



Private tutorial centres and post-elementary learning in Nigeria

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Abstract

The demand for education in Nigeria has continued to increase as the country comes close to the realization of the universal primary education. The need for tertiary education has also increased thus the supply of private tutorial education has risen due to the struggle for admission in tertiary institutions. This study was set out to investigate the incessant neglect of post-elementary schooling for private tutorial centres (PTCs) amongst students in senior secondary. Four distinct objectives were set out. To accomplish the set objectives, it employed the primary and secondary data. The research design employed was the survey method. A sample of 150 was drawn from the target population and 92.67% return rate was recorded. The study reveal that students in senior secondary school abandon the formal school system for PTCs which has led to more malpractice centres, insubordination to rules and regulations and poor attitude towards learning. Furthermore, movements of students to PTCs occur due to poor parental guidance, peer pressure, self-promotion especially when they are advised to repeat, escape from school protocols amongst others. The study therefore recommend that PTCs should be regulated, a ban should be placed on the enrollment of external candidates in SSCE examinations, proper record of the number of students and their schools be kept to guide against movement to other schools for enrolment. Finally, schools that usually record high enrolment for certificate examinations but with few students the previous session should be sanctioned.

Keywords: Private, learning, education, students

1. Introduction

As universal primary education comes close to realization, there are concerns about whether secondary education will withstand the pressure of increasing numbers of children moving up to post-elementary education. Post-elementary learning is today seen not as a luxury, but as a necessary stepping stone towards a better and brighter future. It has been suggested that secondary education could either serve as a pathway for students' advancement or appear as the main bottleneck preventing the equitable expansion of educational opportunities (World Bank, 2005)^[5] thus private tutoring has become an option.

Bray (1999)^[7] observes that private tutorial learning has three essential features, namely, supplementation, exclusiveness and consisting of various academic subjects. This description conceptualizes the ecosphere of tutorial schools as a place where students engage in academic studies for largely demand generated reasons. This is important in two respects; when a formal education is deficient and when the formal state education system has a supply side deficiency meaning that even if the instructors are proficient, if the class size is too large to accommodate for student centered learning then this generates further demand for shadow education systems.

The trend is especially significant in some East Asian countries and Africa, where the phenomenon has been known for longer periods as well-structured establishments with specific names, such as 'juku' in Japan, 'hagwon' in South Korea, 'buxiban' in Taipei (China), 'kewaifudao' in Mainland China (Bray & Kwo, 2014; Liu, 2015)^[12, 6] and "lesson" in Nigeria.

Although diverse tendencies are visible globally, Bray, Kwo, and Jokić (2015)^[13] aver that research on private tutoring is low compare to the actual development of the PTCs. The investigation of the phenomenon is largely focused in East and Southeast Asia, such as Hong Kong SAR, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and India. Studies and investigations have also spread across African, European, North and South American countries as well as other parts of Asia (Wang & Bray, 2016)^[2] although the research is not widespread.

Generally, western education in Nigeria can be historically traced to the activities of the British Colonial Government and the missionaries who opted to bequeath their host communities the education acquired in their home country, with the objective of making the people to be useful to the colonial administration. As Fafunwa (1978)^[1] posits that the origin of Secondary Education in Nigeria shows that the missionaries, the colonial and post-independent governments, private individuals as well as groups pursued education vigorously for various reasons.

Secondary education is one of the most crucial stages of the formal education ladder. It has great importance as it prepares the students for higher education and also for the world of work (Kotaky&Hazarika, 2016). In Nigeria, it is divided into two parts; Junior and Senior. Over the years, education has been understood as a means to enhance one's position in the society. Education is now considered to be a responsibility of the state, communities and individuals as it brings a change in the thought process, impact on the socio-economic status as well as the individual contribution to the growth and development of the nation (Sharma, 2019).

The demand for education in Nigeria is on the rise as such the demand for higher education has continued to grow rapidly. Many secondary school students want to get into tertiary institutions. Unfortunately, the number of higher institutions has not grown as fast as the number of students who demand higher education. Thus, excess demand has been created in the education market. Mainstream schools have long been recognized as the principal institutional channel through which societies educate their young. Alongside regular schooling, the last few decades have brought rapid growth of parallel avenues through which young people gain knowledge and skills (Zhan *et al.*, 2013)^[2].

Private Tutoring Centres (PTCs), as a new form of privatization of education, has grown at a fast pace over the few decades all over the world and has become a billion-dollar business in the global market (UNESCO, 2017)^[7]. Tutoring is not only a phenomenon among low-achieving students, high-achieving students also seek private tutoring for enrichment in order to maintain or even further enhance their good academic performance. As Aurini, Davies, & Dierkes, 2013 opine, the total revenue of the supplementary education industry in just 17 countries (not including the East Asian societies) had already reached around 41.7 billion USD a year. It has become a lucrative multibillion-dollar business.

2. Study Objectives

The study has both overall and definite objectives. The overall objective of the study is to provide empirical insight of the proliferation of PTCs in Benin City. The specific objective includes:

1. To investigate the rationale behind students abandoning secondary education for PTCs senior post-elementary students, abandon secondary education for PTCs.

2. To examine student perception on reasons for students' enrolment with PTCs.
3. To scrutinize the effect of PTCs on post-elementary learning in Nigeria.
4. To investigate the reason (s) for the establishment of PTCs.

3. Research Questions

Based on the objectives of this study, the following questions offer direction to the researcher in carrying out the study:

1. Why do students prefer PTCs to government regulated schools?
2. How does PTCs affect the quality of education delivered to students of senior secondary school in Nigeria?
3. What is/are the reason(s) for the establishment of PTCs?

4. Literature Review

The term "*Private Tutorial Centre*" refers to private education by informal education institutions or tutoring informally by individual teachers or outsiders patterned after the recognized school. It is a common phenomenon thus it is known as shadow education (Bray & Silova, 2006)^[14]. It is a by-product and a distinguishing feature of certain educational systems which create an environment for its occurrence. This is the case in the educational system in Nigeria, where private tutoring is on the increase with no effort of government to control it activities. Private tutoring affects many subjects in the Nigerian educational curriculum, although certain subjects take the lion's share of attention. One of these subjects includes Mathematics due to phobia exhibited by some students.

Private tutoring is global occurrence which can be associated with commercialization and privatization. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the transition to a free-market economy in Uzbekistan facilitated the rise of informal private sector in public education. This in turn has affected mainstream schooling in many ways and changed the face of education (Khaydarov, 2020). The phenomenon of private tutoring as demystified by Costa, Neto-Mendes and Ventura (2008), is a structured set of activities developed outside of the school with intent to improve school performance of students. Contributing to the debate, Nagac & Guc (2014) argue that attending private tutoring centres increases overall performance of students in university entrance examination. Thus, a student who takes private tutoring has better chance of getting into a university. The results their study show is that higher income families are more likely to send their children to PTCs. Thus, they introduce the concept of educational inequality which stem from income variation within a geographical region. They concluded that students from some geographical regions have significantly lower probabilities of private tutoring attendance.

The existing literature is inconclusive as to the effect of private tutoring on student achievement because of complex interplay of multiple factors (Bray, 2014)^[12]. According to Bray (2010)^[9], this tutoring is described as shadow because it resembles a shadow of the mainstream education system in various ways. Its existence emanate and survival is dependent on mainstream education, hence it grows in size and orientation along with the main stream education, and the society's attention is often more focused on mainstream than on the shadow.

The number of tutoring businesses grew 200% – 500% in major Canadian cities during the 1990's (Davies, 2001). In

addition, home schooling has witnessed a phenomenal growth over the past 20 years (Stevens, 2001). Further, the demand for charter schools in Canada continues to grow, despite considerable political opposition. Some scholars contend that private tutoring is not always helpful and beneficial for students as it can sometimes increase mental and emotional pressure on them. For example, teachers pressure them to receive tutoring, fear of failure in assessment, fear of failing to get further study admission after matriculation examination and pressure by parents for obtaining higher scores. Although, some parents are not capable of sending their children for tutoring, they have no other choices than to send their children for tutoring. Both the teachers and students perceived that private tutoring is a pecuniary burden for parents. Parents think it is essential to receive private tutoring in order to improve their children's learning and for better performance in examinations (Stevens, 2001).

In studies carried out in 2015 and 2014 by Azam and Suajatha, parental choice determines children's admission for private tutoring. The studies conclude that there are both positive as well as negative outcome of private tutoring especially for appearing students. Development of self-confidence, advancement in learning by instantaneous feedback from the teachers and learning enrichment by peer competition are some of the positive effect. Similarly, some teachers put less effort to teach during regular classroom period, students being less attentive during classroom instruction, examination focused learning rather than learning for understanding and personal development, and extra financial burdens for family are the destructive fallout of private tutoring.

However, there is a premonition that hinged on the belief that learning and better academic performance is impossible without private tutoring, deeply rooted among students and some parents. In addition, they consider private tutoring as an indispensable component of mainstream schooling. Therefore, PTCs should be regulated to increase efficiency in teaching and learning so that students that depend on private tutoring for better grades would acquire standard training. Private tutoring is in demand at all educational stages. The results of the 2006 Ministry of Education survey in Jordan (Habashneh & Al-Naimi, 2006), show that the lowest percentage of private tutoring was in the first four elementary grades (4.3%). More students take private tutoring in

Mathematics (33.3%), followed by students studying English Language (19.9%), Science (13.7%), and Arabic (3.11%). The highest percentage of private tutoring was 53.6% among students in grade 12, followed by 12.4% among students in grade 11 (Habashneh & Al-Naimi, 2006). Also, there is a high demand among students in grade 8 and 10 to get private tutoring, 51.9% and 38.1%, respectively (Al-Farra, 2009). Such high demand for private tutoring in grade 12 is partially due to the high grades required for admission to universities.

5. Methodology

The simple random sampling technique was adopted for this study. Thus, to select the sample population the non-replacement technique was employed, each item in the sample frame was given a number on a piece of paper and thrown into a container. The researcher randomly selected participants by taking one item at a time from the container with eyes closed and the content in the container was mixed to increase the chances of all items until the required number was reached. Primary and secondary methods of data collection were used in this study. Primary data was collected through a general survey that administered structured and unstructured private tutorial perception questions. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were administered and one hundred and thirty-nine (139) were completed and retrieved. Secondary data was gathered from textbooks, journals and internet materials. Descriptive statistical method was used to analyze the data elicited from the field work using the simple percentages. Percentage values were calculated according to the numbers of responses from respondents to each question and these are presented in tables. The analysis was based on the number of questionnaires retrieved.

6. Research Population

The population of the study was divided into three categories;

- Teaching staff
- Non-teaching staff
- Senior Secondary School Students from the selected schools.

The table below show how the questionnaires were distributed and retrieved.

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution

School	Teaching Staff		Non-teaching		Student		Total	
	Admin	Rtd	Admin	Rtd	Admin	Rtd	Admin	Rtd
Emotan College	15	14	5	4	20	18	40	36
Adolor College	15	13	5	5	20	20	40	38
Nosakhare Model Educational Centre	12	11	3	3	20	19	35	33
Baptist High School (BHS)	12	12	3	2	20	18	35	32
Total	54	50	16	14	80	77	150	139

Source: Field Work 2021

The above table shows that forty (40) questionnaires were administered to Emotan College; thirty-six (36) were returned. The breakdown is thus, fifteen (15) administered to teaching staff and fourteen (14) retrieved, five (5) to non-teaching staff and four (4) returned. Also, twenty (20) were distributed to students and eighteen (18) were retrieved. Adolor College received a total of forty (40) questionnaires were administered of which thirty-eight (38) were retrieved.

Fifteen (15) of the questionnaires were distributed to teaching staff and thirteen (13) returned, the five (5) administered to non-teaching staff were returned. Again, twenty (20) were given to students and returned.

In Nosakhare Model Education Centre a total of thirty-five questionnaires were given and thirty-three (33) returned, twelve (12) distributed to members of the academic staff and eleven (11) were returned. The three (3) of given to non-

teaching staff were also retrieved while the twenty administered to students, nineteen (19) were completed and returned.

For Baptist High School (BHS), thirty-five questionnaires were apportioned of which twelve (12) administered to tutors were returned, three (3) were given to administrative staff and two (2) returned while twenty (20) were administered to learner's and eighteen (18) retrieved.

7. Area of Study

Nigeria is a federation of thirty-six (36) component units with a land mass of 923,768 km². Benin City was chosen as a case study. Benin City is the capital of Edo state with a landmass of 1,204 km². Edo State is well known as the state of education thus its prides itself as one of the states with the highest number of tertiary educational institutions. There are over 500 secondary schools in Benin City both privately and publicly owned. Four schools were selected for the study; two privately owned and two publicly owned. The selected

schools for the study were; Emotan College, Adolor College, Nosakhare Model Education Centre and Baptist High School. These schools were selected based on their staff and student strength as well as their history of surviving the system for decades.

8. Results

This section will present the data gathered through field work. The data is presented in simple percentage tables based on the response rate recorded in the questionnaires for each item. The percentage calculation was calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{No of Response}}{\text{No of Respondents}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Analysis of Respondents' Opinion According To Research Questions

Table 2: Rationale for Students' Preference of PTCs

Statements	<i>f</i>	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
	%						
Poor parental guidance	<i>f</i>	41	74	3	9	12	139
	%	29.50	52.24	2.16	6.47	8.63	100
Environmental influence	<i>f</i>	69	38	8	6	18	139
	%	49.64	27.34	5.76	4.32	12.95	100
Focus on the relevant subjects	<i>f</i>	12	93	15	17	2	139
	%	8.63	66.91	10.71	12.23	1.44	100
Escape from school protocols	<i>f</i>	46	79	2	5	7	139
	%	33.09	56.83	1.44	3.60	5.04	100
Self-promotion	<i>f</i>	82	16	6	13	22	139
	%	58.99	11.51	4.32	9.35	15.82	100
Meet other serious students.	<i>f</i>	31	23	10	52	23	139
	%	22.30	16.55	9.35	37.41	16.55	100
Provide mentorship	<i>f</i>	35	59	3	52	23	139
	%	25.18	42.45	2.16	37.41	16.55	100

Source: Field Work (2021)

The data above shows that 29.5% strongly agreed that poor parental guidance account for why senior secondary school students join PTCs. 52.24% ticked the agreed column. 2.16% were uncertain, 6.47% disagreed while 8.63% strongly disagreed.

From the table above, 49.64% of the sample strongly agreed that environmental influence is appears to influence students' decision to join PTC. 27.34% agreed. 5.67% were uncertain; 4.32% respondents disagreed while 12.95% disagreed strongly.

Table 2 reveals that 8.63% of the sampled population agreed strongly that students sometimes opt for PTCs because they focus on the relevant subjects required by the admission board. 66.91% agreed with the statement. However, 10.71% were uncertain; 12.23% of the respondents disagreed while 1.44% strongly agreed.

The table above arrays that 33.09% of the respondents agreed strongly that student chooses PTCs to escape from

conventional school protocols. However, 56.83 % agreed, 1.44% was uncertain, 3.60% disagreed and 5.04% strongly disagreed.

In addition, some students move to PTCs after failure to secure the desired cut off for promotion thus 58.99% strongly agreed with the assertion, 4.32% agreed, 9.35% were uncertain while disagreed 15.82% strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, the table reveals that 22.30% agreed strongly that students sometimes choose PTC over conventional school because they intend to meet like-minded students. Thus 16.55% respondents agreed and 9.35% were uncertain. However, 37.41% disagreed and 16.55% strongly disagreed.

The table above shows that 25.18% of the sample strongly agreed that PTCs provided better mentorship for students who intend to further their education. 42.45% of the respondent agreed 2.16% were uncertain, 37.41% disagreed while strongly disagreed.

Table 3: Reason(s) for the Establishment of Private Tutorial Centres

Statements	f	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
	%						
JAMB candidates	f	18	111	2	5	3	139
	%	12.95	79.86	1.44	3.60	2.16	100
Complementary role to schools	f	15	12	16	81	15	139
	%	10.79	8.63	11.51	58.27	10.79	100
GCE and those who failed some papers in their SSCE	f	16	76	1	19	27	139
	%	11.51	54.68	0.72	13.67	19.42	100
Provide good enrolment centres for SSCE students	f	2	5	18	49	68	139
	%	1.44	3.60	12.95	35.25	48.92	100

Source: Field Work (2021)

Table 3 reveals that PTCs were originally established to cater for the needs of JAMB candidates. Thus, 12.95% respondents strongly agreed, 79.86% agreed. 1.44% of the respondents were uncertain, 3.60% disagreed while 3.60% disagreed strongly.

The table illustrate that 10.79% of the sampled population strongly agreed that PTCs is established to play a supplementary role to schools, 8.63% agreed, 11.51% were uncertain, 58.27% disagreed while 10.79% disagreed strongly.

The data in table 3 confirms that 11.51% of the respondents

strongly agreed that PTCs were established to meet the need of GCE candidates and students who were unable to get the required credits for tertiary admission. 54.68% agreed with the statement on the reason for the establishment of PTCs, 0.72% respondent was uncertain, 13.67% disagreed while 19.42% strongly disagreed.

Also from the table 1.44% respondents strongly agreed that PTCs assist students to enroll to schools that have not been blacklisted by the examination bodies. 3.60% agreed, 12.95% were uncertain

Table 4: The Activities of PTCs and Its Impact on Post-Elementary Learning in Benin Metropolis

Statements	f	SA	A	UN	D	SD	Total
	%						
Drop in enrollment of WASSCE and SSCE NECO in schools with more students at lower levels.	f	25	92	12	6	4	139
	%	17.99	66.19	8.63	4.32	2.88	100
Increase in the number of malpractice centres.	f	15	83	6	17	18	139
	%	10.79	59.71	4.32	12.23	12.95	100
Insubordination to rules and regulation	f	79	42	0	5	4	139
	%	56.83	30.22	0	3.60	2.88	100
Poor attitude towards learning and assignment.	f	35	48	13	27	16	139
	%	25.18	34.53	9.35	19.42	11.51	100
Bending of rules to suit students desire in order to retain them	f	45	63	3	9	19	139
	%	32.37	45.32	2.16	6.47	13.67	100
Proliferation of Schools established without strong rules and regulation.	f	25	42	13	29	30	139
	%	17.99	30.22	9.35	20.86	21.58	100

Source: Field Work (2021)

The data in table 4 show that 17.99% of the population asserts that PTCs has led to drop in the enrollment of WASSCE and SSCE NECO in schools with more students' lower levels. 66.19% agreed, 8.63% were uncertain, 4.32% disagreed while and 2.88% disagreed.

Again, it could be observed that 10.79% of the respondents agreed strongly that PTCs has led to increase in the number of malpractice centres, 59.71% agreed with the statement, 4.32% were uncertain, 12.23% ticked the disagreed option and 12.95% strongly disagreed.

In the same manner, 56.83% respondents strongly agreed that PTCs has led to the insubordination to school rules and regulations by students. 30.22% agreed with the statement, no respondent was uncertain, 3.60% disagreed and 2.88% strongly agreed.

The data also shows that 25.18% respondents strongly agreed that PTCs has made some students to exhibit poor learning attitude and are nonchalant towards assignments. 9.35% however were uncertain; 19.42% disagreed while 11.51% strongly disagreed

Table 4 reveals that 32.37% of the sampled population strongly agreed that PTC has made some schools to bend

their rules to retain more students. 45.32% agreed, 2.16% were uncertain 6.49% disagreed and 13.67% disagreed strongly.

In the same way, 17.99% respondents strongly agreed that there has been proliferation of schools without strong rules and regulations. 30.22% agreed with the assertion, 9.35% were uncertain, 20.86% disagreed while 21.58% strongly disagreed.

9. Discussion

Students' movement from school to PTCs has become a norm in Benin City. Thus, there's the notion that to make satisfactory grades in assessment test, it is expedient for one to move from school to PTC. This overwhelming phenomenon is not only supported by uneducated parents and guardians but also educated parents even amongst parents who are teachers in both public and private schools. Although some students that have been promoted to the terminal class also join the bandwagon, however such movement is common amongst students in their penultimate year.

PTCs in Benin are classified into two distinct group; the sciences and art/social sciences. However, some PTCs

organize classes for both science and humanities. Some are best known for their records in either practical sciences or the social sciences. With branches spread over populated areas of the city, most PTCs cluster round the Ugbowo axis. Morning and afternoon sessions are organized. Thus students who had switched to the PTCs also enjoy the privilege of attending class in the morning like their counterparts in the formal school system.

A clear distinction between the PTCs and the established schools is that while most of the schools especially privately-owned prioritize the nine subjects for the enrollment of their students, PTCs are organized in terms of the five credits needed for admission purpose. This has made them and their students more focused on the assessment test organized by WAEC, NECO or JAMB than building all aspects of the students which formal school represent.

Over the years, some have been able to transform to orthodox school with pupils and students enrolled in various classes and become government approved as well as WAEC and NECO accredited centres. However, they still hold tenaciously to the PTCs that gave them the platform to emerge as a school. These PTCs were initially setup to meet the need of students preparing for JAMB and GCE and over time have transform to centres where schools with few students shop for external students to meet up with the examination bodies requirements in terms of the minimum number of students required for enrollment.

Some operators and tutors of these PTCs are well educated even up to PhD level. One common characteristic among PTCs is that some of the operators and teaches up to three subjects while some teachers teach on part-time basis Most of the PTCs have been able to make parents as well as students see them as the master of the game employing effective image management strategies. Thus to remain relevant, they display photographs of the laurels of ex-students are displayed close to the centres for passersby to see and possibly recommend them.

Another category of PTCs that was found in Benin City are those that organize classes for students in tertiary institution especially 100 level courses in the sciences and GSTs. Under this type, some of the lectures are organized outside the campuses while others are within the campuses with close alignment with the class representatives that help them market their services. One thing that is common to the system is that it makes it look like school is all about passing examinations. No doubt some of these students come out with excellent grades but are unable to survive the university system because they have been trained on how to pass examination without being transformed by the knowledge they ought to acquire.

10. Conclusion

The study was carried to ascertain how the operation of PTCs impact on the quality of secondary education in Benin Metropolis. The paper argued that the operation of PTCs has become a norm thus, parents and students alike have made it a necessary requirement for passing external examinations. Based on the findings, the paper therefore recommends the following;

1. That PTCs be regulated to curb the incessant movements of students from school as well as examine the curriculum used to ensure that the three domains of learning are well captured and implemented during the teaching and learning process.

2. Schools should not be allowed to register external students. Thus, students who are unable to make their papers should enroll their SSCE as private candidates.
3. The ministry of education should keep close tab on all students under their watch to checkmate their movement from one school to another for enrolment especially senior secondary students.
4. During certificate examinations, schools in densely populated area should be closely monitored as most students who abandoned their school are enrolled in such schools.
5. The ministry of education and the school board should not be in a hurry to issue school licenses to schools, rather some should be put on probation until they are proven to be effective educators who are ready to build society and not just about profit making.

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