



Impact of Private School Administration on Educational Advancement in Katsina State

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Abstract

The growing and increasing demand for quality education by Nigerian citizens calls for the cooperative involvement of all stakeholders. This demand paved the way for the establishment of different private primary and secondary schools. Therefore, this paper sets out to analyze and explore the impact of private school administration on educational advancement in Katsina State. Thus, the efficient method of research applied to come up with a reliable result was in the form of conducting interviews with resource persons, consulting newspapers, magazines, archival and government documents, and the internet, among others. Thus, in the course of a major finding, it was discovered that some of the people joining the business of private schools believed money was bedrock. This led to the highest rate of examination malpractice, indiscipline, and exploitation of teachers in most private schools. From this paper, it is also clear that despite the role of private schools in educational advancement in Katsina State, they still face challenges, of which the way out is for proprietors to maintain standards, avoid teachers' exploitation, and prompt parent payment of school fees. Then government agencies, examination bodies, and NGOs should discharge their duties respectively and make provision for grants in the form of aid.

Keywords: Private School, Administration, Katsina State, Role, Challenges, Way-out

Introduction

At the forefront of modern history, the establishment, development, and administration of private schools for educational advancement in Katsina State can be traced to the activities of Christian Missionary Groups (Sudan Interior Mission [SIM]) in Katsina Emirate. This was recognized and used by the colonial government to address the social challenges prevalent in society, such as the leprosy scourge, agriculture, etc. That was why they established a leprosarium at Babban Ruga, a church (Evangelical Church of Christ

Winning All [ECWA]) and Babban Ruga Primary School in 1937 for education (Umoh, 2010:17–18), which was limited to the 4Rs (religion, reading, arithmetic, and writing) and said to have neglected other learning aspects (KTC), among others. This led to the establishment of St. John Primary School in 1943, with the help of an expatriate who donated 5 pounds. The school became a full-fledged primary school in 1956 with the registration number KAT/KAT10ZKEA (History of John's Church, 2011:16–17). The school was the best in the whole province during the Independence Ceremony on October 1, 1960. No wonder the Sarkin Yaki Katsina

was quoted to have said to the Head Teacher, Mr. Okolo, “I am proud of your school being the best in town” (History of John's Church, 2011:20). This statement was made to the headmaster during the Independence Day Celebration Visitation. So, this marked the end of the first phase of private schools in Katsina, if one may argue.

Nevertheless, the second phase of the establishment of private schools in the area of study came up in March 1980. This individualized private school by name Auntie Ramatu College started its nursery on March 10, 1980, with 17 children in the proprietress's 'house at No. 3 Nagogo Road, G.R.A. Katsina, and progressed into primary school in 1985 with primary 1 and 2. Her first set of pupils to graduate in 1989 got admission to the top 17 secondary schools in Nigeria, including King's College and Queen's College, Lagos (Biography of Auntie Ramatu's Voice, 2005: 5). Thus, in 1984, Katsina Steel Rolling Staff School was established in order to provide primary education to the children of the staff and the community surrounding the staff estate.

Thus, in October 1987 came another famous private school of its time, Kiddies International School Katsina, which came a month after the creation of Katsina State (by the Federal Government on September 23, 1987) to accommodate the influx of civil servants, provide affordable education, and improve the educational standard. Auntie Ramatu College cannot meet all the educational demands, and some parents are not satisfied with the kind of education delivered at public schools (Bala, 2011). That same year, there was the emergence of

ECWA Primary School as the first missionary in the second phase of the history of private schools. Thus, since then, Katsina State has been experiencing a high influx of private schools, whose mode of administration and impact on educational advancement has become an issue for stakeholders.

Private School Administration Ownership of educational institutions in Nigeria is between the public and private sectors. The public sector here refers to government at the three tiers—federal, state, and local—while the private sector speaks about an individual or group of persons, organizations, or mission bodies coming together to establish and run an educational institution at any level of the educational system, namely, nursery, primary, secondary, and/or universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics, among others. Schools that are established and run by governments are called public schools, while those established by individuals, organizations, and mission bodies are referred to as private schools (Wycliff, 2012:94–104). Consequently, private schools are those schools that have the following characteristics: Supported by private organizations or individuals rather than the state, independent schools that are supported wholly by the payment of fees, in schools that are not administered by local, state, or federal governments, the schools retain the right to select their students (Omede, 2015:101–102, Zumuk, 2009:151–153, and Emunemu, 2008:165–170).

For more than five decades now, private schools have run as profit-oriented

enterprises, often owned by individuals, cooperating individuals, voluntary agencies, or faith-based organizations. Private ownership of schools, as earlier noted, dominated the education landscape of the country during the mid-nineteenth century in Nigeria, leading up to the later part of that century. The missionaries were predominantly responsible for those schools. Private schools have persisted since then. In Katsina, there were over 104 private primary schools and private post-primary schools (Wycliff, 2012:80–90). Private schools can be categorized according to fee regimes, such as low-fee paying (LFP) and high-fee paying (HFP). The fee regimes are directly determined by the owner's defined standards and characteristics and are not subject to government regulation. Fee payment determines access and sometimes the quality of programs available in each school. Private schools are mostly run on the basis of cash for provision (Harma, 2011). The report reveals all or some of the following about private schools: Financed privately, managed and run privately, operate in an environment less than the standard of public schools, Process of Personnel recruitment/quantity/quality of personnel strictly restricted, Conditions of service strictly restricted, Monitoring/evaluation system largely unknown, Admission criteria and process determined by the school Teacher development and training are largely unknown; quality assurance measures are largely undisclosed. Government recognition is largely unknown for many private schools. All-year-round admission, indiscriminate registration of candidates for certificate examinations, Ready platforms as —Miracle Centres and Limited/Non

availability of facilitates e.g. laboratories, libraries, demonstration farms, play grounds, etc.

Role of Private School Administration on the Educational Advancement in Katsina State

In Katsina State, private education is becoming increasingly popular, largely due to the contribution it has been making in the provision of standard and quality education, especially in the following key areas:

(1) Standard Education

One of the contributions of private schools in Katsina State is the rescuing of the nation's public education from decay (that is, complementing government efforts in reviving education), which was achieved through the building of schools, the provision of a conducive atmosphere for effective learning, quality learning materials, quality teachers, a good administrative set-up, proper supervision and monitoring, and a disciplinary environment, among others. This contributed to the reduction of the high rate of illiteracy among schoolchildren (population), the decongestion of the children's population in classes, and rescuing them from failure to read and learn, which in turn inculcates a habit of learning and reading, an essential success trait in our competitive society.

(2) Employment/Job Opportunities

Another contribution is in creating employment and job opportunities for many graduates of higher education institutions and, much more fundamentally, for those

who are trained as professional teachers, which the government failed to employ in public schools. It is a clear indication that private schools have prevented quite a number of the Nigerian working population from wasting the knowledge they had acquired in higher institutions of learning while at the same time playing a key role in the reduction of job seekers and the high rate of poverty in Katsina State and Nigeria as a whole. Thus, by extension, the employment provision paved the way for the government to generate revenue through taxes paid by the teachers as well as taxes, levies, and registration fees imposed on private schools by the local, state, and federal governments, which are collected through its agencies. Even though this has been a serious problem for private schools,

(3). Inculcation of Moral Attitude

Another key role is in the area of character formation, the inculcation of a moral attitude in children, and the habit of discipline. For instance, the children are taught how to talk or speak to people, dress, and live a healthy life, among other things, usually through various programs organized by clubs and societies. For instance, quizzes and debates, safety clubs, drugs and abuse clubs, forester clubs, HIV/AIDS clubs, charity clubs, where children are taught to love and support the orphans, homeless, destitute, mad, and sick people, as well as promote peace and others,

(4)Inter-Group Relation

Private schools have indeed promoted not only educational advancement in Katsina

State but also inter-group relations among pupils and students of different family backgrounds, religions, ethnic or language groups, and a lot more. It is only in such schools that one can see people of different identities in one particular classroom compared to most public schools in Katsina State, which have been populated with mostly Hausa and Fulani with a minimal number of other language groups. This has indeed made private schools a place of peace and unity for Nigerians and the building of patriotism. This is because they will grow to become classmates, friends, intermarry, and have a broader knowledge of interacting with various Nigerians. Consequently, the key role played by private schools in this aspect in Katsina State, Nigeria, as a nation cannot be denied by parents, representatives of local, state, and federal governments, as well as all shareholders and stakeholders in education.

Challenges Facing Private School Educational Advancement in Katsina State

In spite of the significant role played by private schools towards the educational development of Katsina and Nigeria as a nation, it is associated with lots of challenges that have seriously affected its smooth operations, quality service delivery, growth and development, and educational advancement. Thus, these challenges are discussed below, one at a time:

(1)School Finance

This is one of the major challenges. No school can stand firm without finance; this is because education is highly capital-intensive (Raji, 2011). This shows that it is very

difficult to run a school without money (capital). One of the challenges is the difficulty of getting all parents to pay their children's school (tuition) fees promptly or in time. The majority of the schools cater to the less well-off, which means that clients often struggle to pay the fees, which in turn results in late or partial payment. Most proprietors have no choice but to accept the school fees piecemeal since they usually expect full payment in due course; this means cash flow is erratic. Moreover, if they refused to collect it, the parents often withdrew their children rather than paying the balance owed.

Thus, this delay in prompt payment of school fees leads to difficulties in meeting obligations, the largest being teachers' monthly salaries or repaying a standard loan obtained from the bank, cooperative, or friends. Thus, the parents' inability to pay their children's school fees promptly is a problem, coupled with inadequate planning on their side and, most fundamentally, the poverty situation of the country, whereby the poor find it difficult to eat three square meals per day, pay house rent, electricity and water bills, and medical care, among others. No wonder some parents owe two (2) terms (Yakubu, 2012).

Nevertheless, this added to the difficulty of having access to loans and grants-in-aid from NGOs, friends, and the government. However, the fieldwork the researcher conducted reveals that private schools in Katsina have not been able to access funds for school development, and even if they have, the repayment terms are invariably short (typically three to six months), and the

interest rates are extremely high (i.e., 15 to 50 percent over the term or at a minimum of 5.5% per month). Difficulties in credit are confirmed in newspapers, magazines, and mass media that Nigerian banks have traditionally been focused on the oil and gas sector, ignoring the banking needs of individuals, small clients, and micro-entrepreneurs. Although part of this narrow focus is as a result of high levels of identity and financial fraud in Nigeria, even where collateral is connected to loan systems, debt recovery is extremely difficult, leading banks to be overly cautious (Salvaging Public Schools, 2012). Thus, even when they agree to give a loan, it always depends on your personal relationship with them (Raji, 2011). At times, the loan given is not reasonable for capital investment. In this context, microfinance banks and informal sector private money lenders are the only options available, especially to low-cost private schools (LCPS). Consequently, the absence of finance becomes the biggest obstacle to private school educational advancement in Katsina State.

(2) Heavy Levy, Taxation, and Registration

This is another major area of challenge. Heavy taxation and a series of registration fees are levied on private schools by the government (i.e., the state and local governments). This turns out to be a way of exploiting and frustrating proprietors in their domain. Thus, their registration and approval are renewed every year. In other words, it is quite unfortunate that after all these rigorous processes, a private school is required to pay special tax for inscribing the name of the school on signboards, school buses, paying tenement rate tax, paying the

annual renewal of school approval, and paying tax on the school apart from the school operator's income tax and the teacher's income tax that is demanded even when some of the teacher's salary is not taxable. Sanitation tax is also there for school operators to pay even when these services are non-existent (The NAPPS Newsletter, 2009:18).

Consequently, all these forms of levies, taxation, and annual registration discourage proprietors, making them feel as if the schools are not established to complement government efforts in reviving and providing quality education to Nigerian children. All these in turn make parents at the receiving end because proprietors increase school fees, the cost of reading materials, lesson fees, testimonials and statement of results fees, certificate fees, and other service charges that parents must pay. Such develops the feeling among people that private schools are too expensive and meant for top government officials, certain personalities, politicians, wealthy people, or bourgeoisie/high class personalities, and not the commoners. Even though, on the other hand, it is a pity that a number of business-minded individuals who go into school operations have made the government sceptical when dealing with school managers, this added to the fact that the government always feels that school management is a lucrative business venture from which exorbitant revenue could be generated, thereby making them pay various ranges of tax (Keke, 2010:18) and registration fees.

(3) Access to Land/Environmental Challenge

Most proprietors lacked access to land, which is why they operated on rented apartments and uncompleted buildings, and the landlords charged exorbitant fares. Meanwhile, some of the schools are far away or situated in distant locations. Finding enough space or land to buy is extremely difficult. Even when the land is available, the owner sells it at an exorbitant amount since they believe that the proprietor could recover it within a while since there is money in school business. In other words, once land sellers discover that the buyer is establishing a school, they put in a huge amount (Moses, 2012). Meanwhile, the government, on the other hand, is not ready to provide land to private schools in spite of their efforts to complement it and revive the educational standard and quality service delivery in the state.

(4) Lack of Manpower

Most private schools lack adequate teachers to inculcate and impart knowledge in students. No wonder people with O'level or SSCE certificates are employed to teach; even those acclaimed to be qualified are mostly ND/HND holders, with a few NCE and B.Ed. graduates as well as those with PGDE (Raji, 2011). Moreover, even the few qualified are directed or forced to teach subjects that are far from their areas of specialization or discipline. For instance, there are cases whereby a history teacher teaches biology and agricultural science, while a chemistry teacher is instructed to teach government (Zubairu & Mu'azu,

2011). However, teachers who teach in private primary schools are made class teachers instead of subject teachers. Such makes their work load too heavy. This added to the fact that proprietors do not want to employ more teachers but to keep on exploiting the available ones in the name of minimizing cost. This is coupled with a poor teacher welfare scheme. In other words, most of the schools pay teachers a low salary, which is below the minimum wage of N18, 000. There are even cases where teachers' salaries are withheld for 2-4 months. This evil causes poor turnover and teachers' migration to other schools that pay well; this is usually done during the holidays or when teachers completely abandon the teaching profession and go into business or other sectors. For more on the exploitative nature, see subsequent pages.

More so, the challenge of in-service training is another issue. Most proprietors do not give their teachers the opportunity to further their studies; even when they are given, there must be an agreement. This added to the poor attitude of proprietors and school directors toward organizing in-house seminars for teachers in order to make them meet up with the current challenges or skills needed in the teaching profession. Even the publishing companies that produced textbooks for these private schools are not helping issues; they mostly organized seminars only for those schools that patronize or buy their textbooks as a marketing strategy (Yakubu, 2012).

(5) Poor Infrastructure and Learning Facilities

Owing to difficulty in accessing loans from banks (financial institutions), grant-in-aid from the government, parent inadequacy in payment of their children's school fees, and capital from proprietors, private schools are characterized by a bad or unhealthy environment, uncompleted buildings, and an unsafe environment. This is coupled with the fact that most of the proprietors could not afford to buy all the necessary materials needed in the school library as well as the laboratories of physics, chemistry, biology lab, ICT lab, audio-visual lab, workshop, sport equipment's, and play environment, which is an integral and essential part of education (Raji, 2011). This added to the improper inspection and supervision of private schools by Ministry of Education (MOE) supervisors or inspectors because whenever they go to these schools, they demand money (bribe) or *kudin chefane* (brown envelope). If they are not given, they would paint the school with a bad record and non-compliance with government guidelines governing private schools (Yakubu, 2012).

(6) Library and Librarian

This is also another challenge because most private schools' proprietors fail to understand that effective and quality service delivery in libraries depends on the quality of staff, and the ease with which users' access and retrieve materials is originally linked to the quality of staff. In school libraries, teacher-librarians are saddled with the responsibilities of providing quality

service and the systematic organization of school library resources (Ogunniyi & Jato, 2010). The importance of the teacher-librarian in the school cannot be overemphasized, but the majority of proprietors and school directors turn this down because they are not qualified library staff by profession.

(7) Discipline

Children in private schools are expected to be well disciplined owing to the character formation and moral attitude inculcated in them, but the reverse is the case (most of them are indisciplined). This is because most of the proprietors are not allowing teachers to discipline them purposefully because they do not want to miss school fees. This couple has parents warning proprietors not to discipline their children whenever they misbehave, and if they do, the children are withdrawn to another school. This made 99.9% of private schools afraid of the discipline of children. However, this has paved the way for the children to misbehave toward their teachers, especially those from the high class or whose parents are of high social status (Raji, 2011), i.e., children of senators, executives, commissioners, rich, wealthy, and top business individuals.

(8) Examination Malpractice/Politics of Private Schools

This is another serious and critical issue hindering the progress of private schools in reviving the educational standard of Katsina and Nigeria as a whole, because the high rate of examination malpractice in Katsina is recorded in private schools (Zubairu and

Mu'azu, 2011, and Adeshina and Rosemary, 2011:42). However, this is seen in the assistance (CHOKES or ECOWAS) given to internal and external candidates (students) during the WAEC, NECO, or SSCE in the so-called Miracle Centres. This is coupled with the fact that most parents are always ready to pay any amount of money to those schools referred to as Miracle Centres to ensure their wards (children) graduate with flying colours in one sitting (Wycliff, 2012:80–90). Thus, when the students have good results, it creates a great spurious impression about the school—that they are genuinely delivering qualitative education. In other words, most of the proprietors engaging in such acts are afraid that mass failure will give them a bad name and thereby discourage external candidates from enrolling in such miracle centres (Kurfi, 2012; Raji, 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Therefore, from this paper, it is evident that private schools in Katsina State have been playing a key role in educational advancement, especially in complementing government efforts to revive the educational standard of not only Katsina but Nigeria as a whole. Nevertheless, the delivery of a quality standard of education in private schools depends mostly on how well the schools appear to function. School proprietors require capacity-building in school management and teaching skills. The majority of schools compete with each other, mostly in terms of providing good services through infrastructure and learning facilities and materials purposely to attract more children to such schools, teachers, and NGOs, among others. This added to the

provision of education that fits the international curriculum.

Based on the findings of this paper with respect to the impact of private school administration on educational advancement in Katsina State, the followings were recommended:

1. Private school proprietors should not make love of money the bedrock of setting up schools, but rather revive the educational standard of the country through quality delivery. For instance, if the proprietors want to get the best from their teachers, they must pay the teacher's salary promptly and create a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere (environment), which includes the provision of a good classroom and staff room, a laboratory, and teaching aids that would yield dedication and commitment. In addition to good financial incentives for hardworking teachers, retraining programs, and cordial relationships that would encourage teachers to go the extra mile, at the end of the day, it would be a win-win situation for all stakeholders. The teachers would be happy, pupils' 'performance would improve, parents 'satisfaction would propel them to act as mobile markets for the school, and in turn, the school owner would gain more respect in addition to money.
2. Teachers are models of society and should behave as such. Therefore, there is a need for them to apply concepts of teaching to their classroom activities, not take the

teaching profession as their last stop of employment.

3. Parents or guardians should pay their children's school fees promptly as a good legacy they leave for their children and for the advancement of education.
4. In terms of discipline, parents should not prevent their children from being disciplined because learning cannot be effective without discipline.
5. NGOs should support private schools with aid-in-grants, which will help in reducing the cost and rate of charges made on children. This would open doors for less privileged Nigerians to enroll their children in private schools and parents to pay promptly their wards 'tuition fees, among others, without any form of delay.

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