

Current Issues on the Management of Diversification of Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria



Education

KEYWORDS : Current issues, management, educational diversification, secondary schools, achievements, challenges.

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated current issues on the management of diversification of education in senior secondary schools in Abia State. The study used a descriptive survey design, carried out in one hundred and ninety (190) senior secondary schools in Abia State. The sample comprised of four hundred and eighty-five (485) principals and teachers, obtained through stratified random sampling techniques. Two research questions and two hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. A twenty (20) item instrument named "Questionnaire on Current Issues on the Management of Diversification of Education" (QCIMDE) was developed to obtain relevant data for the study. The instrument was validated and had a reliability index of 0.82 obtained using Pearson Product Moment Reliability Coefficient. Of the four hundred and eighty-five (485) questionnaires administered; four hundred and eighty (480) were retrieved from the respondents and used for data analysis. Mean and rank order statistics were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that there is need to provide alternative means of financing secondary education; non-reliance on obsolete methodologies, curtailment of manpower wastage, creation of job opportunities, fostering the acquisition of ICT facilities. It was recommended that the stakeholders in education should pay great attention to the management of diversified educational operations. This will take care of new developments in technology and solve the problem of inability to adapt to changes. Also government should support the move towards alternative means of financing secondary education. Teachers should do a lot to discourage reliance on obsolete methodologies of instruction; while concerted efforts should be made to curtail manpower wastage in senior secondary schools. All concerned should strive hard to create job opportunities for secondary schools graduates through relevant curriculum.

Introduction

Investpodia (2014) defined diversification as a risk management technique that mixes a wide range of investments within a portfolio. Here, the proponents of diversification hold it that a portfolio of different kinds will, on average, produce higher returns and then bring about a lower risk than any individual investment existing within the portfolio. Also, Wikipedia (2014) stated that diversification is the reduction of non-systematic risk by investing in a variety of assets. It is believed that if the asset values do not move up and down in a perfect synchrony, a diversified portfolio will have less risk than the weighted average risk of its constituent assets, and often less risk than the least risk of its constituents. In relation to that, Wachra (2014) posited that diversification increases the tendency of cost-saving for the government, improves employment opportunities for students and reduces pressure on the university system.

According to Wikipedia (2014), diversification is one of two general techniques for the reduction of investment risk and it relies chiefly on lack of a tight positive relationship among these assets returns, working even when correlations are near zero or somewhat positive. Investpodia (2014) stressed that diversification strives to smoothen out unsystematic risk events in a portfolio so that the positive performance of some investments will neutralize the negative performance of others. Wachra (2014) mentioned that through diversification, there are various different modes of delivery, a multiplicity of providers and proliferation of study programmes.

Investpodia (2014) maintained that diversification benefits can be gained through investment in foreign securities since they tend to be less closely correlated with domestic investment. For example, an economic downturn in the U. S. economy may not affect Japan's economy in the same way. Therefore, having Japan's investment would allow investors to have a small cushion of protection against losses due to an American economic downturn. Wikipedia (2014) stated that the simplest example of diversification is provided by the proverb: "Don't put all your eggs in on basket". If the basket is dropped, all the eggs will break, but placing each egg in a separate basket will ensure that all will not break at once. Having more baskets for the eggs is the di-

versification; there more risk of losing all the eggs in one basket than losing one egg in one basket.

Diversification encourages alternative modes of delivery, leading to the availability of different kinds of providers; it can equally help in the expansion of post-secondary education with external sources. Omar (2012) noted that classroom students' performance and instructional interactions are a function of economies derived from the learning relationship existing across and among students in a classroom and on the technological fit between students' learning needs and a teacher's capacity, which is a product of diversified educational operations.

According to Ojo, Ogidan and Olakulehim (2006) open and distance education is the major purpose of diversification of educational funds and ensures that the set educational objectives are met through availability and provision of adequate financial resources. The involvement of government and private sectors in funding educational programmes cannot be over estimated. Wachra (2014) stated that diversification has the tendency of increasing job market demand for varied skills as the primary driver of emerging trend and is instrumental in expanding access to employment-related study programmes.

Adeyinka (1992) noted that the greatest problem of educational development all over the world is that of responsibility and control. In this direction, the various agencies of education are actively involved, at times in unhealthy rivalry or competition, but the pattern of this rivalry or competition is often determined by the nature and problems of development itself. Diversification has necessitated in many industrial circles, to prefer polytechnic graduates to university graduates, due to their hands on skills and it thus favours business-oriented programmes such as Accounting, Banking, Business Management, and so on.

Another major problem of educational diversification is the prevalence of multiple systems of education. Adeyinka (1992) similarly noted that there are over thirty-one systems of education in the country: the national system, or Federal (Abuja) system and the thirty six state systems. Each education system is unique, backed up by the Federal or State Education Laws. In

such a case, there is seen varying and divergent systems of education in Nigeria. This situation has created a gap at the senior secondary school level, and in the view of Adeyinka, the gap could be filled by the existence of a unified common curriculum and the influence of a common external examining body.

Adeyinka (1992) observed that as a result of the prevalence of multiple systems of education in the country, there is the problem of diversification and control. Who controls what level of education? Who inspects what subjects, how often and for what purpose? Thus, education efforts are unsystematically and grossly diversified everywhere. Odukayo (2009) posited that this is compounded by unstable curriculum and subject syllabuses and based on the need for schools and colleges to meet the requirements of certain examining bodies, in order to meet diversification standards. Hence, Nigerian educational institutions, particularly at the pre-tertiary level have to change their syllabuses from time to time. These changes occur even when the national subject curricula are constant for some years, the school subject syllabuses are subject to change or modification by teachers, particularly where subject teachers are changed as often as possible.

There has been the issue of unstable staffing and the management of diversification of education. The problem of teaching staff in schools today is no longer that of unavailability, but that of instability. This does not help the development of the education system. The comparatively poorer conditions of service of teachers in the Nigerian society tend to force many teachers in the nation's schools today to seek for greener pastures. In the view of United States Embassy in Nigeria (2012), over 60% of academic staff in the Nigerian university system is in the category of lecturer 1 and below; due to inter and intra sector brain drain. In the same way there are academic staff shortages in all areas, particularly in the critical areas of science and technology. It has become difficult for fresh graduates of universities and colleges of education to remain in the teaching service; they exit without provocation, and as soon as they find greener pastures elsewhere; the teaching staff in Nigerian educational institutions becomes highly unstable, resulting from a bunch of complicated matters.

The procurement and servicing of equipment constitute a setback for educational institutions in the country. The institutions, including secondary schools, lack the various equipment needed for effective teaching and learning, notably those needed for teaching and learning such subjects as Introductory Technology, Woodwork, Metalwork, Home Economics, and others. Odukayo (2009) contended that such equipments need regular service so that they can serve well and last long. In many secondary schools, the experience is that there is usually no adequate provision for servicing the equipment, and when any of them gets damaged, it is always difficult, sometimes impossible, to get it repaired.

In the view of Adeyinka (1992), in a majority of Nigerian secondary schools, the classroom accommodation is grossly inadequate. This factor is likely to have a number of consequences for the management of diversification of education. As a result of the large enrolments in these schools, the classrooms are usually overcrowded, with up to sixty or more students receiving instructions in classrooms designed for only thirty or, forty students. Chukwurah (2011) maintained that increased enrollment rates created challenges in ensuring quality education and satisfactory learning achievement as resources are spread more thinly across a growing number of students. It is not rare to have about 100 pupils per teacher or students sitting under trees outside the school building because of the lack of classrooms.

According to Chukwurah (2011), whatever the number of

schools, facilities and teachers available for basic education remain inadequate for the eligible number of children and youths, and that majority of primary schools, especially in rural areas, lack water, electricity and toilet facilities. This is more so in urban areas where there is population pressure. Under these conditions, teaching and learning cannot be effective; hence the outcomes are usually below expectation. Adeyinka (1992) stated that for effective teaching and learning, well equipped laboratories and subject rooms are needed; but the truth is that many Nigerian secondary schools today lack these essential facilities. Odukayo (2009) however noted that many schools and colleges have buildings that they call libraries, but most of these are not equipped with essential books and current journals and magazines.

Again, an estimated ten million out of the 30 million school aged children are not enrolled in school in Nigeria. Thus, the United States Embassy in Nigeria (2012) maintained that the educational system suffers from deteriorating quality and insufficient investment to keep pace with the country's burgeoning school age population. Odukayo (2009) noted the bad effects of politics, for which there are commitments to reverse years of neglect in the education sector and a significant increase of the Federal funding, investment in basic education is still low not yielding the expected results.

Statement of the problem

Observation has shown that a good number of students who have completed their secondary education but do not wish to continue with higher education, find themselves in dilemma. These young people are not well equipped with necessary skills to empower themselves. At the end of secondary education, the training acquired seems inadequate to make the recipients competent and self-reliant. Currently, the Nigerian society is plagued by a breed of unemployable youths who cannot raise the economic productivity of the country. It is desirable that a lasting solution be provided in the right direction.

Moreover, the management of diversification of education at the senior secondary level seems not to be effectively carried out. Dependence on one area of educational operation goes along with a huge risk. Some educational stakeholders seem to be ignorant of the achievements and challenges of managing diversification of education. It is therefore on this notion that this study is designed to fill this gap. Thus, this study is intended to investigate current issues on the management of diversification of education in senior secondary schools in Abia State, with special focus on the achievements and challenges.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, this study is aimed to:

Find out the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior

secondary schools Abia State.

Investigate the challenges of managing diversification of education in senior

secondary schools in Abia State.

Research Questions

What are the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior

secondary schools Abia State?

What are the challenges of managing diversification of education in senior secondary

schools in Abia State?

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of

principals and teachers on the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools.

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the challenges of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was used in this study. This design was used to investigate, describe and interpret in a systematic way, the existing phenomenon, prevailing situations and on going processes, which in this study is, current issues on the management of diversification of education in senior secondary schools.

The population involved 190 public secondary schools in Abia State. There were 2,325 principals and teachers at the time of the study, that is, 190 principals and 2,135 teachers in public secondary schools in Abia State. The choice of principals and teachers was informed by the reason that they are directly in the management of diversification of education at the secondary school level. The sample of this study was made up of 485 principals and teachers. Stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain the sample.

The instrument for collecting data in this study was a self-designed questionnaire, titled ‘**Questionnaire on Current Issues on the Management of Diversification of Education**’ (QCIM-DE). It was made up of twenty (20) items designed to cover the variables of the study. The instrument focused on: The questionnaire items was rated using modified Likert’s four point scale of Strongly Agree - (SA) = 4, Agree - (A) = 3, Disagree - (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree - (SD) = 1. Three experts in Educational Management face validated the instrument. The test re-test method was applied to ensure that the instrument is reliable using Pearson Product Moment Correlation which yielded a co-efficient of 0. 82.

The instrument was administered to the respondents in their various schools by the researcher and two assistants. The researcher administered 485 questionnaires to the participants, but retrieved only 480.

Mean computation and rank order were used to analyze data to answer the research questions, while z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Findings

Research Question 1: what are the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools?

Table1: Mean and rank order of the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools in Abia state

S/N	Achievements of managing diversification of education in Senior Secondary Schools	Principals	Teachers	Mean set	Rank	Decision
1.	Offer of varieties of choices to students	2.56	2.61	2.58	6 th	Accepted
2	Non-reliance on obsolete methodologies	2.82	2.47	2.64	2 nd	Accepted
3	Reduction of teacher workload	2.63	2.50	2.56	7 th	Accepted
4	Fostering the acquisition of ICT facilities	2.66	2.53	2.59	5 th	Accepted
5	Creation of job opportunities	2.63	2.58	2.60	4 th	Accepted
6	Redeeming of the teaching profession’s public image	2.45	2.51	2.48	8 th	Rejected
7	Reduction of academic brain drain	2.36	2.39	2.37	10 th	Rejected
8	Curtailing of manpower wastage	2.59	2.66	2.62	3 rd	Accepted
9	Provision of alternative means of financing secondary education	2.76	2.67	2.71	1 st	Accepted
10	Increment in educational investments	2.46	2.40	2.43	9 th	Rejected

Table 1 shows the mean scores of principals and teachers, mean set and rank of each item on the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools. The data were presented according to their rank as follows: Item 9 had a mean set of 2.71 and ranked 1st, Item 2 scored 2.64 coming 2nd while item 8 had a mean set of 2.62 and ranked 3rd. Item 5 had a mean set of 2.60 and ranked 4th; item 4 ranked 5th with a mean set of 2.59; item 1 scored 2.58 ranking 5th while item 3 with a mean set score of 2.56 ranked 7th and all these were accepted. On the other hand the rejected items were 6, 10 and 7 with mean sets of 2.48, 2.43 and 2.37 respectively.

Thus, the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools are: provision of alternative means of financing secondary education, non-reliance on obsolete methodologies, curtailing of manpower wastage, creation of job opportunities, fostering the acquisition of ICT facilities, offer of varieties of choices to students and reduction in teachers’ workload. However, the findings show that stemming of academic brain drain and reduction of academic brain drain are not part of the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary school.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges of managing diversification of education in Senior Secondary Schools?

Table 2: Mean and rank order of the challenges of managing diversification of education in Senior Secondary Schools in Abia state

S/n	Challenges of managing diversification of education in SeniorSecondary Schools	Principals	Teachers	Mean set	Rank	Decision
1	New developments in technology	2.81	2.63	2.72	1 st	Accepted
2	Use of obsolete instructional methodologies	2.39	2.58	2.48	9 th	Rejected
3	Inconsistent educational policies	2.53	2.66	2.59	5 th	Accepted
4	Inadequate teacher supply	2.66	2.51	2.58	6 th	Accepted
5	Insufficientbudgetary allocations and financial crisis	2.57	2.69	2.63	3 rd	Accepted
6	Political instability and environmental crisis	2.68	2.55	2.51	7 th	Accepted
7	Teacher conservativeness and inability to adapt to changes	2.72	2.61	2.66	2 nd	Accepted
8	Prevalent academic brain drain	2.51	2.48	2.49	8 th	Rejected
9	Inadequate infrastructural provision	2.68	2.59	2.63	3 rd	Accepted
10	Incessant teacher strikes	2.39	2.47	2.43	10 th	Rejected

Table 2 shows the mean scores of principals and teachers, mean set and rank of each item. The data as presented below according to their ranks indicate that item 1 with 2.72, item 7 with 2.66, items 5 and 9 with 2.63 each, item 3 with 2.59, item 4 with 2.58, item 6 with 2.51 were all accepted as challenges of managing diversification of education in Senior Secondary Schools in Abia state. However, items 8, 2 and 10 with mean set scores of 2.49, 2.48 and 2.43 respectively were rejected.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools

Table 3: z-test analysis on the significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools

Respondents	N	X	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Remark
Principals	215	23.47	12.09	478	0.514	0.1960	Not Significant
Teachers	265	22.92	11.26				

In table 3, at 0.05 level of significant and 478 degree of freedom, the calculated and critical value of z, are 0.514 and 1.960 respectively. Since the calculated value is less than the critical value of z, the above hypothesis was therefore accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the challenges of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools.

Table 4: z-test analysis on the significant difference between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the challenges of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools.

Respondents	N	X	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Remark
Principals	215	23.55	10.28	478	0.260	0.1960	Not Significant
Teachers	265	23.30	11.19				

In table 4, at 0.05 level of significant and 478 degree of freedom, the calculated and critical value of z, are 0.260 and 1.960 respectively. Since the calculated value is less than the critical value of z, the above hypothesis is therefore accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the challenges of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings of this study, the achievements of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools are: provision of alternative means of financing secondary education, non-reliance on obsolete methodologies, curtailing of manpower wastage, creation of job opportunities, fostering the acquisition of ICT facilities, offer of varieties of choices to students and reduction in teacher workload.

This study found out that diversification of education helps in the creation of job opportunities. This in agreement with Wachra (2014) that posited that diversification increases the tendency of cost-saving for the government, improves employment opportunities for students. By diversifying educational operations at the senior secondary level, the system is able to acquire new ICT facilities needed to enhance productivity. Senior

secondary student will not be constrained by narrow choices in terms of career and specialisation. With adequate management of diversification of education at the senior secondary level, concrete efforts are made towards curtailing of manpower wastage. This can go a length further, in improving the production capacity of the system.

Based on this study, the challenges of managing diversification of education in senior secondary schools are new developments in technology, conservatism and inability to adapt to changes, insufficient budgetary allocations and financial crisis, inadequate infrastructural provision, political instability and environmental crisis, inconsistent educational policies and inadequate teacher supply.

Inadequate infrastructural provision is identified as one of the challenges of managing diversification of education. This agrees with Adeyinka (1992), who noted that these institutions, including secondary schools, lack the various equipment needed for effective teaching and learning, notably those needed for teaching and learning such subjects as Introductory Technology, Woodwork, Metalwork, Home Economics, and others. Apart from all this, the present day Nigerian society is noted for political instability and environmental crisis, which hinder developmental efforts, slows down plans and stifles innovative tendencies. Educational policies and their implementation are never consistent in Nigeria; they are changed and replaced at will without any deep thought on their effects on the smooth management of schools.

However, this study found out that diversification of education is not affected by academic brain drain. This contrasts with Adeyinka (1992) who maintained that it has become difficult for fresh graduates of Universities and Colleges of education to remain in the teaching service; they exit without provocation, and as soon as they find greener pastures elsewhere; the teaching staff in Nigerian educational institutions is highly unstable, resulting from a bunch of complicated matters.

Conclusion

It has become very necessary for the stakeholders in education to pay great attention to the management of diversified educational operations. This is because, among other things, it is instrumental in the provision of alternative means of financing secondary education, non-reliance on obsolete methodologies, curtailing of manpower wastage, creation of job opportunities, and fostering the acquisition of ICT facilities.

Apart from the foregoing, the management of diversified educational operations is being greatly challenged by such issues as new developments in technology, conservatism and inability to adapt to changes, insufficient budgetary allocations and financial crisis, inadequate infrastructural provision, political instability and environmental crisis, and inconsistent educational policies.

Recommendations

1. The government should support the move towards alternative means of financing secondary education and do a lot to discourage non-reliance on obsolete methodologies of instruction.
2. Concerted efforts should be made to curtail manpower wastage in senior secondary schools and also strive hard to create job opportunities for secondary schools graduates.
3. The government should help in schools to acquire ICT facilities and then organise seminars, workshops and conferences for teachers to foster their acquisition of ICT skills.
4. Teachers should be made to be conversant with new devel-

opments in technology in order to be relevant in managing diversification of education.

5. There should be sufficient budgetary allocations to deal with financial crisis in order to tackle the issues of inadequate infrastructural provision.
6. The government should use all available machineries to create political stability and discourage environmental crisis, and also ensure that educational policies are consistent.

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