

PARENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (PTA) ROLES AND FUNDING OF PRIVATE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

Chima Sebastine Ugwulashi

Department of Educational Management
University of Port Harcourt,
NIGERIA.
csugwulashi@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Infractions may occur between the school and community, thereby, hampering their coexistence. School-Community conflict in practical sense is resolved through the internal and external administrative mechanisms. The Ministry of education, Schools boards, Board of governors, PTA is relevant policy makers that determine most school decisions. The Ministry and State school board instituted the Board of governors to directly oversee school operations. The Board of governors was absolutely empowered by various state governments in Nigeria to coordinate the affairs of schools especially at the secondary level. The Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) in the 1990^s till date power have hijacked this function in the administrative structure of the school system. The PTA now takes responsibility of determining many policies that exist in most schools today for its overall development, hence, assisting the principals in daily administrative process. This paper thus, examines the concept of Parent Teachers Association (PTA) roles and funding of private school administration in Nigeria. It looks at the misconceptions and misapplications of this tool in funding of private schools which requires single entrepreneurial effort. Finally, summary and recommendations were made on the position for proper examination.

Keywords: School, community, parent teachers association, board of governors

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of school in Nigeria is traceable to the early missionaries' interventions that brought western educational practice (Fafunwa 1974, Taiwo, 1980). The Church Missionary Society (CMS), Methodist Missionary Society (MMS), Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) and United Presbyterian Church of Scotland and many others were simultaneously competitively embarking on evangelism through establishments of schools. These efforts doubled as converted individuals, families and communities enthusiastically embraced western education, and later government became fully involved having seen education as an effective tool for national development. In fact, the early missions provided the benchmark for establishment of schools in Nigeria till date. In 1887, the first Nigeria education ordinance provided background for government participation in funding education by providing grants; and education was pursued at different developmental stages.

The Phelps-Stokes report on education published in 1922 and 1925 memorandum and 1926 code propelled educational development in Nigeria. Nevertheless, educational development became sporadic from 1930 with adequate government participation till date. In light of all these, private school establishments have been in the past traced to missionary adventurers. A lot of mission schools still exist today with greater performances and some state governments have already

started handing over these schools to original missions because of decreased quality in the public schools. There is greater individual and corporate private interest in education as an investment opportunity at all the educational levels, with more proliferations in the primary and secondary levels which stem from the popular demand by the teeming population of Nigerians who now see education as an instrument for national development (Maduagwu, 2004).

Two notable factors are presumed to have contributed to the proliferations of private schools. A very high society pressure on education, such that effective demand for education is increasing as world population increases. Also the collapsing quality in public schools has pushed many parents to seek for quality education in the private hands. These two factors have causal relationships because as population increases, pressing needs on existing infrastructures increases which the public schools alone cannot accommodate for qualitative system of learning. Put differently, the best education is one that every society accepts as offering the accepted values and virtues in changing the behaviour of the learner to be worthy in character and learning at the end of the period.

The explosion on the population rate of school attending pupils at the primary school level manifested into the secondary school level. This increase affected government expenditures as more schools and teachers are required. With this also, there is pressure on the tiny government resources allocated to education thereby affecting public school management that triggered private investment in education. Maduagwu (2004) succinctly postulated amidst these conceptions that private schools establishment promotes quality education, resulting in good academic performance, sound disciplinary and moral practices, and profit making by school proprietors. In surmounting these challenges by private schools in education, government efforts is required for effective public school management in meeting the set out targets and goals of education through known quality assurance process.

CONCEPT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

School administration involves all the processes through which resources are mobilized in educational institutions to accomplish the goals of education. It is a process of mobilizing school resources towards achievement of desirable educational goals. School administration is an activity process that requires expertise and training in educational principles and practices in ensuring proper management of school general activities for achieving result in education. There is wide assumption by many that school administration is an easy activity especially in small private institutions where a man and his wife operates a kindergarten, nursery and or primary school without requisite knowledge on school administrative concepts that forms the background for effective running of school.

It implies that for effective school administration, one has to be trained on the principles and practices of education as to understand the basic classroom instructional methods and management. Secondly, to be trained on educational management concepts that provide administrative skills that model behaviours and motivation in achieving academic goals. Most private schools today, have not met the requirement of a good school in terms of administrative trainings, staff quality and quantity, infrastructural and instructional facilities. More struggling private schools like public schools existing need monitoring on their proliferations, operational requirements and management processes.

CONCEPT OF PRIVATE SCHOOL

The sporadic emergence of private schools especially at the primary and secondary levels signified world over that there is serious crises which the public schools cannot contain. This hunger for education has increased pressure on the existing public schools that more schools are required to accommodate this demand in both developed and developing societies. Establishment of private schools evolved to accommodate these growing needs and in search for quality education. Most of the private schools do not only lack infrastructural and instructional facilities development but also fund directed for recruiting qualified teaching staff except few schools.

Among the few private schools in Nigeria that met this status are either owned by wealthy individuals, corporate bodies and missions. Evidentially, larger numbers of these private schools are poorly managed, but have done substantially to sustain the hunger for education. They maintained high quality standard and disciplinary measures even with the calibre of staff or infrastructural and instructional facilities at their disposal. They strived to maintain standard as many prominent scholars passed through these mushroom private schools found in corners and crannies of the world today.

The conceptualization of private schools required due process in its establishment. There is a legitimate conception that school must meet the stated requirements before its establishment especially private institutions (Igwe 2010; Igwe and Obasi, 2005). Studies have proved that parents' patronage of private schools are influenced by: teachers' dedication to work, high level of discipline among the teachers and pupils, early opportunity to train a child, good physical facilities, teaching and use of appropriate medium of instruction for which reasons high fees did not deter parents from patronizing them (Onuka and Arowojolu , 2008). The embracing of private school proves the true perspective of this study result as evident today.

Despite these reasons among others adduced in many volumes today, private schools establishment needs to be controlled even though; it lies within the constitutional provisions of freedom of ownership of property. But in as much as the so – established school intends giving the inmates the academic substance required for intellectual growth for national development without prejudice, minimal requirements must be met in standardizing education process, so long the school provides and promotes educational accessibility to everyone which is fundamental despite the location or place. Obviously the establishments of private schools have helped in solving the many problems encountered in public school mapping that creates spatial disparities. In effect the educational disparity among tribes, states, regions and or geographical clusters is adduced to uneven interests in political determination and influences on education world over.

School mapping process most at times is politically driven as it has become tool to garner political power and support in most developing countries. Demography is another factor which has made certain areas over crowded with basic amenities attracting resourceful staff like urban areas while rural-rural areas are deprived. Onuka and Arowojolu (2008) important pointed out seventeen factors for parents patronage of private schools which include : (i) Avenue to train a child properly (ii) Children are trained to be inquisitive (iii) Availability of educational activities (iv) Secures future standard of children education (v) Children develop more academically, socially and morally (vi) Smooth transitions from home to school (vii) Children inculcates social norms and values (viii) Beautiful uniforms (ix) Children are more disciplined (x) Classroom environment encourages learning (xi) Immediate environment are made attractive (xii) No strike (xiii) No shortage of teachers (xiv) Opportunity of admission into the best secondary school (xv) Qualified teachers (xvi) Workbooks are checked and (xvii) Each pupils is given attention. These

factors favours the establishment of private school since the activities in public schools have become discouraging that many think they no more constitute good place for knowledge acquisition.

Private Schools and Educational Development

The establishments of private schools have made it easier for even small communities have access to quality education which the public school cannot assure in the locality. Education has been communalized by this process that even the lower class competes with the middle class and middle class with upper class on choice of schools for their children. Notwithstanding, the size of private schools, they have narrowed the gap and improved the system to a great extent in standardizing educational derivable which the public schools failed to provide for the nation at large because of decaying state in the management of education. Today, parents can afford private education in Nigeria despite the high cost because of these derivable accruing from the private school system.

In spite of the exorbitance of most private schools, this effort is highly appreciated by many parents for creating standard considering the messy situations public educational institutions are faced mostly at the primary and secondary levels. The deteriorating state of public school has led to critics about its future by the society. Most of the public schools have the best teachers but enthusiasm is lost because of the place of teachers in the society. Also there are no funds and cannot properly generate funds for its management, meeting school demands became extremely difficult thus affecting organization performance.

Finance is one problem that crumbles effective administration of public school and is important before establishment of private schools. Unlike public schools that depend on government in the face of dwindling economy, private schools are sole dependent on private finances. Elekwachi (1999) in Onuka and Arowojolu, (2008) reviewed the cost incurred on private education asserted that Government should aid voluntary agencies with funds to avoid craze for profit in the sub-sector. And that most investors in the education industry were more interested in the net present value of the return on their investment. This cost of private education needs subsidization as to give the society opportunity to enjoy consistent learning.

The problem of fund in the public schools led to Parent Teachers Association (PTA) formations as avenue to raise funds to augment government subventions. It is here, that the role of PTA in the private institutions in Nigeria context is examined whether it is justifiable in terms of fund raising.

Concept of Parent Teachers Association (PTA)

PTA is a voluntary association of parents and teachers in a particular school established for its development. This concept of internal grouping arrangement tends to facilitate good school – community relationship. In this perspective, obeying the principles of good school – community relationship, parents are opportune to understand what exist in school their wards attend and the constraints school experienced in course of carrying out the administrative and instructional functions. In Nigeria, PTA is backed by law in some states making it compulsory for parents and teachers; while in other states it is voluntary. Whichever way, parents mandatorily pay levies agreed by the association for their wards attendance in that particular school (Igwe, 1999),

Based on this practice, Enaohwo and Eferakeya (1989) note that in public schools it is not well practiced and needs to be discouraged especially where PTA arrogates themselves powers meant

for Board of Governors, usually appointed by the ministry of education to facilitate school governance. This assertion obviously portrays what is tenable in contemporary struggling societies where education is corruptly managed under the disguise of dwindling economy. This postulation provided impeccable background for condemnation of PTA being an important avenue for school financing.

The reason for the total rejection of PTA practice becomes inevitable as most principals connive with certain parents without due process to put compulsory levies on every child in the school. Invariably all parents are made to pay imposed levies without objection for the interest of their wards. In other words there is compulsory compliance to imposed levies for every child attendance. Although, it is scholaristic view that PTA helps in the development of school by meaningfully contributing to building of classrooms, hostels, library and many others activities. On the other hand, it makes parents shoulder responsibilities of the government by providing fund for running public schools after paying their taxes.

In the private school administration lays another unresolved contradicting conception as to the imposition of frequent levies on parents. In pretext to support better academics, proprietors of private schools connive with some parents under the PTA canopy to levy for developing their schools. Levy as defined is financial contribution by parents/carers relating to the costs associated with each student's participation in their education program (Tasmania, 2012).

Tasmania (2012), maintained that levy items are mostly consumables that student uses during school year such as stationery, photocopying and printing paper; or the costs of services such as bus hire and entry fees that are essential to delivery of the education program. They suggested further that levies cannot be used to charge for teacher salaries, or for the cost of relief teachers, either directly or indirectly, and are not a source of general revenue or be raised to supplement areas of school funding such as building maintenance, purchase of equipment or energy costs. These are the obligations of school owners not parents in case of private institutions.

PTA now assumes the role of Board of Governors in public schools, which the proprietor or group of owners and or agents of the private school supposed to constitute their board of governors not parents of the pupils in the governance of the school. In other words, private property financial responsibilities cannot be laid on the parents after paying persistently school fees. To levy parents for development purpose of the school is not a welcomed PTA role in internal administration of private school. PTA levy is an appropriate way to improve public schools facilities only when need arises.

In this circumstance, Igwe (1999) citing Anderson and Van Dyke (1963) highlighted some functions of PTA as applicable to public school (a) promoting better acquaintances and healthy working relations between teachers and parents (b) serves as effective channel of communication between the school a community (c) advise the school staff, the board of governs or the school committee on pressing education needs of the community as perceived by parents amongst others. The Board of Governors functions include (a) budgeting and preparation of financial statement of the school (b) raising and management of funds, subject to such guidelines as may from time to time be approved by the commissioner for education (c) overseeing to the collection of funds and revenues as applicable (d) authorizing and scrutinizing the disbursement of all funds to mention but a few. In some public school the two exist, the Board of Governors stands prominently. There are deviations of what the PTA stands on their roles in relations to the concept of private school organizations funding.

Parent Teachers Association (PTA) in Private School Organization

In case of private educational institution it becomes basically clear to say that the ideal aim of PTA was at variance to what is obtainable in public school organization. Whether PTA or Board of Governors as the case may be, in public school it works for the common purpose of creating an enduring academic place for generations, while in private schools all the proceeds belong to the entrepreneur who own the school or inheritance of the estate.

Even though, that private school requires PTA, there should be no compulsory levies for all parents for the development of the school property because 65 – 70 % of private schools solely rely on levy. The private school is obliged to provide all it takes for a good school, which must be funded by him or group of owners. However, parents who wish their wards to attend such school pay the prescribed amount of fees / levy stipulated by the school on entering the school. But it is unacceptable for school owners to levy parents continuously on the development of the school on recurrent basis. As Tasmania (2012) notes levy is to be paid as an entry fees that are essential to delivery of the education program.

It is assumed that such levies paid at entering period are adequate and no more levy required in the name of school development. Obasi & Asodike (2007) pointed out that since there is no government financial presence, the school fees take care of the entire cost of the school even up to payment of staff salaries and fees are graded according to school site, location and status of the school. This assertion supports the need to adequately define and differentiate the role of PTA in imposition of development levies in private schools.

It has been hypothesized that private schools do not require government funding since they are not of public accountability. In Nigeria system, private schools are sole proprietorship and do not require tax payers money for its development. Private school PTA role should focus on curriculum development of the school their wards attend, such that the school provides adequately the right academics. They are profit making ventures like any private business outfit, but parents have to check the frequent levy for continuous development of private institutions hiked fees. It makes fees charged meaningless if parents are meant to bear the burden of the proprietors. Public school fees world over are less which provided avenue for levies in peculiar situations.

School levy makes up the differences of government subventions in running public school. Many states introduced levy in public school on infrastructures. It augments the short fall of government funds for providing infrastructural facilities in public schools. Other States employ different ways to finance public education and also decisions to hand over mission schools to their original owners for cost implications. Levy is actually moribund in public school, upon government free education in the first two-tiers, there are many children not attending school, so levying those already in school becomes another obstacle that will affect accomplishing of Millennium Development goals target by 2020. The choice of private school is good, but the question becomes clearer as on whose interest are the imposed private institutions development levies.

SUMMARY

In the public school perspective, the governments have done a lot in making education a social commodity by catering for all. This effort has met several pitfalls due to population rate in schools, insufficient fund, and or concentration of effort in urban areas thereby leaving greater number of the rural public schools in very sorry states. In effect, the decaying state of public schools is compounded more by fund to maintain existing infrastructures, administrative costs and prompt salaries for school personnel.

PTA levies in public schools supplementing government subventions is not so common in Nigeria because of government educational subsidy. Various states have their educational palliative measures in place. Private schools imposition of compulsory development levies for private property after charging exorbitant fees should be questioned by PTA. Even though, they have helped to foster hope on education in Nigeria, PTA roles need to be clear to all parents whose wards attend the school.

It is the position of the author, that providing good instructional and infrastructural facilities and trained staff to manage school improves the standard of academic performance. As a business enterprise, private schools maintain quality standard through proper and disciplined administrative control. Adequate funding helps to achieve and maintain education goals. But PTA role remains supportive only to ensure that quality of academic service meets the expected standard. It should not be fund generation for the school proprietors. PTA can be for mission private schools which are absolutely nonprofit making ventures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PTA in private schools should concern itself in ensuring that proprietors provide good standard of teaching and learning to enhance high quality of education. The proprietors should ensure that PTA roles are mere supportive not absolutely to veto revenue generation. That PTA moderates administrative process in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning but not financiers of the school. There should be implementation of standard projects related to academic pursuit that cannot overstretch their capacity to bear therefore resting the burden on parents.

The inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education should be made functional to ensure strict adherence to standards and quality requirements in school administration, and standard instruction (Onuka and Arowojolu, 2008). This helps in monitoring and standardizing private schools not meeting what constitute a good school.

PTA should act as source of fund raising for public or mission sponsored private schools which are not outright for profit making. The mission schools take the form of public school in funding which is entirely missions' responsibility in providing quality of services, and considerable cheaper fees compared to profit run private schools.

Finally, the Federal, State and Local governments respectively must be the promoters of education. They should build confidence in public school education by intervening in rehabilitating dilapidated public schools for adequate teaching and learning. There is need for provision of infrastructural and instructional facilities, minimization of industrial actions through improved welfare packages, professional development through training and retraining of teachers, planners and administrators in educational system.

REFERENCES

- Elekwachi, I.A. (1999). Issues in The cost-Benefit Analysis of Private Sector Investment in education.
- In Onuka, A. O.U and Arowojolu, A.F. (2008). An Evaluation of Parents' Patronage of Private Primary Schools in Abeokuta, Nigeria. *International Journal of African & African American Studies Vol. VII, No. 2, Jul 2008*.
- Enaohwo, J.O. & Eferakeya, O.A (1989). *Educational Administration*. Ibadan: Paperback Publishers Ltd.
- Fafunwa A. Babs. (19974). *History of education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Igwe, L.E.B. (1999). *Fundamentals of school community relations management: Political and Legal Dimensions*. Port Harcourt: Pam Unique Publishers.
- Igwe, L.E.B & Obasi, F.N. (2005). *Legal Doctrines, Principles and decided cases: Implications for Effective School Administration*. Ogoni: Fredsbary Printers and Publishers.
- Maduagwu, S.N (2004). *Proliferation of private primary and secondary school institutions in Japan and Nigeria*. Educational studies 46, international Christian University.
- Obasi, F.N and Asodike, J. (2007). *Resources Management in Nigerian schools*. Owerri: Alphabet Nigeria Publishers.
- Onuka, A. O.U and Arowojolu, A.F. (2008). An Evaluation of Parents' Patronage of Private Primary Schools in Abeokuta, Nigeria. *International Journal of African & African American Studies Vol. VII, No. 2, Jul 2008*. Retrieved from <https://ojcs.siue.edu/ojs/index.php/ijaaas/article/view/114/178> or <http://www.eurojournals.com>
- Taiwo, C.O. (1980). *The Nigerian educational system: past, present and future*. Lagos: Thomas Nelson Nigeria Ltd.
- Tasmania Dept of Education Australia (2011). Retrieved 23rd February 2012 from <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/costs/levy>
- www.nigerianbestforum.com
- www.meridian.wednet.e