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Abstract

Privatisation initiative has greatly assisted in the expanding access to secondary education in Nigeria and most especially in Kwara State. Nowadays, they are facing many challenges ranging from funding, facilities, equipment, condition of service, low quality of teachers, low student enrolment and irregular inspection among others, which undermine the achievement of the stated objectives in the curriculum of secondary education for competitive advancement in the 21st Century. Thus, this study examined the re-crafting of private secondary schools in Kwara State for competitive advancement in the 21st Century: The Challenges and The Prospects. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 5 officials of Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development; 3 officials of Kwara State Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) and 3 officials of Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). Also, purposive sampling technique was used to select all 188 private secondary schools in Kwara State and from the schools, purposive sampling technique was used to select all the Proprietors; Principals; 1 official from the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) and 1 experienced teacher from each of the schools to make a total number of 763 respondents. The findings revealed that private secondary schools in Kwara State were staffed with qualified teachers and despite various challenges faced, the population tendency shows that a large market exists for private school providers. Based on the findings, it is recommended that government should collaborate with owners of private schools and accept them as partners in providing quality education for national development. Likewise, the proprietors should not compromise the standard they have been sustaining by ensuring that qualified applicants are recruited in order to realise the set goals.

Keywords: Privatisation, Private Secondary Schools, Challenges and Prospects.

Introduction

Education is the mechanism by which a society generates the knowledge and skills required for its own survival and sustenance that transmits to future generations

through the process of instruction to its youths. A society can only develop and exist progressively if it ensures that its educational system is adequate, relevant and sustainable for the needs of the people in a particular period of time, most especially for competitive advancement in the 21st Century.

The broad objectives of secondary schools are to prepare individuals for useful living in the society and for higher education. To achieve these objectives as highlighted in the National Policy on Education (2014), government recognised that education is an expensive social service that requires adequate financial provisions from all tiers of government, private sector, communities, individuals and other organisations for the successful implementation of educational programmes. Osokoya (2017) asserts that the significance of education towards the national development made private individuals, communities, and even both the local and international organisations have interest in the development of education, especially secondary education.

In his submission, Ayeni (2016) observes that the involvement of the private sector in education enterprise gives room for the proprietor to establish a school business for the purpose of training students to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and values for useful living. Alabi (2021) specifies that privatisation involves the transfer of assets; management, functions or responsibilities previously owned or carried out by the government to private sectors. It is often proposed as a way of reducing the reliance on government in the provision of services either because the government is no longer able to meet the costs of the services sought by the public or because the government is ideologically committed to minimalist forms of government.

Therefore, it is an indisputable fact that privatisation enterprise has greatly assisted in the expanding access to education in Nigeria and most especially in Kwara State. The resources of the public sector alone in any way could not have sustained the realisation of educational goals in the state for competitive advancement in the 21st Century. Hence, privatisation has been helpful in realising ambitious plans for education, especially secondary education. But, nowadays, there are many challenges that are plaguing private secondary schools generally in Nigeria and Kwara State in particular, and such challenges undermine the achievement of the stated objectives in the curriculum of secondary education for competitive advancement in the 21st Century. These include funding, facilities or equipment, condition of service or motivation, low quality of teachers, merger plan or low student enrolment and irregular inspection of private secondary schools among others (Ike, 2017).

Funding can be regarded as the number one problem facing private secondary schools in Nigeria. According to Lawal and Ayoade (2007), many proprietors of private secondary schools do not have enough money to provide all necessary resources for their schools, and even some find it difficult to pay their staff salaries

as at when due. This is because of irregular payment of school fees by the students, thereby making it difficult for many private secondary schools to effectively operate. Also, most private schools are small in size, lack teaching equipment and facilities and get trapped in making shifts of house or rented accommodation. As such, little patronage and high costs of accommodation slow down their ability to acquire education in specific environment, recruit quality teachers and provide the required equipment and all other necessary resources to meet up with the set standards to operate as schools for competitive advancement in the 21st Century. Banks hardly engage in business with small size schools to avoid compounding their problem in accessing loan facility (Odeleye & Oyelamin, 2012).

In achieving the goal of teaching and learning for competitive advancement in the 21st Century, facilities are central to any level of education, but some private secondary schools do not have adequate necessary facilities that can facilitate effective teaching and learning in their schools. Such facilities include standard library, laboratory, standard playing field, school hall, classrooms, among others. Jaiyeoba & Atanda (2003) assert that a school with inadequate classrooms and facilities such as chairs, lockers, libraries, textbooks, laboratories and workshop would be uncomfortable for students to learn. Therefore, availability of infrastructural facilities in the right quantity and quality is germane to the success of education irrespective of the level.

Most private schools, especially low-fee payment, might not be able to afford facilities or equipment necessary for offering certain subjects based on the curriculum especially in the science, technical and vocational areas. This makes some private schools focus more on social science and art subjects to the detriment of a balanced curriculum as required in the educational system. The state education policy emphasises on sciences, technical and vocational education and has encouraged this over the years. Private schools need to have equipment and facilities that are necessary to actualise the stated objectives as emphasised in the National Policy on Education (Ehigiamusoe, 2012). Similarly, Agi (2013) states that private secondary education can be improved more to succeed in Nigeria, collaborative efforts between operators of private school system and government can open new chance for the success in operating schools. This is possible if private education providers are accepted as partners in national development.

Another problem facing private secondary schools is that, many of them do not always have stable and permanent teachers that can fulfil the educational objectives of the 21st Century. The reason is due to inability of the schools to give regular promotion and incentives to their teachers as well as poor conditions of service. Ike (2017) observed that in the 21st Century, the problem is no longer that of unavailability but that of instability. This does not help the development of the education system because of the comparatively poorer conditions of service of teachers in the Nigerian society. The tendency for many teachers in the nation's private schools today, as was the case with their predecessors in later colonial and

independent Nigeria, is to use the teaching profession as a stepping stone to other highly esteemed and more attractive jobs. In this sense, Agi (2013) suggested that private school system should evolve a platform for the harmonised condition of service that mirrors what is obtainable in the public secondary schools. This would enable teachers in private schools, who see their job as ad-hoc arrangement, settle down to develop careers in such schools and contribute meaningfully to the development of education.

In addition, some private secondary schools do not have quality teachers who are capable and qualified to teach students as well as improve the standard of education for competitive advancement in the 21st Century because most proprietors do not employ teachers with high qualifications such as Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) Degrees, Bachelor of Arts Education (B.A. Ed.) Degrees, Bachelor of Science Education (B. Sc. Ed.) Degrees and Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), rather, they employ Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) and National Diploma (ND) holders, just to pay little amount to them and make more profits, and this undermine the objectives of secondary education for competitive advancement in the 21st Century. Hamilton-Ekeke (2013) asserted that one of the most important factors in the teaching process is a qualification of the teacher. The perspective of teachers' qualifications can go a long way to bring about students' higher academic achievement most especially in this 21st Century. Teacher qualifications relate to competence in instruction, management of students and materials in the classroom.

Moreover, it is observed that, there are some schools that do not have enough students on the enrolment. This problem is noticeable in the rural areas of the country and even in some urban private secondary schools (Lawal & Ayoade, 2007). In view of this, private school owners would need to look at the trend in the industrial sector to see how most firms are surviving without much problem. Also, many activities in many private secondary schools in the country are not supervised adequately like those of public secondary schools. Ige (2013) maintained that there is a need to always inspect private secondary schools in Nigeria. Ministry of Education and other concerned agencies need to continue to organise regular inspection visits to schools irrespective of whether public or private and present such reports to the government so as to know how effective they are. Thus, this study examines the re-crafting of private secondary education in Kwara State for competitive advancement in the 21st Century: The Challenges and the Prospects.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that there are many challenges facing private secondary schools in Kwara State, these include funding, facilities, equipment, condition of service or motivation, low quality of teachers, merger plan or low student enrolment and irregular inspection of private secondary schools among others which could emasculate the achievement of the stated objectives in the curriculum of secondary school education for competitive advancement in the 21th Century.

Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2003); and Afolabi (2018) posited that availability of infrastructural facilities in the right quantity and quality is germane to the success of education irrespective of the level. A school with inadequate classrooms, resources and facilities such as chairs, lockers, libraries, textbooks, laboratories and workshop would be uncomfortable for students to learn.

Purpose of the Study

- i. examine the level of qualification of teachers on the staff roll of private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century;
- ii. investigate the challenges facing private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century;
- iii. determine the measures put in place to overcome the challenges in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century; and
- iv. assess the prospects of private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century

Research Questions

- i. Were the teachers on the staff pay roll of private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria qualified for competitive advancement in the 21st Century?
- ii. What were the challenges faced by private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century?
- iii. What were the measures put in place to surmount these challenges in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century?
- iv. Were there any prospects for private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of this study consisted of all private secondary schools in Kwara State, while the target population was 188 private secondary schools under the Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development in the state and 30 officials in charge of private secondary schools in the Ministry of Education and its agencies. A stratified sampling technique was used to group the respondents into three. These were policy makers, implementers and beneficiaries. The purposive sampling technique was used to select five officials of Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, three officials of Kwara State Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) and three officials of Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). Similarly, purposive sampling technique was used to select all the 188 private secondary schools in Kwara State and from the schools, purposive sampling technique was used to select all the Proprietors and Principals of the schools; one official from the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) and one experienced teacher from each of the 188 private secondary schools to make a total number of 763 respondents for the study. The purposive sampling technique is considered suitable for this study because the technique is in line with the Patton

(2002) who stated that the purposive sampling technique could be used to select the respondents when there is an attribute of interest in the target population. Table 1 shows the sample of respondents.

Table 1: Respondents Sampled for the Study

Respondent Group	Number of Sample
Policy Makers:	
Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development	5
Teaching Service Commission	3
State Universal Basic Education Board	3
Implementers:	
Proprietors	188
Principals	188
Experienced Teachers	188
Beneficiaries:	
PTA Chairman	188
Total	763

Answering Research Questions

There are four research questions raised in this study. The percentage was used to answer the research question 1, while thematic analysis was used to answer research questions 2, 3 and 4. This involved presenting the facts and interpreting the available evidence with the researcher based on the research questions formulated for the study.

Research Question 1: Were the teachers on the staff pay roll of private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria qualified for competitive advancement in the 21th Century?

The proprietors and the principals of the schools sampled for this study submitted that, most teachers in their schools were qualified. According to them, 60% of the teachers in their schools possessed Bachelor's Degree in education such as B.A. (Ed), B.Sc. (Ed) and B. (Ed). Also, 20% were Higher National Diploma (HND) with Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) holders and 15% of the teachers had Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), while 5% possessed Master's Degree in Education. This shows that private secondary schools in Kwara State were staffed with qualified teachers. Table 5 shows the teachers qualification as obtained from the respondents.

Table 2: Teachers' Qualification in Private Secondary Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria

S/N	Teachers' Qualifications	Percentage
1.	Bachelor's Degree in Education: B. A. (Ed), B. Sc. (Ed) and B. (Ed)	60%
2.	HND with PGDE	15%
3.	NCE	20%
4.	M. (Ed)	5%
	Total	100%

Source: Field work 2023

Research Question 2: *What were the challenges faced by private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21th Century?*

Funding was one of the major challenges that faced private secondary schools in Kwara State. 85% of the proprietors of the schools revealed that funding was the major problem affecting private secondary schools in the State. The reason was not far-fetched because most of the private secondary schools did not have enough funds to provide adequate learning resources for the students in their schools. The only visible source where most of the private schools got fund apart from their personal money was from students' school fee. The school fee was not regularly paid by the students and this problem made it difficult for many schools to effectively operate as expected. Other sources of funds such as donations, appeal funds/launching, grants from voluntary individuals, organisations and government as the case may be were not constant like school fee.

Multiple taxation by the government was another challenge of private secondary schools in Kwara State. The increase in the taxes paid by the proprietors affected most of the schools, because most of the schools did not have enough fund to pay multiple taxes charged by the Government. This also affected effective operation of these schools as anticipated by the government and the people of the state. As stated by the proprietor of Emmanuel Baptist College, Ilorin, multiple taxes inflicted on private schools had been preventing some of them to provide adequate physical facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, chairs, tables, computers, and most especially, payment of the teachers' salaries. He further added that many schools, in most cases, struggled to pay the taxes; therefore, he appealed to the Kwara State government to reduce it.

Teacher turnover was one of the challenges faced by private secondary schools in Kwara State. In many schools, the problem was no longer the issue of unqualified but unstable teachers. Many teachers in private secondary schools used teaching profession as a stepping stone to more lucrative jobs. The reason is due to the inability of many proprietors to give promotion and regular incentives to teachers. Thus, teaching is gradually becoming a profession for the new graduates of

Universities and Colleges of Education who are ready to leave the job as soon as they find a better offer elsewhere.

Reduction in student enrolment was a challenge noticeable in private secondary schools in Kwara State from 2015/2016 through the year 2018/2019 academic sessions. According to the information gathered from the proprietors and principals of private secondary schools through the questionnaire, during this period, there was economic recession in the country as a result of the falling price of crude oil at the international market which resulted to drop-down in the allocation of Kwara State from the Federal Government for many months. Kwara as a civil savant state was affected because a majority of the parents rely on salaries. Due to the drop in the allocations, some workers could not afford to pay the school fee of their children in private schools; hence, they enrolled their children in public secondary schools.

Irregular supervision of private schools also posed a challenge to private secondary schools in Kwara State. According to Parent-Teacher Association of private schools in Kwara State, the officials from the Ministry of Education did not regularly supervise the private secondary schools as done in the public secondary schools in the State. Some principals of private secondary schools also revealed that, despite the high taxes collected by the state government, private secondary schools were hardly inspected twice in a year.

Research Question 3: What were the measures put in place to surmount these challenges in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century?

Numerous measures were put in place by the stakeholders of private secondary schools to overcome the identified challenges. Thus, efforts had been taken to speak with the government on how to assist in giving soft loan to proprietors of private secondary schools so that they could provide an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning in their various schools; as well as improve the standard of education in Kwara State. Similarly, meeting had been organised by the school managements to encourage parents to pay their children school fee on time in order to ensure smooth running of the schools.

In addition, the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS), Kwara State Chapter had appealed to the Kwara State government through the Kwara State Internal Revenue Service (KWIRS) to reduce the multiple taxes placed on private schools in the State so as to ease the tax payment and make the proprietors financially buoyant to promptly pay teachers' salaries and allowances when the schools are opening and during long vacations. The prompt payment of teachers' salaries and allowances would motivate teachers to settle down in private secondary schools and contribute their quota to the development of education in Kwara State.

Moderation of high school fee charged by some proprietors of private secondary schools had been addressed by the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools (NAPPS) to encourage parents to enroll their children in private schools. Also, in a bid to resolve the challenge of irregular supervision of schools, an appeal had been made by Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) to the government through the Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development and its agencies to supervise private secondary schools regularly as done in public secondary schools in the state.

Research Question 4: Were there any prospects for private secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria for competitive advancement in the 21st Century?

Stakeholders of private secondary schools suggested that private secondary school system in Kwara State can be improved to succeed and contribute more to realising the goal of "Education for All". Despite various challenges facing the system, the population tendency shows that a large market exists for private school providers as they continue actively in the education sector whereby parents and guardians are making conversant choices of private schools to send their children for proper learning; more financial institutions are available to assist with facilities and instrument to ensure the smooth running of private schools; opportunities to benefit from the technical and professional expertise available in government sectors to enhance the standard of their schools; and private sectors have opportunities to benefit from the state regulation of education that will in turn enhance their performance necessary for attracting large customers.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study revealed that teachers in private secondary schools in Kwara State were qualified to teach for competitive advancement in the 21st Century, because 60% of teachers in private secondary schools possessed Bachelor's Degree in education such as B.A. (Ed), B.Sc. (Ed), B. (Ed). Likewise, 15% were HND with PGDE holders, and 20% had NCE, while 5% of the teachers possessed M. (Ed) that is, Master's Degree in Education with Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). This validates the view of Hamilton-Ekeke (2013) that one of the most important factors in the teaching process is the qualification of the teachers because it relates to the competence in instruction, management of students and materials in the classroom.

The outcome of this study indicated that challenges faced by private secondary schools in Kwara State were funding, multiple taxation by the state government, unstable teachers, reduction in student enrolment as a result of the economic recession that affected parents' income and irregular supervision of the private schools. This is in line with the finding of Lawal and Ayoade (2007) and Ike (2017) that funding, unstable teachers and irregular supervision of the private secondary schools were the major challenges facing private secondary schools in Nigeria and particularly in Oyo state.

The finding of this study also showed the various measures taken by proprietors, principals and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) to overcome challenges faced by private secondary schools in Kwara State within the period covered by this study. The reason included discussion with the government on how to get soft loan; PTA meetings to encourage parents to pay their children school fee on time; appeal to the government through the Kwara State Internal Revenue Service (KWIRS) to reduce the multiple taxation imposed on private schools; moderation of high school fee charges by some proprietors to encourage parents to enroll their children in schools; and an appeal to the government through the State Ministry of Education and its agencies to regularly supervise private secondary schools as done in public secondary schools in the state.

This is in tandem with the findings of Agi (2013) which revealed that private school owners would need to look at the trend in the industrial sector to determine how most firms survived without many problems and to evolve a platform for the harmonised condition of service. Also, there is the need to always inspect private secondary schools in Nigeria. Ministry of Education and other concerned agencies need to continue to organise regular inspection visits to private schools and present the reports to the government for effective implementation.

The result of this study also revealed that despite various challenges facing the private secondary school system, the population tendency shows that a large market exists for private school providers, more financial institutions are available to assist with facilities and instrument to ensure the smooth running of private schools; opportunities to benefit from the technical and professional expertise in government sectors to enhance the standard of the schools; and have opportunities to benefit from the state regulation of education that will in turn enhance their performance necessary for attracting large customers. Hence, it is believed that there are many opportunities for the improvement of private secondary schools in Kwara State, since there is existence of friendly industrial environments in Kwara State to operate private schools. This confirms the findings of Agi (2013) which stated that private secondary education can be improved more to succeed in Nigeria, collaborative efforts between operators of private school system and government can open new chance for the success in operating schools. This is possible if private education providers are accepted as partners in national development.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that private secondary schools in Kwara State were staffed with qualified teachers, and despite the challenges faced by private schools, stakeholders such as proprietors, principals, parents, and National Association of Proprietors of Secondary Schools (NAPSS) played significant roles in overcoming the challenges faced by private secondary schools in the state. Also, the population tendency in Kwara State shows that a large market

exists for private school providers, more financial institutions are available to assist with facilities and instrument to ensure the smooth running of private schools.

Recommendations

- i. The proprietors should not compromise the standard they have been sustaining by ensuring that only the qualified applicants are recruited into their schools as teachers so as to facilitate effective realisation of the set goals.
- ii. State government should reduce the taxes imposed on the private secondary schools to enable them financially buoyant to operate effectively, teacher should be well motivated to enhance their long in schools and regular inspection should be keyed into by the Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development and its agencies.
- iii. Parents should always be encouraged by the school management to pay the school fee of their children at the right time; proprietors should relentlessly implore the Kwara State government to reduce the taxes imposed on their schools and also make loan accessible for the development of their schools. Unjustifiable school fee should be discouraged by the National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools to make it affordable to many people.
- iv. Government should collaborate with owners of private schools and accept them as partners in providing quality education for national development.

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