CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL DELIVERY IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This is an investigation of the challenges to effective educational delivery in public and private basic schools in Bayelsa State. The descriptive survey design was adopted. The sample comprised 1,000 teachers (including 205 head teachers) from 205 basic schools randomly selected from the eight local Government Areas in the State.. The two instruments used for for the study were (a) an opinion survey questionnaire titled 'Quality Delivery of Basic Education: Teachers' Survey Questionnaire' (QDBETSQ)' and an inventory form named 'Quality Delivery of Basic Education: Head Teachers' Survey Form' (QDBEHTSF). These were appropriately validated with the assistance of the supervisor and some experts in the department. The instruments were personally administered, with the assistance of some trained research assistants. One research question was posed, and one null hypothesis formulated to guide the study. Results showed that the delivery of quality basic education in public schools is moderately inhibited by poor funding, lack of or inadequate facilities, low and irregular staff salaries, inadequate teaching aids, lack of and inadequacy of qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, poor facilities management culture (weighted mean = 2.39). These challenges were minimal in private schools (weighted mean = 1.79). On the empirical side, the difference in challenges to quality delivery of basic education in public and private schools was found to be statistically significant (Standard Deviation Private Schools = 0.52; Standard Deviation Public Schools = 0.59; t-value = 11.741; P<0.05). This implies that in all areas of assessment, the private schools fared better than the public schools. This justified parents' and guardians' preference of private schools for their children and wards.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, as in other countries, there are two categories of schools: public and private schools. Public schools are government-owned and government-controlled and in most cases do not charge fees. Private schools are owned and controlled by private individuals or organisations; and they charge fees to pay teachers, provide facilities and maintain infrastructures. In Nigeria today, many parents and guardians who can afford the fees send their children or wards to private schools because of the general belief that pupils in private schools usually perform better academically than pupils in public schools (adebayo (2009). As a follow-up to Akpe (2015), this study compared the nature of material resources provisions in public and private schools, to check whether the acclaimed better academic performances of pupils in private schools are related to the availability of material resources for teaching, infrastructures and generally more conducive environments for teaching and learning.

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SAMPLE LITERATURE

Mba (2008) assessed indicators of quality provision of secondary education in Ikwerre Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State. The study used all 381 teachers in all the 17 private and 4 public schools. The study is comprehensive in content with regard to quality parameters and the sample is very representative of the LGA covered. The study revealed that although both public and private schools did not have sufficient number of good quality teachers, the situation in the private schools was better than that of the public schools. School facilities are significantly more adequate in pivate schools than public schools. Better working conditions and school climate are found in private schools than in public schools. The interpretation of this result is that challenges to the delivery of quality education in Rivers State were less prominent in the private schools than in the public schools.

Obasi (2008) investigated teaching manpower training and development in public and private schools in South Eastern Nigeria as a basis for assessing quality of teachers available to the school system. The survey involved a sample of 877 teachers (25%) and principals of 62 public and 46 private schools (25%) in 25% of LGAs in each of the states. The analysis of the result showed that public and private schools utilised almost the same training and developmental programmes for their teacher development exercise. However, the rate of utilisation is higher in the private schools, than in the public schools. The researcher equally identified the problems of inadequate training programme as inadequate budget, lack of commitment from states and proprietors of private schools, and lack of personnel for competency assessment. All these constituted challenges to the delivery of high quality education in the states studies. Obasi's work is limited to training and development programmes as one of the parameters for assuring teacher quality in the school system. However, staff development alone cannot guarantee improved teacher quality if other personnel ingredients like motivational incentive schemes are lacking. The absence or inadequacy of motivation and incentives for teachers are some of the challenges to quality delivery of basic education in the area of study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is a massive preference for private schools by the consumers of education in Bayelsa State even when the public schools are free, on the ground that there is a decline in the quality of education in the public schools. This preference is based on the belief that quality parameters exist more in the private schools than in their public counterparts. In other words, parents and guardians believe that the private schools have better teachers than the public schools, resulting in better students' results in external examinations. This contradicts Akpe's findings that the only quality parameter that is equally applicable to public and private schools is human resources because no statistically significant difference was found in the human resources provisions in public and private schools (Akpe 2012). Therefore, the acclaimed better academic performance of students in private schlools could be traced to the predominance of other quality parameters, such as better facilities, better infractructures, better quality of instructional process, more conducive

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learning environments, evidence of high quality of learning outcomes and minimal challenges or consstraints to the education delivery process in the private schools (Akpe 2015: 136; cf Mba 2008).

The problem, therefore, bothers on where we have better quality delivery of basic education and what quality parameters are more applicable to each category of institution. Since the provisions of human resources, particularly teaching staff, are not significantly different in public and private schools, could the acclaimed achievement of higher quality educational delivery in the private schools be associated with less constraints or fewer challenges to effectuve delivery of education in the private schools, among other quality parameters, than in the public schools in Bayelsa State? This, indeed, is the problem that this study was designed to investigate.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges to effective delivery of quality education in the public and private basic schools in Bayelsa State. .Specifically, the stu dy was designed to find out the extent to which certain challenges militated against the delivery of quality basic education in public and private schools in Bayelsa State. The specific objective of the study was to determine whether the challenges to effective delivery of education are more prominent in the public schools than in the private schools, or, put the other way round, whether the challenges to effective delivery of basic education are less prominent in the private schools than in the public schools in Bayelsa State

RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the objective identified above, the following research question was posed to guide the study:

What is the quality of learning outcomes of basic education in public and private schools in Bayelsa State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypothesis was also formulated to reinforce the research question:

There is no statistically significant difference between public and private schools in the challenges to quality delivery of basic education.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents a description of the methodology that was adopted in carrying out this study, embodying the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, administration of instrument and method of data analysis.

Research Design

The research design for this study was descriptive survey. This is because the research was designed to assess the quality of delivery of basic education in Bayelsa State, focusing on the challenges to quality delivery of basic education in public and private schools in that state, using a sample of the population to generalize for the entire state.

Population

The population of this study consisted of the entire 132 registered private basic schools and 689 public basic schools in the 8 Local Government Areas of Bayelsa State. The 821 head teachers and 7,946 teachers of these schools constituted the research population.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The research sample for this study was made up of 33 private and 172 public basic schools (a total of 205 basic schools), spread across the eight LGAs of Bayelsa State. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted to pick the sample of schools, school heads and teachers, based on public schools versus private school dichotomy. Firstly, 25% of public and private basic schools in each of the eight Local Government Areas were randomly sampled, giving a total of 33 private and 172 public basic schools. All the head teachers of these sampled schools were used as respondents. In addition, 10% of the teachers in these sampled schools were randomly selected and used for the study, giving a total of 689 public and 106 private school teachers, bringing the total number of respondents to one thousand (1000).

Instrumentation

Two instruments were designed and used for the study. These were an opinion survey questionnaire code-named 'Quality Delivery of Basic Education: Teachers' Survey Questionnaire **(QDBETSQ)'** and an inventory form named Quality Delivery of Basic Education: Head Teachers' Survey Form **(QDBEHTSF)**. The two instruments were structured into two parts, the first part was designed to collect information on the demographic data of the respondents (proprietorship and level) while the second part contained the main questionnaire items covering the area of research. The QDBETSQ with 108 items was structured on a 4-point modified Likert-type scale. Part B of the second instrument (QBDEHTSF) contained 373 items aimed at collecting concrete evidences on teacher qualification and experience, facilities and students' performances. The researcher adopted and modified some items from the instrument used by Osiobe (2010).

Validity of Instruments

To ensure the validity of the instruments, the questionnaires and the research questions were given to the supervisor and some experts in the Department of Educational Manaagement, University of port-harcourt, for critical examination. The final draft of the instruments was based on their corrections and suggestions. The researcher also related the questionnaire items to the research question and hypothesis to ensure their adequacy for the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument QDBETSQ was determined, using the test re-test method with 30 sampled teachers who were not to be part of the sampled respondents, with two-week interval. This yielded a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) of 0.92. Based on this high reliability co-efficient, the instrument was considered reliable. The second instrument, QDBEHTSF, was designed to gather concrete evidence. Hence, there was no need for reliability testing.

Administration of Instruments

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire and inventory form, with the assistance of some trained research assistants. Most of the questionnaires were retrieved on the same day of administration. Where this was not possible, repeated visits were made to ensure high response and return rate. The process of instrument administration took a period of 10 weeks because of the difficult geographical terrain. In all, 206 QDBEHTSF was administered (34 in private and 172 in public schools) and all were retrieved, giving a total of 100% response rate. For the QDBETSQ, 795 copies were administered (689 in public and 106 in private schools). Of these numbers, 614 (89%) copies were retrieved from public schools while 92 (87%) were retrieved from private schools. Some teachers and school heads, especially in the private schools, were reluctant to release information because of fear of government sanctions.

Method of Data Analysis

The responses to the **QDBETSQ** research instrument were weighted as follows:

(a)   Very Adequate or High – **4**

(ii) Moderately Adequate or Moderate – **3**

(iii) Minimally Adequate or Low – **2**

(iv) Very Inadequate or Very Low – **1**

Responses to **QDBEHTSF** were weighted thus:

(b)   *Students' Performance*

Distinction, **4**; Credit, **3**; Pass, **2**; Fail, **1**

(ii) Teacher Qualification

BA/Bsc & above with Educational Qualification, **4**; NCE, **3**; B.Sc. without Educational Qualification, **2**; lower than NCE, **1**

(ii) Teacher Experience

10 years and above, **4**; 5- 10 years, **3;** 2-5 years, **2;** Less than 2 years, **1**

Means and standard deviations were used to analyse the data to address the research question, while the t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected for the research are analysed below.

Research Question (RQ1): *What are the challenges to quality delivery of basic education in public and private schools in Bayelsa State.*

The challenges of quality delivery of basic education in public and private schools were assessed in 23 areas. The result of the analyses is presented in Table 1 The result of the opinion survey shows the Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation of the level of agreement with the listed items as shown in Table 1 was graded on a 4 point- modified Likert scale, namely, Great Extent, Moderate Extent, Minimal Extent and Not at all. The delivery of quality basic education in public schools is moderately inhibited by poor funding, lack of or inadequate facilities, low and irregular staff salaries and inadequate teaching aids. Tthis is evident in the mean opinion scores for these challenges falling between 2.51 and 3.01 (all of which are within the moderate weighting). Other factors that pose minimal challenges to quality delivery of basic education in public schools include: lack of and inadequacy of qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, poor facilities management culture (see the weighted mean of these factors in Table 1, falling between 1.97 and 2.46)

For the private schools, these aforementioned challenges minimally inhibit quality delivery of basic education (see weighted mean scores falling between 2.46 and 1.56) for 21 out of the 23 challenges assessed, as shown in Table 1 below. The respondents in the private schools agreed to a minimal extent with all the items with weighted mean ranging from 1.56 to 2.46, except for teachers rejection of posting and inappropriate purchases with weighted mean of 1.31 and 1.37 respectively which means they did not agree at all that these items posed challenges to quality delivery of Basic Education in Private schools.

Table 1: Weighted mean and SD of teachers' assessment of the challenges to quality delivery of basic education.

S/N	Challenges to Quality Delivery	Public Schools		Private Schools	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Lack of qualified teachers	2.23	1.12	1.92	0.94
2	Inadequacy of qualified teachers	2.24	1.13	1.85	0.92
3	Overcrowded classrooms	2.32	1.15	1.70	0.93
4	Lack of supervision	2.22	1.05	1.67	0.86
5	Inadequate supervision	2.31	1.04	1.77	0.88
6	Inadequate teaching aids	2.73	1.07	2.01	0.99
7	Poor funding	3.01	1.14	2.14	1.01
8	Low staff salaries	2.76	1.06	2.46	1.04
9	Irregular payment of salaries	2.51	1.03	1.69	0.97

10	Difficult riverine terrain	2.49	1.20	1.60	1.01
11	Teachers rejection of transfers	2.11	1.15	1.31	0.78
12	Inappropriate purchases	2.15	1.14	1.37	0.68
13	Poor maintenance culture	2.46	1.12	1.56	0.75
14	Poor plant plan & school mapping	2.57	1.17	1.91	0.97
15	Lack of facilities	2.90	1.18	2.04	1.09
16	Inadequate facilities	2.75	1.20	1.93	1.08
17	Over utilization of staff	2.07	1.12	1.90	1.03
18	Under utilization of staff	1.97	1.05	1.89	1.08
19	Lack of defined scheme of service	2.32	1.12	1.71	1.03
20	Lack of pension scheme	2.33	1.27	1.93	1.31
21	Aiding Examination malpractice	1.77	1.07	1.28	0.81
22	Lack of training in education by Managers /proprietors.	2.34	1.17	1.70	1.08
23	Lack of right orientation by proprietors/school managers.	2.39	1.20	1.83	1.09
	Aggregate Mean	**2.39**	**0.60**	**1.79**	**0.52**

Research Hypothesis (Ho1): *There is no statistically significant difference between public and private schools in the challenges to quality delivery of basic education.*

To ascertain the significant differences in the challenges to quality delivery of basic education in public and private schools, a t-test was administered at 5% level of significance, Summary of the result is presented on Table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean and test of differences between public and private schools on teachers' assessment of the challenges to quality delivering of basic education.

SN	Categories	N	Mean	SD	t-value	2-tailed sig. value	Remarks
1	Public Schools	388	2.39	.59	11.741	.000	v. sig.
2	Private Schools	184	1.79	.52			

p<0.05

For the test comparison of the means of 2.39 and 1.79 for public and private schools respectively, a t-value of -11.741 was obtained This is found to be very significant at .000 (2-tailed) since it is far less than the α level of 0.05. This difference is significant hence the associated null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected. From the mean evidence in table 2, it is clear that public schools are significantly more inhibited in their drive towards quality delivery of basic education than their private counterparts.

DISCUSSION

The result in Table 1 above shows that public schools are significantly inhibited by challenges to quality delivery of basic education than the Private schools, the mean score in all the 23 areas tested shows that Public schools are more prone to challenges than Private schools. This agrees with Akyaempong (2008) which stated that it is quality concerns in education that have resulted in a sizeable private sector involvement in Ghanaian basic education. This result also agrees with Mustapha (2006) who recommended that privatization should be used as a tool to solve the educational challenges in Turkey, though Imnakoya (2006) asserted that even in the poorest part of the world, up to 70% still prefer private education. Definitely these private schools for the poor would face a vast number of challenges also. The major reason for the preference for private schools by basic education consumers is the imminent challenges faced by the public schools, though this does not mean that the private schools are free from these challenges. In Bayelsa State, a vast majority of public schools are located at the rural areas or riverine terrains and most teachers, including the youth corpers, reject postings to these locations. The private school proprietors may be too business conscious, as everything is paid for in private schools. This is a deviation from the global advocacy for the actualization of Education For All (EFA).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Delivery of quality basic education in public schools is moderately inhibited by poor funding, inadequacy of instructional materials/facilities, low and irregular staff salaries. These challenges minimally affect quality delivery of basic education in private schools.
2. Public schools are significantly more inhibited than private schools by challenges to quality delivery of basic education.

CONCLUSION

Quality delivery of basic education is yet to be substantially achieved in Bayelsa State, whether in public or private schools. This state of affairs is more deplorable in public schools than in private schools. The desired goals of implementing basic education can hardly be achieved under this low quality performance. The low quality performance of students in public schools could easily be associated with the low status of the quality parameters in those schools. On the other hand, the high status of quality parameters in the private schools must have been responsible for the high quality of learning outcomes in those schools - that is, better performance of students in internal and external examinations (Ihebereme& Maduewesi 2009; Ikpitibo 2008; Karadimos 2010; Mba 2008; Mbachu 2009; Obasi 2008; Obong 2009). In spite of some common deficiencies in both categories of institutions, parents and their children still prefer private schools to public schools, because children attending private schools believe that they have brighter chances for better results in public external examinations, such as WAEC's Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) and NECO's Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE). This preference could be traced to the preveilence of better quality delivery in the private schools,

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which is generally associated with such quality parameters as more appropraite teaching and learning facilities, better infractructures and generally more conducive environments for teaching and learning (cf Mba 2008)..

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has revealed that the quality of learning outcomes in private basic schools in Bayelsa State is higher than that of the public basic schools. Earlier studies have shown that the quantity and quality of teachers in both public and private schools are about the same. The reason for better performance of students in the private schools has been linked to the availability of facilities and high quality instructional process   (Akpe 2012). It is therefore recommended that the State Government, as proprietor of the public schools, should make more funds available to the schools so that adequate provisions could be made for essential facilities for teaching asnd learning, adequate infrastructures and conducive environments for teaching and learning. Otherwise, the efforts of teachers for effective learning in the public schools would be in vain. Further, government efforts should be direcred towards regular and more effective inspection of the facilities and the instructional process so that the schhols could meet the minimum standard for effective teaching and learning and in that way ensure high quality of learning outcomes in both categories of institutions

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The following areas are suggested for further research:
1. Comparison of human and material resources provisions in the basic education
   schools (or any other level or levels of educasion) in specific states of Nigeria.
2. A study of factors responsible for the varying qualities of learning outcomes in
   basic education in public and private schools in Bayelsa State; and in other states of
   Nigeria.

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