

Private Sector Participation and Management of Public Secondary Schools in Benue and Nasarawa State

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***Abstract:** This research delves into the intricate dynamics between private sector involvement and the administration of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States. The primary focus is on the realms of funding and the provision of physical infrastructure. Employing a correlational survey design, the study meticulously gathered insights from 228 teachers and principals representing a diverse array of 527 government-aided secondary schools. The research harnessed two robust questionnaires, the Private Sector Participation Scale (PSPS) and the Management of Public Secondary School Questionnaire (MMSSQ), to meticulously collect data. Rigorous validation by experts and a comprehensive trial test underscored the reliability of these instruments. The data, meticulously analyzed through the lens of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and linear regression, unearthed a compelling revelation. It showcased that private sector participation stands as a robust predictor for heightened funding levels and an amelioration in infrastructure provisioning within public secondary schools. As a beacon for policymakers, the study advocates for the fortification of policy frameworks guiding public-private partnerships. The imperative lies in addressing coordination challenges and ensuring an equitable distribution of resources. Moreover, the research underscores the significance of stakeholder collaboration and proposes capacity-building initiatives as pivotal elements in nurturing enduring, effective partnerships between public schools and private sector entities. Ultimately, these recommendations aspire to propel positive transformations in public secondary education.*

***Keywords:** Private Sector Participation Management, Public Secondary Schools, Benue And Nasarawa State*

Introduction

Education is an expensive social service that requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of government for successful implementation of its programmes. That is why most nations of the world strive to devote a sizeable proportion of their Gross National Income to develop the educational sector. In Nigeria, between 7.6% and 9.9% of our annual expenditure is devoted to education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012). The public alone cannot meet the educational needs of the teeming population of the country; there is therefore the need for both public and private sector partnership in the provision and management of secondary education in Nigeria most especially in the Benue and Nasarawa States.

Secondary education is defined by (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN 2013:8) as “the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage”. It is expected to function as preparation for life and higher education. Secondary education will achieve its objectives if there is provision of infrastructural facilities, standard and quality assurance, financial assistance, staff and students discipline, laboratory equipment, employment of extra teachers by School community relationship amongst others. The state governments through their state ministries of education manage and finance secondary education in the States. The ministry provides grants to teaching service boards for execution of their administrative functions. The funds provided are used for payment of teachers’

salaries and allowances, to procure instructional materials, equipment and provide physical facilities and equipment, construction of classroom blocks for public schools in the area (Akpa, 2015). The Federal Government through the National Policy on Education (FRN 2013) mandates the private sector to also participate in the management of secondary schools.

However, the Nigerian government has made efforts to involve stakeholders in the management of secondary schools, such as participation of Parents Teachers' Associations and community members in school management. Despite these efforts, the effective management of secondary schools in Nigeria continues to be a persistent problem. To address this, in 2006, the National Council on Education approved the establishment of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in all primary and secondary schools in Nigeria as part of the government's strategy to restructure the school management process and increase community participation in school management (Ogbonnaya, 2015).

Furthermore, the ownership of educational institutions in Nigeria is between the public and private sectors. The public sector, comprising government entities at federal, state, and local levels, stands in contrast to the private sector's involvement in managing secondary schools, which encompasses corporations, non-profits, and individuals in various aspects of education (Srivastava, 2013). The private sector is further categorized into three groups. Firstly, the local private sector involves associations like old students' associations, Parents Teachers Associations (PTA), philanthropists, and alumni associations managed solely by individuals within the community. Secondly, the institutionalized private sector includes banks, insurance, oil, and construction companies, privately owned but somewhat influenced by government control. Finally, the third category consists of private registered firms and industries, managed privately but registered with the government as limited liability companies (Onyene, 2016).

Management is getting things done through others. It can be more scientifically defined as the co-ordination of all the resources of an organization through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling in order to attain organizational objectives. However, Chike-Okoli (2015) asserts that educational management is the ability of the educational manager to judiciously utilize the human, material, financial and the time resources towards the effective achievement of the objectives of the educational institutions. This study will investigate the impact of private sector participation on funding, provision of physical infrastructural facilities, staff recruitment, staff training, discipline, school community relationship and the provision of school security in secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States.

Funding of education refers to the financial support provided for the various components of education such as research, teaching, infrastructure, and student support services. It is a critical aspect of managing education as it influences the availability and quality of educational opportunities for individuals and societies as a whole Hanushek and Woessmann (2017). In Nigeria, Gbadegesin and Enefolo (2016) observe that inadequate infrastructure in Nigeria's educational sector may be attributed to poor funding. It was observed that from 2019 and 2021, the budgetary allocation was 7.02% Amoo, (2018). It was suggested that institutions of learning should look inwards to generate income either commercially or through public private partnerships to fund infrastructure Enefolo (2016). However, private sector participation in funding secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States brings in additional funding, improves infrastructure, and provides modern technology and resources. Private sector involvement often includes scholarships and grants, benefiting financially disadvantaged students. Public-private partnerships and vocational training initiatives are also established Akinpelu and Ogunsanwo, (2015). It is important to regulate and align private sector involvement with educational goals. Collaboration between the private sector, government, and communities is vital for maximizing benefits. By working together, stakeholders can create sustainable models that address the challenges faced by secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States and foster holistic educational development as it relates to school infrastructural facilities Adedokun and Afolabi, (2016).

School infrastructural facilities are the operational inputs of every instructional programme, it constitutes elements that are necessary for teaching and learning. Such include buildings, laboratories, machinery, furniture and electrical fixtures Ehiemetalor, (2011). These must be functional in relation to

other aspects of the community, such as health centres, libraries and good roads and must be large enough to allow for expansion as enrolments expand. If the private sectors are involved in the management of secondary schools in the study area, it is assumed that there will be appropriate provision of infrastructural facilities to facilitate effective teaching and learning because local communities often raise funds to provide facilities in schools such as the building of new classroom blocks dormitories. Private sector involvement can lead to improvements in the quality and quantity of infrastructure, including buildings, equipment, and technology. One way the private sector can contribute is through public-private partnerships (PPPs) Adedokun and Afolabi, (2016). PPPs are collaborations between the government and private sector entities to finance, design, build, and operate infrastructure projects. In the context of secondary schools, PPPs can help address the funding gap for infrastructure development and maintenance, as well as improve the efficiency and effectiveness of project delivery Riley, (2012). Another way the private sector contributes is through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. CSR involves voluntary actions by companies to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions in their operating communities. Within the realm of secondary schools, companies may invest in infrastructure development, recruit and pay teachers, as part of their CSR efforts, resulting in better facilities for students and recruitment of qualified teachers for teaching (International Finance Corporation [IFC], 2018). It is against this background the researcher is investigating the impact of private sector participation on the management of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States.

Statement of the Problem

The management of secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa State seems to face multiple challenges, necessitating involvement from the private sector to enhance overall school management. However, the current level of private sector participation in secondary schools seems to be low, resulting in several issues. These seem to include inadequate funding, insufficient provision of physical infrastructural facilities, challenges in staff recruitment and training,. These challenges seems to significantly impede the quality of education, prompting an investigation into the impact of private sector participation on the management of secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States. Addressing disparities in funding and resource allocation and infrastructure development, necessitates an in-depth examination of how private sector involvement impacts these critical aspects of secondary school management in the areas. This study aims to respond to the concerns raised by stakeholders in educational management and offer insights into the impact of private sector participation on the management of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between private sector participation and the management of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States. Specifically the study sought to:

- i. Examine how private sector participation correlates with the funding of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States.
- ii. Explore the relationship between private sector participation and the provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the correlation between private sector participation and the funding of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States?
- ii. What is the correlation between private sector participation and the provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools?

Statement of Hypotheses

The study formulates and tests the following null hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05:

- i. Private sector participation does not correlate significantly with the funding of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States.

- ii. There is no significant relationship between private sector participation and the provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools.

Methodology

The research employed a correlational survey design, aiming to establish relationships between private sector participation and the management of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa State. This design allows for the sampling of opinions from a significant portion of the population to determine if a relationship exists between the independent variable of private sector participation and the dependent variable of the management of public secondary school.

The target population for the study was 527 government-aided secondary schools located in Benue and Nasarawa State and 1140 teachers in Benue And Nasarawa State. The selection of this population was based on the significance of the study. The sample consisted of 228 teachers and principals, representing 5% of the population. Proportional stratified sampling was employed, selecting teachers and principals in the area. The sample size was distributed proportionally among the chosen areas, ensuring a comprehensive and representative selection of participants.

Two researcher-developed questionnaires, the Private Sector Participation Scale (PSPS) and the Management of Public Secondary School Questionnaire (MMSSQ), were used for data collection. These instruments featured a 4-point rating scale and focused on the relationship between private sector participation and the management of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States. The questionnaires underwent validation by experts in Educational Administration and Planning, leading to the restructuring of certain items to align with research objectives. To establish reliability, a trial test was conducted in South-East States, yielding an overall internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.82. This indicates the instrument's reliability for the study.

The administration of the questionnaires was facilitated by five research assistants with tertiary education degrees, utilizing a direct delivery technique for the immediate retrieval of completed questionnaires. This method aims to ensure efficiency, accuracy, and a two-week data collection period. Research assistants, briefed on the study's purpose, assisted in administering the questionnaires to the respondents. The direct delivery technique was used, requiring respondents to fill and return the instrument on the spot. Research assistants were chosen to ensure accurate completion, a high return rate, and efficient coverage of the extensive study area.

Data analysis involved using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to address research questions and linear regression to test hypotheses. These statistical methods were chosen for their ability to measure correlation and determine cause-and-effect relationships between variables at a 0.05 level of significance.

Interpretation and analysis

A total of 228 copies of questionnaire were taken to the field and administered to 228 respondents and 227 were returned, showcasing that 1 copy of the questionnaires were lost. The data analyses and interpretation are presented accordingly with the 227 copies returned, using the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. Data related to each research question and hypothesis is presented on separate Tables for easy comprehension. **Analysis of Research Questions**

Research Question 1

What is the correlation between private sector participation and the funding of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Scores on correlation between private sector participation and the funding of public secondary schools in Benue and Nasarawa States

		Private sector participation	Funding
Privatesector participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.961
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	227	
Funding	Pearson Correlation	.961	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	227	227

The table one reveals significant positive correlations in Benue and Nasarawa States between private sector participation and funding in public secondary schools. Both the correlations within the private sector participation variable and funding variable separately are perfect and statistically significant, each yielding a Pearson Correlation of 1 and a p-value of 0.000 with a sample size of 227. Furthermore, the correlation between private sector participation and funding is notably strong, with a Pearson Correlation of 0.961 and a p-value of 0.000, suggesting a robust relationship between private sector involvement and increased funding for public secondary schools in the region.

Research Question 2

What is the correlation between private sector participation and the provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools?

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation scores relationship between private sector participation and the provision of physical infrastructural facilities

		Private sector participation	provision of physical infrastructural facilities
Private sector participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.947
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	227	
provision of physical infrastructural facilities	Pearson Correlation	.947	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	227	227

The Pearson correlation analysis, utilizing a sample size of 227, reveals a robust and statistically significant positive linear relationship ($r = 0.947$, $p < 0.001$) between private sector participation and the provision of physical infrastructural facilities. This implies that as private sector involvement increases, there is a substantial tendency for an augmented provision of physical infrastructure. The correlation coefficient's high magnitude underscores the strength of this association, while the low p-value signifies the result's statistical significance, suggesting a reliable pattern rather than a chance occurrence.

Hypothesis 1

Private sector participation does not correlate significantly with the funding of public secondary schools.

Table 3: Linear Regression Showing Relationship Between Private sector participation and funding of public secondary schools

Variable	R	R ²	F	B	t	Sig
(Constant)	961	924	2736.786		5.203	000
funding of public secondary schools				961	52.314	000

F (1, 226) = 2736.786, P < 05

The results from the linear regression analysis, as presented in Table 3, reject Hypothesis 1, indicating a statistically significant correlation between private sector participation and the funding of public secondary schools. The regression model demonstrates a significant overall relationship (F = 2736.786, p < 0.05), and the coefficient for private sector participation (B = 52.314) is positive. This suggests that an increase in private sector participation is associated with a substantial positive effect on the funding of public secondary schools. The t-value of 5.203 further confirms the significance of this relationship. Therefore, based on the findings, it can be concluded that private sector participation is a significant predictor of increased funding for public secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between private sector participation and the provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools.

Table 4: Linear Regression Showing Relationship between Private Sector Participation and Provision of Physical Infrastructural Facilities in Public Secondary Schools

Variable	R	R ²	F	B	t	Sig
(Constant)	947	896	1939.717		2.853	000
Provision of Physical Infrastructural Facilities				947	44.042	000

F (1, 226) = 1939.717, P < 05

The results from the linear regression analysis presented in Table 4 support Hypothesis 2, indicating that there is a statistically significant relationship between private sector participation and the provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools. The regression model demonstrates a significant overall relationship (F = 1939.717, p < 0.05), and the coefficient for private sector participation (B = 44.042) is positive. This suggests that an increase in private sector participation is associated with a significant positive effect on the provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools. The t-value of 2.853 further confirms the statistical significance of this relationship. Therefore, based on the findings, it can be concluded that private sector participation is a significant predictor of improved provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

In this study, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings of this research have been discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

The first finding of this study revealed that private sector participation is a significant predictor of increased funding for public secondary schools. The finding that private sector participation is a significant predictor of increased funding for public secondary schools resonates with the study conducted by Akande (2016) in Kano, Nigeria. Akande's research revealed that private sector involvement had a positive impact on the funding of public secondary schools, providing additional financial resources for infrastructure, teaching materials, and overall improvement in learning opportunities. Both studies highlight the importance of private sector partnerships in addressing funding challenges faced by public schools, with potential benefits including enhanced quality of education and improved school management. However, both studies acknowledge the need to address challenges such as unequal distribution of funding and the potential commercialization of education

The second finding revealed that private sector participation is a significant predictor of improved provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Oladipo and Akpa (2016) in Lagos and Okorie (2017) in Abuja. These studies found that private sector involvement had a significant positive impact on the physical infrastructure of public secondary schools, including improvements in classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and sports facilities. The benefits extended to the construction and renovation of classroom blocks, provision of ICT infrastructure, and support for extracurricular activities. While acknowledging these positive outcomes, both studies identified challenges, such as coordination issues and difficulties in ensuring sustainability of partnerships, emphasizing the need for clear guidelines and policies to enhance private sector participation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study's findings support the notion that private sector participation significantly predicts increased funding and improved provision of physical infrastructural facilities in public secondary schools in the Benue and Nasarawa States. The findings underscore the transformative potential of strategic private sector partnerships in bolstering the quality and management of public secondary education. To optimize these benefits, policymakers are urged to establish clear guidelines and policies, ensuring equitable resource distribution and guarding against potential commercialization of education. This study contributes valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders aiming to leverage private sector participation for the betterment of public secondary schools in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the related empirical research, two key recommendations emerge to enhance the effectiveness of private sector participation in public secondary schools in the Benue and Nasarawa States:

1. **Policy Framework Enhancement:** Given the positive influence of private sector participation on increased funding and improved infrastructure, it is recommended that educational policymakers develop and strengthen a comprehensive policy framework. This framework should provide clear guidelines for public-private partnerships, outlining expectations, responsibilities, and mechanisms for equitable resource distribution. Additionally, policies should address challenges identified in the studies, such as coordination issues and sustainability concerns. Regular reviews and updates of these policies will ensure their relevance and effectiveness in fostering beneficial

private sector involvement in the long-term development of public secondary education.

2. **Stakeholder Collaboration and Capacity Building:** To address coordination challenges and ensure sustainable partnerships, it is crucial for educational authorities to facilitate robust collaboration between public schools and private sector entities. Establishing platforms for ongoing communication and engagement will foster a shared understanding of goals and objectives. Moreover, capacity-building initiatives for school administrators, teachers, and private sector representatives can enhance their skills in managing and sustaining partnerships. Workshops, training programs, and knowledge-sharing forums can contribute to effective collaboration, ensuring that private sector resources are optimally utilized for the benefit of public secondary schools.

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