

Public-Private Partnership In Education: A Strategy For Improving Quality Of Vocational-Technical Education Programme In Nigeria: A Case Study Of Rivers State

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Abstract

The study dealt with public-private partnership in education: a strategy for improving quality of vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria. The population of the study was drawn from public sectors such as staff of ministry of education, staff and students of government technical colleges in Rivers State and private sectors such as companies, philanthropists among others from eight hundred (800) samples were randomly sampled. One (1) research question and hypothesis were postulated for this study, five (5) items questionnaire titled 'public-private partnership in education: a strategy for improving quality of vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria (PPESFIQVTEPN)' were used to collect information. The mean statistics was used to analyze the research question while Z-test statistical tool was used to test the hypothesis at 5% level of significance. The result showed that the respondents' a strategy for improving quality of vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria as low. However, there is significant difference in their perceptions. Based on these finding, recommendations were made such as: there should be complementary role between the public and private sectors in order to bring about the development of an efficient vocational education and training system.

Keywords: Public – private, Partnership, Strategy, Quality and Vocational-Technical Education.

Introduction

Aina (2005) pointed out that vocational – technical education is capital intensive which will remain a social service in the foreseeable future. He further stated that the economy will require a complete transformation before the kind of paradigm shift from public to private sector participation envisaged by the organizers will be actualized. In order to actualize the above as stated by Aina, Enemali (2007) advised that the federal government should establish at least one federal technical college in each state of the federation as a model and this effort should be complimented by the states, thereby establishing one technical college in each local government area. In consonance with the above, Raymond and Awulugu, (2007) suggested that the federal government should have additional polytechnics in such a way that by 2010 enrolment there should be at least twice enrolment in Universities to complement the turn up from technical colleges.

Aina (2005) further lamented that the action plan drawn by the elaborate October/November, 2000 seminar on the vision and mission of vocational - technical education which were in three stages such as: immediate (February 2001 to July 2001), mid – term (2002-2005) and long – term (2006-2010) which have either been half-heartedly implemented or not yet implemented at all. In order to give effect to the provision of facilities, substantial investment should be made to rehabilitate and expand the facilities in technical colleges, he added. Adirije (2006) recommended that a complementary role between the public and private sector should be adopted in order to bring about the development of an efficient vocational – technical education and training system. He further opined that the public sector should focus on the prerequisite of initial vocational – technical education training; whereas the private sector should concentrate on skills development at the workplace.

In order to achieve the above, Azubuike (2007) observed that the Education Trust Fund (ETF) wishes to collaborate with federal government in specific project ideas and other developmental programmes in training institutions through project definitions, specifications and provision of facilities that will positively impact on education in Nigeria, while training and capacity building has to do with enhancing the intellectual, administrative, professional and managerial ability of personnel in the educational sector. Such activities will include staff training and development programmes, workshop attendance, provision of expert and assistance in curriculum development in which vocational – technical education is not left out.

In another dimension, Olatunji (2003) stated that the partnership envisaged should cuts across different but mutually inclusive groups of stakeholders, including International Non-Government Organizations and Development Agencies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture (UNESCO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Multinational Corporations such as Alesco Cooperation Limited, Shell, Chevron, Taxaco, Total Final ELF, Exxon-Mobile and others Organized Private Sector (OPS)

such as Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Marine and Agriculture (NACCIMA), MAN Global and selected Non-quoted private sector companies such as Econet, Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN), Globalcom, Etisalat, Zain, Dangote and Folawiyo Groups. Professional Bodies such as Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), and Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), among others are not left out.

Finally, Charles (2003) declared that time is ripe for Nigerian public/private sector partnership to go beyond the Education Tax Fund. He added that Nigeria should take advantage of the international experience and allow for significant contributions to educational development.

Statement of Problem

Okwori (2007) noted that equipping of vocational – technical education institutions with workshop tools and facilities has remained problematic because of its capital intensive nature. The Federal Government of Nigeria also in realizing this, states in the National Policy on Education (2004:35) that in recognition of the fundamental importance and cost intensive nature of vocational and technical education, government shall provide adequate fund for technical and vocational education, but due to several aspect of education the government is attending to, technical colleges still suffer shortage of needed facilities to operate in the right footing. The above problems have motivated the researchers to undertake this study, which is aimed at the strategy for improving the quality of vocational – technical education through public-private partnership (PPP) in education.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study was to establish a strategy for improving quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State through public-private partnership in education.

Research Question: One research question guided the conduct of the study.

To what extent has the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State improved through Public-private partnership?

Hypothesis

Significant difference does not exist in the mean scores of respondents' about the extent at which the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State has been improved through Public-private partnership.

Research methods

Survey research method was utilized for this study to source data to answer the research question, which centered on public-private partnership in education: a strategy for improving quality of vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria. The population for the study comprised all public sectors such as teachers and students of all technical colleges, ministry of Education and private parastatals such as multinational companies and philanthropists among others in Rivers State. A sample of 800 (400 public sectors and private sectors) was drawn using random sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled “public-private partnership in education: a strategy for improving quality of vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria (PPPEASFIQVTEPN)” with 5 items and 5-point scale: High Extent (VHE).....4.50-5.00; High Extent (HE).....3.50-4.99; Moderate Extent (ME).....2.50-3.49; Low Extent (LE).....1.50-2.49 and Very Low Extent (VLE).....0.50-1.49 was used for the study. The researchers personally went to the colleges used for the study and administered 800 copies of the questionnaire. 700 out of 800 were properly completed and retrieved on the spot but 100 suffered mortality due to wrong entry. The mean 3.50 mean rating was used to answer the research question while z-test was used to test the research hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question: One research question guided the conduct of the study.

To what extent has the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State improved through Public-private partnership?

Data gathered to provide answer to this research question were collected in respect of items 1 – 5; analyzed and presented in Table 1

Results:

Table 1: Respondents' mean score on the extent of public-private partnership in education: a strategy for improving quality of vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria (a case study of Rivers State).

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Public sectors, N = 350			Private sectors, N=350		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	To what extent has public- private partnership improved the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State through provision of functional workshop equipment?	3.92	0.64	ME	2.80	1.11	ME
2.	To what extent has public and private partnership improved the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State through building of infrastructures?	3.40	1.60	ME	2.20	0.61	ME
3.	To what extent has public and private partnership improved the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State through financing extra-curricular activities and facilities for such activities?	1.90	0.24	LE	2.85	0.20	ME
4.	To what extent has public and private partnership improved the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State through the supply of instructional materials?	3.40	1.60	ME	2.50	0.80	ME
5.	To what extent has public and private partnership improved the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State through provision of consumables for workshop use?	3.10	0.70	ME	2.60	0.50	ME
		$\bar{G} \bar{X} = 3.14$ GSD = 0.96			$\bar{G} \bar{X} = 2.59$ GSD = 0.44		

Table 1 reveals that the public sectors that reacted to items 1, 2, 4 and 5 had all their mean score within the 2.50 – 3.49 range of Moderate Extent except item 3 leaving their grand mean of 3.14 centrally in the same range which authenticated that the public sectors perceive the extent at which public-private partner to improve the quality of vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria as Moderate.

It is equally clear that the private sectors who responded to the same items had both their mean and grand mean within 2.50 – 3.49 range of Moderate Extent. This implies that the private sectors perceive the extent which public-private partner to improve the quality of vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria as Moderate.

Hypothesis

Significant difference does not exist in the mean scores of respondents' about the extent at which the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State has been improved through Public-private partnership.

The test of this hypothesis was made in respect of appropriate data gathered and presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: z-test on perception of respondents' on the extent of improvement of quality vocational-technical education programme in Nigeria through public- private partnership (PPP).

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	z-cal	z-crit	P	Df	Decision
Public sectors	350	3.14	0.96	9.74	1.96	0.05	698	H ₀
Private sectors	350	2.59	0.44					Rejected

From table 2 above, since the calculated value of z-ratio (9.74) was greater than the critical value of z-ratio (1.96); the stated null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Implying that the

respondents perceived the extent at which public-private partner in the improvement of quality of vocational – technical education programme in Nigeria in different ways.

Discussion of Findings:

From the findings, the result revealed that the respondents significantly agreed that the extent to which public-private partner in the improvement of quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State yielded different results, at (3.14) and (2.49) grand mean of Moderate Extent. The null hypothesis was rejected as the calculated value of z-ratio (9.74) was greater than the critical value of z-ratio (1.96). This confirmed that the respondents perceived the extent at which public and private partner in the improvement of quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers state in different ways. This agrees with the finding of Charles (2003) who opined that the time is ripe for Nigerian Public/private sectors to partner in education.

Conclusion:

Based on the analysis of the data that were gathered during investigation, although the extent at which public-private sectors partner in the improvement of the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State was Moderate, the respondents' perception differed significantly. It therefore concludes that, the aims and objectives of vocational-technical education have been defeated since its funding is solely left in the hands of the government.

Recommendations:

In the light of the findings of this study the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be complementary role between the public and private sectors in order to bring about the development of an efficient vocational education and training system.
2. Trust fund should take advantage of the international experience to allow significant contributions to educational development by partnering with private sectors in the provision of facilities in the schools thereby improving the quality of vocational-technical education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State.

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