

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE COST QUALITY RELATIONSHIP IN THE EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE

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## **Abstract:**

The economics world vividly recognizes the entrepreneur as one of the major factors of production, alongside capital land and labour. His role in the co-ordination of other factors of production cannot be over-emphasized. Mort and Associates (1960) summarized research findings on cost –quality relationship in education thus: “every empirical study of the relationship between expenditure level and the quality of education adds its bit of the presumption that the relationship between cost and quality is strong”. In-between this provision and the quality of education received is the entrepreneurial decision making process. Thus the assertion of education as an economic activity, on which the higher it is invested in, the higher its output and the higher the output, the quicker the achievement of the national objective of vision 20,20,20. Though controversies exist with examples of the Federal Unity Schools in Nigeria, yet it is an established fact that a well funded education system is vital to ensuring the attainment of quality education thereby fast tracking national development.

## **Introduction**

It is assumed that the adequacy of financial allocation made to education will determine the standard or quality of education to be provided. With this assumption in mind, it is felt that if adequate financial provision is made to ensure the provision of qualified and quality staff, in addition to adequate physical infrastructural facilities, equipment, recreational centres, and enough money for enrichment programmes and remediation work, the quality of education could be determined.

It is assumed also that if priorities are not misplaced, and if inflationary trends are curtailed or curbed, it should be possible to determine quality of education from the level of investment made on it. The level of investment could therefore be a critical indicator for the performance of the educational system. Hence the postulation that the level of expenditure or investment on education has a positive correlation with the quality or standard of education provided.

## **Findings from Studies in the U.S.**

Twenty-six studies conducted in the United States are reported or rather summarized by Mort and Associates as follows:

- Regardless of the method of measuring quality, a relatively strong relationship exists through all levels of education as yet experienced in public education as exemplified by Mississippi studies which was considered to be lowest, through Maine, West Virginia, Rhode Island, Illinois and Pennsylvania representing the middle group to the highest in the case of New York and New Jersey.
- The higher expenditure of public schools do not begin to approach the point where the relationship drops off.

- The relationship appears to be an accelerating one. Those who spend more tend to add to the range of education on the one hand and on the other hand to a better job of focusing on the needs of children and young people throughout the range of ability.

In a related study, Lewis (1965) made an illuminating discovery of cost-quality relationship. Wallat limited the instrument of his study to four facts that seemed observable in the high expenditure schools on those found in New York metropolitan areas: namely the

- Teaching of skills in a real or realistic fashion and the teaching of a wider range of skills.
- Teaching of areas of knowledge realistically
- Discovery and the area development of social aptitudes of individuals through tests and tryouts.
- Development of gross behaviour patterns like citizenship character and thinking, which are assumed to be the developmental characteristics.

Mort and associates (1960) reports that between 1950 and 1955, five additional studies have been conducted, and that four out of these five confirmed the findings of the earlier ones. The fifth however, based on a study of Connecticut, found significantly less relationship between quality (Mort 1960) as measured in achievement tests and expenditure level. It was found to be so, according to Mort and associates that the used of a two-year average expenditure per pupil without the use of sparsity corrections (in enrolments) might be responsible for the perceived discrepancies.

Some of the other parameters used for measuring cost-quality relationships deal with evaluation of a school system based on types of school programmes in the achievement of a specific important objective. Sometimes, the period of lag/lapse between a change in expenditure policy and maximum effect on school quality, many give useful indications of the relationship between cost-quality.

Furno's study using the wealth of data from the New York metropolitan School Study Council appeared that expenditure policy, at any particular time, might be expected to have impressionable effect of good or bad, over a period of at least twenty five years into the future.

### **Controversies Over the Cost-Quality Relationship – The Nigeria Experience**

The cost-quality relationship came under critical questioning as from 1966 when Coleman and his associates (1966) and Jenks and associates (1972) raised questions concerning it. According to Burrup (1977), results of these studies appeared to indicate that costs as evident in such factors as salaries and facilities have only a minor effect upon achievements of students when compared with the much larger effect of their intelligence and family background.

There is sufficient evidence to show that other factors may play concomitant role of adversely affecting quality in spite of increased financial outlays on education. For example, the "Unity Colleges" founded in Nigeria by the Federal Government in the thirty six States of the Federation and Abuja is heavily funded with very little noticeable differences in most of them. Where some assessors perceived that some performed better than the rest is due to factors of selections of entrants, the dedication and commitment of staff and students to the tradition of the schools concerned.

One positive monetary factor, that creates problems in the study of cost-quality relationship which must be re-emphasized, according to Obanya (2006), is related to salary policies. Theoretically, dedicated staff members ought to be rewarded according to their performance. Unfortunately, most educational systems tend to grant automatic increments and sometimes promotion to individual teachers without serious regards being given to their performance.

Where apparent mediocrity is encouraged at the expense of meritocracy, any increased financial outlays that go into salaries of teachers may not necessarily improve the quality of education. An incompetent teacher on a higher scale of salary or one enjoying unmerited promotion will still carry his incompetence along with him within the system and might even cripple the system. Sooner or later, he might be promoted beyond the level of his competence. The swelling of the budget for education through increased salaries unless tied to efficiency or output, cannot be a clear indicator of the quality education provided.

It will be necessary, however, to embark on empirical studies on cost-quality relationship in Nigeria to test the validity of the relationship between expenditure on education and its quality. This is necessary, in view of the fact that some elitist private schools and colleges (apparently expensively equipped and well funded) have been established in Nigeria relative to public schools where less facilities are provided.

As it appears, the majority of pupils who patronize these elitist schools and colleges are children of privileged people whose most probable qualifications for entry into such schools are dependent on their ability to pay fees.

Be that as it may, expenditure level in education, including the hiring of competent teachers, is still an important indicator that a well funded educational system is vital to ensuring the attainment of quality education.

### **The National Goals and Objectives**

In line with education for all by the year 2015. These goals are derived from the philosophy of education which include:

- The eradication of illiteracy
- Inculcation of national consciousness and national unity
- Inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society; among others (Nat. policy on education 2004). All these and more as contained in the revised edition of the Nigeria Policy on education are aimed at achieving the millennium goals of 'EFA' by the year 2020.

### **Summary**

The protagonists of private entrepreneurship of education put up arguments ranging from:

- What has been regarded as the operational role of the family to the benefit of the individual in the area of personal economic gains and
- Individual self actualization to the fact that privately provided education has better quality than the publicly provided.
- The fact that private education allows for free exercise of alternative choice of the type of education for an individual citizen.
- The fact that private education by its nature and its relations to its clientele, are more flexible and adaptable to changes as and when demanded by the patrons of the school system.

But the protagonists of public entrepreneurship of education see private education as retrogressive, discriminatory, and fragmentary of the society and create inequality of educational opportunity to the generality of school-age children. They see public education as egalitarian and a means of fostering social, political integration and the removal of obstacles to equalization of

educational opportunity. It is also seen as a removal of obstacles to economic and social mobility (Obaya (2006).

### **Conclusion**

Findings from far and near, point strongly to the fact that heavily funded, private entrepreneurial provision of education tend to produce qualitative products into the labour market than the publicly owned education enterprises. In effect, this means that the privately, heavily funded education enterprises are responding positively to the direction of achieving the national education objectives by the year 2020.

### **Recommendation**

- ❖ Public school should be made to equate with the private schools in terms of funding.
- ❖ Supervising or monitoring activities should be beefed up in order to supervise expenditure made on schools to match input to service delivery.
- ❖ Inspectorate departments of the ministry of education should rise up to their responsibilities and ensure that teachers perform their duties.
- ❖ Grants in aid should be restored to private and missionary schools to help them pay their staff well in order to curb staff mobility.
- ❖ The Educational Management Information System (EMIS) of state ministries of education should be made very functional in order to assume their proper roles of gathering, storing, and disseminating informations relating to the education enterprise.

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