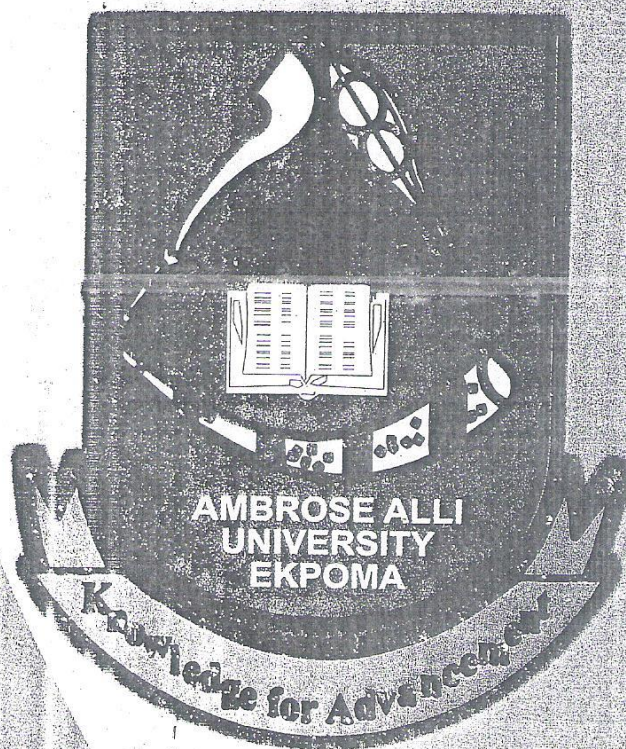


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## TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF PRIVATE SECTOR'S PARTICIPATION IN THE QUEST FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The study examined educational practitioners' views on the roles the private sector could play in ensuring quality education in Nigeria. Information was sought from ninety six respondents with a questionnaire titled 'The Roles of Private Sector in Quality Assurance in Education'. The generated data was analyzed with the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formulae. It was discovered that the Nigerian tertiary education is in crisis, that the problem emanate from the foundations laid at the primary and the secondary levels and finally, that the private sector could contribute meaningfully to improving the quality of education in Nigeria if adequately involved. The findings were discussed and necessary recommendations made.

### Introduction

Any nation that will compete favourably in the committee of nations (in the current world order) must ensure high quality education to be able to produce high quality manpower required for its economic, social, political, scientific and technological advancement. Quality means many things to many people but according to Hornby (2001), it is the degree or grade of goodness, excellent or worth. Applying this to education therefore, it means a scale of goodness against which teachers, pupils or the whole school merit can be measured.

It is against this scale of goodness that the whole system of education, that is, students'

achievement or teachers' effectiveness is measured. This measurement is either via students' performance in a standard examination or through the appropriateness of the curricula to the needs of the students and the society at large. It has to do with students being able to acquire particular skills expected for that level and being able to utilize such skills productively. Quality education should be able to provide students with good infrastructural facilities, qualified teachers, teaching and learning facilities that will eventually lead to good examination results that are devoid of malpractices. (Olaniyonu 2002 & Omotosho 1997).

### **The State of Education in Nigeria**

From all indications, education has continued to play an important role in Nigerian economic development and social transformation since independence. However, education in Nigeria according to Ipaye (1999) is no longer what it used to be in terms of quality. The quality of instruction has gone down tremendously. Some two decades ago, a young man could use his primary school leaving certificate to secure a job as a clerk. This is not possible any more due to low quality of the primary education.

One major aim of primary education among others is to provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and local craft, but owing to low quality of instruction in our public primary schools, it has become evident that there are more dropouts. In some cases, these dropouts are being maneuvered into secondary schools in spite of their poor performances. The secondary education, which is meant to provide opportunities for further enhancement of literacy and numeracy acquired at the primary school, fails within the middle layers of the Nigerian educational pyramid.

The broad goal of secondary education is to prepare the individuals for (a) useful living within the society and (b) higher education (FRN 2004). The question then is "Is the secondary education meeting up to this expectation?" Like the primary school certificate, ensuring useful or decent living with the school certificate is now a mirage, while the preparation for higher education is interspersed with malpractices ranging from examination malpractices at the GCE and matriculation examinations to admission malpractice at higher levels of education.

Higher institutions, the apex of education system, have the purpose of meeting the needs of the society and its requirements for qualified manpower. They should prepare the individuals, among others, to acquire both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable them to be self-reliant and useful members of the society through teaching, researching, staff development, generation and dissemination of knowledge etc.

However, the dynamic nature of the society demands that the needs of the people will



continuously change. Consequently, the higher institutions, particularly the universities that were designed to meet the needs of the society according to Osafehinti (1997), found themselves falling by the road side.

### **Problems Affecting the Nigerian Educational System**

There is a myriad of problems that is affecting the Nigerian educational system thereby hampering quality education. The phenomenal rise in student population, the depletion in staff strength, the lack of lecture spaces, tutorial rooms, inadequate furniture and other infrastructure have jointly contributed to the gradual and eventual demise of the academic structure in the educational system.

The quality and quantity of teachers, their attitude and dedication to work, their self perception, the general and specific disregard for teachers and their pay, also constitute burdens for education in Nigeria (Ipaye 1999).

In recent years, while the propensity for secondary school leavers to study at the higher institutions remains as high or even higher, as in the seventies, the characteristics of students and conditions of employment have changed considerably. While opportunities in the civil service have declined, this ceased to be attractive, the private sector had become parochial and selective in their choice for graduate employees, with resultant preference for professionally qualified applicants (Osafehinti 1997).

Consequently, the growing preference for professional studies to over subscription and competitive admission for these areas of study. This condition gave room for various malpractices in examinations and in admission to tertiary education. These practices call to question the quality of graduates produced.

Despite all the above, financial stringency, poor funding, institutions' internal and national staff and students' crises that sometimes lead to closure of schools for several months have lead to decline in international competitiveness of the educational industry in Nigeria. The resultant effects are low output and poor quality (Osafehinti 1997).

The institutions then gradually and unsuspectingly produce graduates who cannot find jobs in the society and who as a result of the training received, cannot create jobs for themselves (Osafehinti 1997).

Focusing on the quality of our educational system, Obanya (1997) opined that quality issues in education are of three levels.

The input or what goes in as investments into education (i.e. education policies, administration framework, enabling environment, resources, finance and teachers).

- The processing or the practical action taken to make the input serve the purposes they are intended to (i.e. the curricular, teaching methods, management, supportive homes, teachers' professional support, remuneration, meaningful school and society interactions) and
- The income or the observable and results of the process of education (i.e. competent learners, qualified teachers, relevant education system etc).

Certain agencies (government, ministries of education, schools boards etc) are considered responsible for ensuring adequate staffing, financial and infrastructural inputs into the school system while some examination bodies provide the student inputs and the processing levels are governments' and teachers' responsibilities.

However, if the outcome or products from the educational system are generally for the society, the effective manipulation of all levels must be the responsibility of the general society and not solely government or government agencies' responsibility.

Should the private sector be incorporated into the main stream of the activities? Could the private sector contribute to raising the quality of education in the country? Should the private sector wait till they are called for financial donations?

These and many more questions necessitated this study. Its main intention is to examine educational practitioners' views in the roles that the private sector could play to ensure quality education in Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study was concerned with determining educational practitioners' (i.e. tertiary education teachers') view on the roles the private sector could play in ensuring quality education in Nigeria. The focus goes beyond financial contributions but covers their expected roles in the input, processing and absorption of the products of our educational institutions.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were answered in the study.

1. Is Nigerian Tertiary Education in Crisis?
2. Is there any relationship between the foundation (laid at the primary and secondary schools) and the state of tertiary education in Nigeria?
3. Would the private sector's participation contribute to quality assurance in the Nigerian Education System?

### **Method of Study**

Sample: Ninety-six (96) Lecturers in the Lagos State University and Adeniran

Ogunsanya College of Education were served copies of the questionnaire out of which eighty (80;83.33%) copies were recovered.

The instrument used was a questionnaire on the Role of Private Sector in Quality Assurance in Education. It has six sections (A-F). Section A sought information on respondents' backgrounds. It contained six items. Section B sought information for answering question 1 (and 2). it contained ten items. Section C for question 2 contained ten items. Section D has nine items while Section E with five items and F containing four items provided information to answer question 3.

The instrument was validated by colleagues and other experts in the areas of educational measurement and research design. Their criticism and suggestions were considered in the final version thus reducing the items from initial 50 to 43. The reliability was also established at 0.65 using the test-re-test reliability.

The responses were analyzed by applying the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) formula for question 1 and 3 and the Pearson product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formula for question 2. They were tested at 0.05 level of significance. For calculating the correlation, the responses were scored as follows: SA=4, A=3, D=2 and SD=1.

## **Results**

Research Question One: Is Nigerian tertiary education in crisis?

Table 1: Below shows the analysis with responses to items in section B  
Table 1. The State of Nigerian Tertiary Education (in Percentages) N=80



Item	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	No. Resp	Total
1.	The standard of education in Nigeria is falling.	(32) 40	(12) 15	(24) 30	(12) 5	-	(80) 100
2.	The scope of the curriculum (i.e. required knowledge) is becoming wider than before.	(16) 20	(24) 30	(24) 30	(12) 15	(4) 5	(80) 100
3.	The free tuition policy in our institutions contributes to poor product quality.	(20) 25	(16) 20	(28) 35	(16) 20	-	(80) 100
4.	Inadequate infrastructure in institutions of learning affects teaching and learning	(60) 75	(20) 25	-	-	-	(80) 100
5.	Poor academic performance is traceable to the academic foundations at the primary and secondary schools	(44) 55	(36) 45	-	-	-	(80) 100
6.	Malpractice during qualifying examinations into universities paves way for inflow of ill-equipped students.	(56) 70	(24) 30	-	-	-	(80) 100
7.	Inadequate funds hamper effective teaching and research thus resulting into poor product quality	(48) 60	(32) 40	-	-	-	(80) 100
8.	Improper accreditation (of programmes/institutions) is a factor for producing ill-equipped graduates	(32) 40	(32) 40	(16) 20	-	-	(80) 100
9.	Environmental distractions prevent students from proper acquisition of intended knowledge	(24) 30	(52) 65	(4) 5	-	-	(80) 100
10.	Every Problem in the Nigerian education system should be blamed on the society at large.	(20) 25	(28) 35	(24) 30	(8) 10	-	(80) 100
	<b>Total</b>	(352) ) 44	(276) ) 34.5	(120) 15	(48) 6	(4) 0.5	(800) 100

Calculated  $X^2 = 339.09$ , Table value = 49.77, Level of significant = 0.05 Degree of freedom = 36.

From table 1 above, 78.5% of the respondents agreed with all the items presented while 21% disagreed with 0.5% giving the response. By the Chi-square statistics, the calculate  $X^2$  (339.09) was significantly greater than the table value of 49.77; hence we should not assume that there is no problem with Nigerian tertiary Education. It is in crisis.

#### Question Two:

Is there any relationship between the foundations (laid at the primary and secondary schools) and the state of tertiary education in Nigeria?

The subjects' responses to items in section C are presented in table II while the analysis of question 2 is presented in table III below.

**Table II: Subjects' Responses to Items on Foundations at the Primary and Secondary Schools (in Percentages) N=80**

m	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	No. Resp.	Total
1.	Lack of dedication by public primary and secondary schools' teachers encourages poor foundation for students.	(24)	(48)	(8)	-	-	(80)
2.	Privately owned nursery and primary schools help to build qualitative foundations for higher education	30	60	10	(20)	(4)	100
3.	Unregistered unapproved nursery and primary schools outnumbered approved ones.	-	(12)	(44)	(20)	(4)	(80)
4.	Only well established private organizations should be allowed to set up schools		15	55	25	5	100
5.	The foundations laid at the nursery, primary and secondary education determines the quality of higher education products	(16)	(32)	(20)	-	(12)	(80)
6.	Divided government attention over all levels of education hampers adequate quality control.	20	40	25	-	15	100
7.	Government should relieve itself from tertiary education and concentrate on the foundation at the primary and secondary schools	(32)	(32)	(16)	-	-	(80)
8.	Government should leave management of the primary and secondary schools and concentrate on tertiary educations	40	40	20	-	-	100
9.	Profit maximization tends private schools to employ many unqualified teachers.	(52)	(28)	-	-	-	(80)
		5	35				100
		(4)	(8)	(40)	(28)	-	(80)
		5	10	50	35		100
		-	(16)	(36)	(28)	-	(80)
			20	45	35		100
		(32)	(36)	(12)	-	-	(80)
		40	45	15			100
		(36)	(36)	(8)	-	-	(80)
		45	45	10			100
	Total	(196)	(248)	(184)	(88)	(4)	(720)
		27.2	34.4	12.2	12.2	0.56	100

Table II shows that 61.6% of the respondents agreed with the items presented on section C while 37.8% disagreed and only 0.56% gave no response. The analysis of question two is presented on table III.

**Table III: Relationship Between Foundations laid at the Primary and Secondary Education and the State of Tertiary Education in Nigeria**



Variable	F	Total Score	Mean	Calculated "r"	Table Value
Foundations (Section C)	80	1984	24.8	0.96	0.71
State of Education (Section B)	80	2524	31.55		

From table III above, the calculated 'r' was 0.96 while the table value was 0.71 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated 'r' was greater than the table value, therefore there is a significant relationship between the foundations laid at the primary and secondary levels and the state of tertiary education in Nigeria.

### Question Three

Would the private sector's participation in education contribute to quality assurance in the Nigerian education?

Subjects' responses to sections D, E and F of the questionnaire are presented on table IV below for analysis of question 3.

**Table IV: Quality Assurance in Education through Private Participation (in percentages) N=80**

### Section D

Item	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Private individuals should not be licensed to set up universities to avoid the abuse of certificate.	(16)	(24)	(32)	(8)	(80)
2	Only well established private organizations should be allowed to set up higher institutions	20	30	40	10	100
3	Setting up of higher institutions should be solely government responsibilities to ensure standard and uniformity.	(40)	(28)	(12)	-	(80)
4	The private sector could contribute to the financing of education to ensure effectiveness	50	35	15	-	100
5	Education levies should be imposed on every individual and private business	(12)	(12)	(44)	(12)	(80)
6	Legal private business should compulsorily sponsor registered research projects annually in higher institutions	15	15	55	15	100
7	All registered private business must donate infrastructural and teaching resources periodically to school	(36)	(40)	-	(4)	(80)
8	Introduction of tuition into higher institutions will discourage "all comers" thereby beefing up quality.	45	50	-	5	100
		(8)	(40)	(24)	(8)	(80)
		10	50	30	10	100
		(32)	(36)	(12)	-	(80)
		40	45	15	-	100
		(28)	(40)	(12)	-	(80)
		35	50	15	-	100
		(28)	(40)	(12)	-	(80)
		35	50	15	-	100
		(28)	(40)	(12)	-	(720)
		35	50	15	-	100

## Section E

Item	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	The Private sector should be adequately involved in accreditation of courses in the institutions of learning to ensure and acceptability.	(20)	(52)	(4)	(4)	(80)
2.	Well-established private organizations that have training institutions should be accredited to award degree equivalent certificates	25	65	5	5	100
3.	Issuance of degree certificates by private organizations may lead to racketeering	(24)	(28)	(20)	(8)	(80)
4.	Tertiary students should undergo industrial attachments or professional practices in their respective fields	30	35	50	10	100
5.	Periodic industrial training or workshops should be compulsory for higher institution teachers	(24)	(28)	(28)	-	(80)
		30	35	35	-	100
		(44)	(32)	(4)	-	(80)
		55	40	-	-	100
		(40)	(36)	(4)	-	(80)
		50	45	5	-	100



Calculated  $X^2 = 378.49$ . Table value = 67.5. Level of significant = 0.05, degree of freedom = 48

### Section F

Item	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	The private sector (as an employer of labour) should be sufficiently incorporated into the selection process of students for admission alongside JAMB.	(28)	(16)	(32)	(4)	(80)
2.	Professionals in the private sector should constantly be used as resources persons for teaching, testing and evaluating students.	35	20	40	5	100
		(12)	(40)	(28)		(80)
		15	50	35		100
3.	Private organizations should be encouraged to set up and equip their respective sections in our university libraries	(32)	(36)	(8)	(4)	(80)
		40	45	10	5	100
4.	The private sector should co-fund libraries of education institutions in their respective domains	(16)	(48)	(12)	(4)	(80)
		20	60	15	5	100
		(420)	(564)	(304)	(72)	(1360)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>100</b>

Table IV shows that 72.3% agreed with all the items presented while 27.7% disagreed. On subjecting these responses to the  $X^2$  formula, the calculated  $X^2$  obtained (378.49) was significantly greater than the table value of 67.5 at 0.05 level of significance; hence we can conclude from the subjects' responses that the participation by the private sector will contribute to quality assurance in education.

### Discussion

The study sampled tertiary education teachers' views on the state of education in Nigeria especially at the tertiary level and the contributions the private sector could make towards ensuring quality in the Nigerian educational system. It reveals that a crisis exists in the quality of education at the tertiary level in Nigeria. This was attested to by 78.5% positive responses (table I) and the chi-square analysis. This echoes the cries of writers (like Ipaye 1999, Osafehinti 1997) on the downward trend of education in Nigeria. The role of higher education is so important in the economy of most developing nations (like Nigeria) to the extent that it has to be sustained at whatever cost in view of the existing problems.

Tracing the sources of the problems to the academic foundations given to the "student inputs", the high percentage response (61.66%) affirmed that the problems are related to the foundations. This relationship was also found to be statistically significant (tables II and III). Hence, one can conclude that the major source of the problem is the foundation laid at the

primary and-secondary school levels as suggested by some items in the questionnaire. This is a further confirmation of the fact raised by Ipaye (1999) that the education provided at the foundation levels (Primary and Secondary Schools) is unsatisfactory.

The mushroom Nursery and Primary schools, which littered our society the lackadaisical attitude of the public primary and secondary schools' teachers to work and resultant examination malpractices are evidences of half backed school leavers who are being maneuvered into our higher institutions of learning. Attention should also be focused on the processing or the practical action taken to manipulate the inputs as suggested by obanya (1997). This is because Ipaye (1999) has itemized explosion in students' population, depletion in staff strength, and inadequate infrastructure as contributing factors to the problems facing education in Nigeria while Osafchinti (1997) added malpractice in the level of admission, financial stringency by administrators, poor remuneration and incessant closure of schools.

Most importantly, the study has revealed that the private sector can effectively contribute to assuring quality in Nigerian education. The 72.4% positive responses from the subjects (table IV) and the significant difference in the chi-square analysis show that if the private sector is adequately involved a positive change will be experienced.

The involvement should not only be financial donations or sponsorship but should cut across all stages identified by Obanya (1997). That is the input stage, the processing stage and the output or turnout stage. They should be encouraged to establish and co-fund libraries, sponsor researchers, used as resource persons, set up accredited institutions, provide periodic donations of infrastructure and even at the screening level. *The era of being unconcerned and awaiting when to be called for financial donations should be forgotten.*

### **Conclusion**

Some conclusions could be made from the study

- It could be concluded that our educational system is bedeviled by some problems that hamper the provision of quality education.
- That the problem emanated from the foundations and extended to the processing stage at higher institutions.
- That the private sector can contribute to assuring quality in education in Nigeria if adequately involved at the input stage, processing or practical action state and turnoff (or output) state.

### **Recommendations**

The following are therefore recommended based on the findings



- A law should be enacted by government to make certain percentage of every business organization's annual profit as compulsory education levy.
  - All multinational companies should compulsorily be made to sponsor notable research studies periodically in any university or research institution in their domain.
  - Professionals from the private sector should occasionally be used as resource persons in schools and universities.
  - All multinational organizations should be encouraged to set up libraries or book aid programmes in schools and colleges to assist students to develop reading culture.
  - The private sector should be adequately represented during admission screening exercises.
  - All multinational companies must be made to include specific educational programmes in their annual budgets
  - An annual education tax should be imposed on all taxable adults and the government should ensure judicious spending of such fund
  - Conditions for registration of private schools should be slackened but supervision should be intensified
  - Parents should show more responsibility and concern about the education of their children during the <sup>and</sup> beyond the secondary school level.

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