Design:** The Descriptive Survey research design was employed for this study. This survey method focuses on people, attitude, opinion, motivation and behaviour (Gay 1992). The design was considered suitable for this study since the study involves the determination of the impact of proliferation of private secondary schools on the quality of education in the state.

**Population:** The population of study comprised all civil and public servants in Ogun State who are enlightened enough to give sound opinion on the issue.

**Sample:** The sample for the study consisted of 100 civil servants and 100 teachers that made the 200 respondents. The civil servants were selected through systematic random sampling technique while 25 teachers each were selected from the four educational zones through clustered random sampling technique.

**Instrumentation:** The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire which was constructed by the researchers. The questionnaire is made up of two sections. Section A dealt with the bio-data of the respondents. On the other hand, section B is patterned along Likert 4-point scale ranging from Strong Agree to Strongly Disagree. This section has 10 items in all and five items each measured the two variables (access to education and performance in examinations) respectively.

**Validity and Reliability of the Instrument:** To determine the validity of the instrument, the draft copy was presented to colleagues and experts in quality assurance in education who made necessary corrections and modification before it was finally approved. To this end, the content validity has been certified. Test re test reliability of the instrument ranged between 0.71 and 0.88. These values were adjusted high enough and the instrument is said to be stable over time. Hence, the instrument is very reliable and appropriate for use in this study.

## Results

**Hypothesis one:** This hypothesis states that the proliferation of private secondary schools has not significantly improved access to secondary school education

**Table 1:** Impact of proliferation of private secondary education on access to education.

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Existence of many private secondary schools has created access to education.	18 (38.2)	21 (45.8)	66 (56.4)	95 (59.6)	200
2	The cost of secondary education is very cheap now due to proliferation of private schools.	16 (38.2)	18 (45.8)	81 (56.4)	85 (59.6)	200
3	Despite the proliferation of private secondary schools, the fee is still out of reach.	80 (38.2)	81 (45.8)	26 (56.4)	13 (59.6)	200
4	Access to secondary education is made possible through proliferation of private schools.	21 (38.2)	27 (45.8)	77 (56.4)	79 (59.6)	200
5	Establishment of many private secondary schools has not done much to make secondary schools accessible.	56 (38.2)	86 (45.8)	32 (56.4)	26 (59.6)	200
	<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>1000</b>

$X^2 \text{ cal} = 18.9$ ;  $df = 12$ ;  $P = 0.09$

From table 1, it could be seen that the value of  $X^2$  cal (18.93) is not significant  $P = 0.09 > 0.05$  at 95% confidence level given 12 degree of freedom. Since this result is not significant, therefore the null hypothesis is hereby accepted while the alternate hypothesis is rejected. This means that the proliferation of private secondary schools has not improved access to secondary education significantly in Kaduna north local government area.

**Hypothesis Two**

The last hypothesis suggests that the proliferation of private secondary schools has not significantly contributed to improved performance in public certificate examinations in Kaduna North Local Government Area. To test this hypothesis, the investigator used chi-square statistical method for data analysis. The result of the analysis is as shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Contribution of proliferation of private secondary schools on students’ performance in public certificate examinations.

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Students’ academic performance in public certificate examination is enhanced with proliferation of private secondary schools.	53	61	49	37	200
2	Proliferation of private secondary schools has affected students’ academic performance positively in public certificate examination.	46	59	44	51	200
3	Academic performance of students in public certificate examination becomes worst due to proliferation of private secondary schools.	26	41	66	67	200
4	Despite the proliferation of private secondary schools, the teachers are dedicated and thus improves students’ performance in public certificate examination.	50	58	46	46	200
5	Inspection of private secondary schools is not thorough because they are too many, hence, the students’ performance is poor in public certificate examination.	55	61	32	52	200
	<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>1000</b>

$X^2$  cal = 24.5 ; df =12; P = 0.00

Analysis of data in table 2 reveals that chi-square calculated value of 24.56 is significant  $P = 0.00 < 0.05$  given 12 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is thus discarded while the alternate hypothesis is retained that the proliferation of private secondary schools has significantly contributed to improved performance in public certificate examinations in Kaduna North Local Government Area.

**Discussion of Findings**

The finding of the first hypothesis indicated that proliferation of private secondary schools has not significantly improved access to secondary education. This result contradicts the opinion of Omede (2015) that stated that the establishment of private school creates access to people for education at any level in to country. Similarly, Tooley and Dixon (2005) asserts that many people are yawning for education but could

not due to limited space. He states further that with the opportunity given to individuals and organizations to establish and run private schools, the problem of access will be reduced.

The result of this hypothesis is however not surprising because, many private schools were not established to close the gap created by the lack of access but rather to make profit. Schools are established as business venture, and in realization of the objectives of the properties, they charged exorbitant fees which many parents cannot afford to send their children to.

The result of the analysis of the second hypothesis indicated that proliferation of private secondary schools has contributed in no small measure to improved performance of students in public certificate examinations. Although, the proliferation is beset with myriads of shortcomings, yet students in the private secondary schools tend to perform better in academics than those in public schools. The possible explanation is that in the private schools, the proprietors are always around to monitor the activities of the schools daily. Also, teachers are usually more dedicated to their duties in private than the public schools. All these most times jointly work together coupled with the fact that students are not usually large in the classes in private schools which makes the classes to be manageable in size by the teachers. Also, there is opportunity for individualized instruction contingent upon one-on-one interaction. All these are likely to contribute to improved performance in public certificate examinations.

No wonder this result is in agreement with the conclusions of Amadi (2008), Olugbenro (2013) and Saliu (2015) that there is a significant different in the academic performance of students from private and public secondary schools with those in private exhibiting better performance than those in public schools.

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is hereby concluded that the proliferation of private secondary schools has not created the expected access to secondary education. Meanwhile, it has also been established that the proliferation of private secondary schools enhanced students' performance in public certificate examination.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are put forward in line with the findings and conclusion reached.

1. Ogun State Ministry of Education in conjunction with the local government should enforce the rules and regulations governing the establishment of private schools strictly.
2. The private owners of secondary schools should see the establishment of their schools first of all as service to humanity by charging moderate fees for all and sundry to have access to quality education.
3. Effective monitoring and inspection should be periodically carried out by the officials saddled with such responsibilities to enforce compliance to laid down rules and regulations.
4. Adequate and qualified professional teachers should be employed by the private school owners, necessary infrastructure and facilities be provided to continually, improve the performance of their students in public certificate examinations.

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