

IMPACT OF COMMERCIALIZATION OF EDUCATION ON THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Commercialization and privatization of education in different levels of education has occupied the minds of Nigerians over years, for many it means providing quality education for their children and wards while for others it is a show of wealth. Commercialization of education has its positive and negative effects on Nigerian educational system and also to the scholars in different schools. This paper examined the impact of commercialization of education in Nigerian Educational System. The origin, purpose and strategies to adopt in commercializing education, regulatory measures necessary for maintenance and strengthening of the concept were studied; the paper was summarized by pointing out the negative and positive impact of commercialization of education.

Keywords: *Commercialization, Privatization and Education.*

Nigerians are familiar with Commercialization of Education which gave rise to privatization of schools as a result of the failure of state and federal government of Nigeria to provide necessary facilities to public schools. Lesleba (2014) stated that the quality of education in public institutions in Nigeria has been adversely affected by inadequate funding as well as political and economic factors which dwindled the system.

Dwindling is a process where a situation is gradually decreasing until little remains (Collins English Dictionary (2014). The term "Economy" originated from two Greek words "Oikoc –

"Household" and "Veoual" – "Manage" is an area of the production, distribution or trade and consumption of goods and services by different agents. (Merrian - webster dictionary). Economy is the structure or conditions of economic life in a country, area, or period; also an economic system. It is a large set of interrelated economic production and consumption activities which aid in determining how scarce resources are allocated. It is an entire network of producers, distributors and consumers of goods and services in a local, regional, or national community. (Ad.www.viral.site).

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An economy is described as been dwindling when it is about to collapse.

Education may be defined as the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life; Dictionary.com (2015). It means education is a preparatory exercise needed to develop the mind of an individual. In the same vein Farooq (2012) suggested that education is a process in which and by which the knowledge, characters and behaviour of human beings are shaped and moulded. It is then considered that education is a source of character formation. The purpose of education, according to Victor-Ishikaku (2016) is basically the upbringing of the young in the society to make them functional and useful to themselves and the society to which they belong.

Anwan and Saha (2017) declared that education makes man a right thinker and a correct decision-maker, which means it exposes man to think intensively and critically. Agina Obu (2016) added that all forms of educational activities are geared towards ensuring the attainment of identified social goals. Rabidas (2014) summarized education as the key instrument in bringing the social change in any society all over the world. It is a human right with immense power to transform life. Anwa and Saha (2014) pointed out that without proper education, the training of human minds is incomplete therefore, individual becomes a human being in the working world only when he has been educated in a proper sense.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated that everyone has a right to education and that education shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. It is also stated that technical and professional education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. It is on record that before the advent of western education, education was given to every citizen without any monetary value and even after then, education continued without much attention to financial involvement. But today, education has gained recognition with high level of financial interest which has created room for commercialization of education.

Concept of Commercialization of Education

Commercialization is the concept of marketing and sale of educational goods and services to schools by external providers. (Hogan & Thompson (2017). Commercialization is a terminology used in the field of commerce; the term often connotes business method. It means the process of introducing new product into commerce, making it available in the market (Wikipedia July 6th 2018.). Commercialization of education may be literally defined as a process of private ownership and management of educational institutions whereby investments are made with the motive of earning profit. The researcher therefore describes Commercialization of education as the process of distributing educational goods and services to individuals or organization for profit oriented motive.

Origin of Commercialization of Education

From the words of Chikwem (2008) Nigerians are familiar with the private schools that were operated by the missionaries before they were taken over by the government. He argued that the setback suffered by Nigerian Schools over the years which include: poor funding by state and federal government, poor technological advancement, poor educational planning for all, poor infrastructure, strike action, cultism and lots more paved way for privatization of education in Nigeria due to the license issued by the former president of Nigeria (Olusegun Obasanjo) to private individuals and organizations to commercialize education. It surfaced itself through mushrooming private schools.

Scope of Commercialization

Privatization of education in Nigeria and other countries has been a huge business enterprise. The scope remains largely visible within the globe. Qualified teachers/lecturers render educational services at home and abroad. This has facilitated rapid expansion of international trade of educational services from one country to another. According to Anwar and Saha (2017) the commercialization of education flourished in India over last two decades in the name of reforming education.

Commodification of Education in Nigeria

The concept of commercialization of education has brought about converting

the value of education to its monetary worth. From the commercialization point of view the students are the consumers, education is the commodity and the educational institutions are the shop. Samer I. (2016) in his study revealed that the school heads perceived the digital media to be cost – effective marketing strategy.

An exploratory study carried out showed that commercialization of education is very high in most of the cities of Nigeria such as: Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan, and Port Harcourt, due to the class of dwellers in such areas. It was observed that some schools pay in dollars and others with high level of naira. Wealthy parents patronize commercialized educators as a way of showing their wealth, while others as a way of giving their children quality education. This issue of Commodification of Education should be tackled with urgency to enable the commoners fit in properly in the country. Education has been regarded as a special service to inspire learners, shape their minds and thus educate them. But there are apprehension regarding the form in which it could be provided.

Purposes of Commercialization

- **To raise the fallen standard of education:-** The problem of low standard of education stem from inadequate management of public schools by the state and federal government. Public schools lack good learning environment, Laboratories and other amenities required or needed for conducive teaching and learning. Lesleba (2014) maintained that

the quality of education in public institutions has been adversely affected by inadequate funding as well as political and economic factors. Therefore the process of commercialization of education came to remedy what went wrong with Nigeria systems of Education.

- **To promote economic development and increase literacy level in nigeria:-** Intellectual training gives way to economic development of a country if an individual is given quality education, he can function properly in the society as a responsible and useful member. It also helps in increasing the rate of literacy, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross National Income (GNI), Per Capital Income (PCI), etc. These are major indicators of economic development of a country. These indicators also help in the human resource development. Commercialization of education contributes immensely to the economic development of a country.

- **For wealth creation:-** Commercialization of education is a very wide avenue for wealth acquisition especially if the necessary facilities and conducive learning environment are provided. It creates wealth for the proprietor/proprietress also for the employees.

- **For globalization of education:-** The positive aspects of globalization are as follows. First, with globalization, you are dealing with global market. So private schools don't only use their curriculum but curricula of two to three countries. This can be a huge benefit of terms of sales and expansion. Another benefit of

globalization is that the commercializer will draw the best in the world to their schools. Hence, gathering information from the whole world using Information and Communication Technology devices. Accessed 12 July, 2018.

Regulatory Measures in Private Schools

Government controls over private schools are found even without subsidies. However, heavy controls invariably accompany subsidies, particularly over teacher salaries and qualifications, price and other entrance criteria.

Commercialization of Education across the World

Although it can be argued that education is for the common good and its cost should be borne by the government for the common benefit of society, the trend all over the world is that it has been increasingly commercialized in recent times. In China for instance, according to Tao, Berci & Wayne (2015), commercialization of education has been a fairly recent trend in China which has manifested itself in mushrooming private schools at different levels. The authors argue that commercialization of education is running against the cultural tradition where education was not for profit and was designed to create opportunities for upward social mobility for those who aspire. However, according to the authors, the current commercialized education seems to be profit oriented and may block opportunities for many poor people.

Similarly, Kuehn (2003) argues that while education is expected to be

funded by government and accessible to all, there are increasing cases of commercialization in the Nigeria. Schrum (2002) argues that commercialization of education in the United States of America has been influenced by the perceived reduction in the funding of educational institutions in a time of rising costs and expectations.

This has led to schools being asked to find their own funding which has turned school administrators into fundraisers. Another aspect of commercialization is the involvement of business corporations which have invaded schools with advertising schemes disguised as funding for the schools in the form of advertising in schools buses, sponsorship of school sports activities etc. Tejawasi (2010), argues that education was always something that was driven by devotion and thought, situation that has changed with the advent of commercialization. He argues that the current commercial education system manufactures solipsists but does not nurture altruists and as a result India has become a dirt pool where educational institutions proliferate like mushrooms many of which have become clubs for incompetent youngsters. It is also argued that the commercialized brand of education has affected the teaching profession by making people to view the profession as just another job which pays and feeds them. Consequently, many leaders have developed different attitude towards their jobs juxtaposed with demands of money-mongering institutions that they work in.

Shyam S. (2013) argues that education, as provided for in various constitutions and international conventions is supposed to be a fundamental human right that should be the responsibility of government. However, in many parts of the world, government's share in overall education expenditure has gone down drastically. In India for example, government expenditure which was 80% in 1983 had gone down to 67% in 1999 and currently stands at 54%. At the same time, private expenditure has increased by 11 times in the last 15 years and commercialization of education has led to the sale of the education services with a profit motive at the expense of quality. On the effect of commercialization of education in India, Bhatia (2014) notes that during the 90s, there were only handful students who scored more than 90% but today the situation has reversed and there are only handfuls that score less than 90%. This is because education has become a commodity and all genres of society are overly obsessed with high scores which have devalued the real essence of education. This has been as a result of over-supply of education which has led to substandard education and very limited job opportunities.

Similarly, Mishra (2012) observes that students in the commercialized education system in India have been reduced to mere consumers, leaving out the millions of poor yet deserving students. The trend means that education is no longer a noble profession but a business enterprise and profit making opportunity where subjects such as English, Science

and Mathematics assume more importance than literature or Art merely because they provide more remunerative jobs in the market. Teachers are no longer important in educational decision making to advocate for the best interest of the child, rather they are expected to follow the line and work for the best interest of the private school only. Regarding the situation in Nigeria, Les-Leba (2014) noted that private investment in education will generally be driven by profit motive and if youths and children education are left solely in the hands of commercialized educators, the basic right to education may only be available to the few elite class who can afford it for their children while the majority of citizens who are financially challenged will remain uneducated and become social liabilities which may even retard wealth creation. Meanwhile, Chijioke (2014) reported that a Gambian Minister, while acknowledging the contribution of the private sector to education, had decried the commercialization of higher education in Africa which he said was bound to compromise quality and deny the less privileged people access to higher education.

Impact of Commercialization in Nigerian Education

Commercialization has positive and negative impact on education. Some of the positive impacts are as follows:

- **It tackles the global educational challenges:**

Commercialization of education helps to fight the global educational challenges

such as low standard of education, non uniformity of curriculum, information and communication Technology, problem of globalization in Education has been in control since the emergence of Commercialization of education because most private schools operates on Hybrid curriculum. This is to achieve the globalization of education. Imran (2014) reported that education has taken a central role as without education globalization cannot be germinated.

- **Personality development:**

Commercialization of education helps in the personal development of the students. For the personality development it provides intellectual, moral, health education, skill acquisition and Christian ethos. According to Raturi (2016) various aspects of commercialization of education affects the students' psychological state as well as their general behaviour. Iqra R. (2014) posited that education gives power of positive thinking and self confidence positive thinking allows a person to deal with difficulties successfully.

- **Quality of education:**

Commercialization of education provides quality education. The concept of quality education in a broader term refers to quality content, appropriate methodologies, qualified teachers, quality learners and conducive learning environment which in turn produces quality outcome. Generally every parent wants their children to acquire quality education which will help them in future life as well in the development of society. A child who acquires quality education will become a more dependable worker,

better citizen and great contributor to the society. The commercialized institutions provide good infrastructural facilities, for achieving quality education. In spite of the government pouring in resources for the cause of universalization of elementary education, it is a well known fact that the quality of education or the perception of it, offered by government schools does not match that of private schools.

- **Employment opportunity:** The emergence of commercialization increased the job opportunities for both teaching and non-teaching staff, this paved way for qualitative and quantitative development of education in Nigeria.

- **Economic development:** Commercialization of education via privatization has created avenue to educate many Nigerian children and youth who can now face some societal challenges around them Commercialization of education helps in the process of economic development. Due to its presence, various organizations such as General Agreement on Trade in services (GATS), students get the opportunity to do professional courses at the local branch Campuses of foreign institutions. For instance, teachers and non-teaching staffs generate resources for survival. This helps to reduce the unemployment rates in the country.

- **Increased private institutions:** The emergence of commercialization of education ushered in a number of private institutions in various regions. The rate at which private institutions spring up, created room for competition among commercialized educators. The various private institutions provide technical,

medical, professional courses for the benefit of their students, increased the job opportunity and both the qualitative and quantitative development of education. So commercialization of education helps in this process.

- **Professional and vocational development of learners:**

Commercialization of education gives very much emphasis on professional as well as vocational development of the students. The advertisement made by schools and colleges such as coaching, diploma degree, vocational training, various professional and skill development courses etc. which help students to get a background about these courses, and provide opportunities to develop their academic career.

Negative Impact of Commercialization of Education

Commercialization of education also has negative impacts. Some of the impacts are as follows-

- **Profit oriented/maximization:** Ukonu (2011) stated that the target of many private schools is to make profit. To them school is for commercial benefit. In the private institutions the admission fees, monthly fees, development fees, semester fees etc. are very high. From these sources they earn money from the students only for their benefit. But the same curriculum is used in private and government schools. From the commercialization point of view the students are the consumers, education is the commodity and the educational institutions are the shop.

• **Examination malpractices:**

Commercialization of education gives more emphasis on marks. Due to exam malpractices, Premium times March 23rd 2018 stated that private schools teachers should decline from supervising West African Examination Council (WAEC).

• **Poor salary/conditions of service to teachers:** The remuneration package for teachers in private schools become inadequate to meet the survival needs of these baby keepers. Everyone is curious about salary and condition of service; historically, private school teacher's salaries have been paid less than those in the public school sector. Kennedy (2018) and their work condition does not guarantee job security and pension.

• **Over burdening of teachers:** Teachers in private schools are given much work to enhance the performance of the pupils. They use the whole time for the children, teaching and monitoring their ways, assisting them in the best way they can and also do extra moral lessons to engage the children till when their parents will come and pick them.

• **Use of hybrid/integrated curricula:-** Commercialization brought about the use of curriculum of two to three countries for a particular class. Teaching using this number of curricula might be boring on the part of the learners and the teachers contrary to the government schools where only the federal government curriculum is approved. Hybrid style runs the risk of trying to do so many things to all students, prompting teachers to spread themselves too thin and dilute learning.

Conclusion

Education is meant to develop the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains in a learner under the auspices of the school without compensation from any individual citizen. The services of educating the citizens of the country has been the responsibility of the government, but her failure has led to the commercialization of education which has come to stay because her services, despite the high cost outweighs that of government schools. Therefore educational plans should be redefined to catch up with the needs, interest and aspiration of the society.

Education is the most powerful and effective instrument for bringing radical changes in the behavior of students. It is a powerful instrument of nation's socio-economic and cultural development. Therefore Nigerian Government at all levels should also critically look into the decayed infrastructure in these institutions and proffer lasting solutions putting in place effective policies which can stand the test of time, as far as the educational upliftment of our younger generations is concerned.

Suggestions

1. There should be sanction on private schools, who deviate from approved fees and method of operation.
2. Government should routinely supervise government schools in order to streamline and properly modify their activities.

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3. Government should enhance the use of specified curriculum in schools at different levels of education.

4. Government schools should be equipped and operate in the same manner as the commercialized schools so that the commoners in the country can compete with their counterparts in private schools.

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