



A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MISSION SCHOOL IN NIGERIA AND ITS PSYCHO-SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS

Jacob Omedeⁱ

PhD, Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education, Kogi State University,
Anyigba, Nigeria

Abstract:

This study examined the operations of the past and present mission schools in Nigeria by comparing cost of training to know whether it was cheaper with the past mission schools than the present mission schools. The study further examined variables such as adequacy of infrastructures, quality and quantity of personnel, discipline of staff and students as well as the goals or objectives that were and are the driving forces of these schools in order to determine where and how they differ and the direction of the difference. Two hundred respondents through purpose sampling techniques were used to answer the research questions. The instrument used to collect data was a twenty one (21) item questionnaire divided into five sections, A-E. The instrument was personally administered on the subjects and the return rate was 100 percent. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistical tools and the results obtained included among the following that: it was cheaper to train in the past mission schools than the present mission schools in Nigeria, that discipline of staff and students were higher in past mission schools than the present mission schools and that the past mission schools had more qualified personnel and produced more qualitative and disciple students than the present. Recommendations that were based on the findings were that the present mission schools particularly, the universities should reduce their fees to allow more accessibility and affordability, increase award of scholarship to the promising and indigent students as well as that mission schools should not lose sight of what they existed for; they should use their benevolence for soul winning rather than driving people away from the Christian faith by being callous and exploitative.

Keywords: past, present, mission school, tuition fee, discipline, less privileged, neighborliness

ⁱ Correspondence: email jacobomede@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Ownership of schools at almost all the levels of educational system in Nigeria is between the public sector and the private sector (Omede, 2015). The Federal, States and Local Governments establish schools from the Basic to the Post Basic levels. Schools owned by these three tiers of government are known as public schools while the ones by licensed individuals, organizations or mission bodies are referred to as private schools.

Education is described as an instrument for national development and social change (FRN, 2009). It is very crucial to national transformation. Consequently, the inability of government to expand schools to accommodate the teeming youths and the frequent closure of public schools due to protracted industrial actions as well as the social and economic benefits inherent in owning schools paved ways for private participation in education in Nigeria.

But the reasons for establishing mission schools in the early days of missionary activities in Nigeria may be different. Mission participation in education in Nigeria that dated back to the pre-independence era was principally for soul winning as any other interest was ancillary. The Christian Missionary Society (CMS) Grammar School for instance, that was established in June, 1859 had as part of its plan to develop locally educated elites to help promote the Christian faith (Abati, 2009). Mission schools were a strategy adopted by early missionaries to get converts into Christianity (Omoloye and Opoola, 2012).

Apart from the CMS, there are other Christian bodies such as the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM), the Qua Iboe Mission, the Christian Missionaries in Many Land (CMML), The Methodist mission and Anglican mission as well as some relatively newer mission bodies as the Redeemed, and the Living faith to mention these few, have had to establish schools in many geo-political zones of this country. In the eastern part of kogi state for example, schools such as Ochaja Secondary schools Ochaja, Our Lady of School, Anyigba, CMML Secondary School, Anyigba, St. Charles College, Ankpa, St. Peter Secondary school, Idah, are schools established by missions. These schools in their hay days were very dignified, respected and held in very high esteem. The products from these schools until recently were men of reputable intelligence and sufficient morality. In hopes of seeing quality of education improve; Oguntola (2012) noted that Lagos became the first state that returned hundreds of seized mission schools to their owners.

Mission schools in the past were reputed for moral and academic discipline, low cost training, championed the education of orphans and children with indigent parents as well as those who were regarded as outcasts who could translate into nothing meaningfully. The managers of these schools were so mindful of the spiritual growth

and development of students and arranged teaching and learning that could help develop and sustain this in them. It is not an exaggeration that certificated products of these schools were mostly found worthy in character and in learning. Teachers were not only qualified academically, they were as well developed morally and were practically exemplary in good conduct.

It is regrettable, that many mission schools in Nigeria now seem to operate practically in antithesis. They tend to provide education at exorbitant prices. The cost of education is so abysmally high and they run schools as profit-oriented businesses than a social service that they ought to be (Omede, 2015). Tuition fees at church-run primary schools according to Oguntola (2012) ranges from 15,000 Naira to 50,000 Naira per term. Yes, their facilities may be okay, but as a church, they should have been more humanitarian than being profit minded to exemplify the life of Jesus Christ whose interest it is to better the lots of humanities at no economic cost. For instance, He brought dead Lazarus back to life at no monetary cost (John 11:1-44, fed 5000 people without any person paying a penny (Matthew 14:13-21), healed the woman with the issue of blood for twelve years (Luke 8:43-48), the sick man by the pool of Bethesda for thirty eight years (John 5:1-15). None of these people paid any money. What about His disciples who sat under His tutelage-the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)-how many of them paid tuition fee?

Characteristically, the church of this age seems to be more materialistically minded than they are spiritual. They put much emphasis on money and some had faked miracles to draw membership because the larger the congregation, holding other variables constant, the fatter the income that comes into the church. Many of the Mega churches have drifted into education ventures because of its viability economically. Most of these mega churches have universities namely, Covenant, Caritas, Salem, Crawford, etc. but tuition fees in most of these mission universities are exorbitant relatively. The coming into the educational sector of this country by the missionaries is a very commendable one. Mission schools provide employment to a reasonable number of people, compliments efforts of Federal and State governments in providing admissions to many applicants and that the missionary orientation of the schools would minimize cultism and moral decadence among others (Omoloye and Opoola, 2012).

Therefore, it is good that mission schools exist but they are exorbitant for many average Nigerians. The schools are not for the poor, they are too elitist as Bola in Oguntola (2012) noted. The situation is so bad that not up to thirty percent (30%) of the church members through whom finances that established these schools were raised (offerings, tithes, pledges, donations and levies) who have the willingness to train their children in these schools can afford to do this. Many church families complain they cannot afford to train their children (Oguntola, 2012). There seemed to be a massive shift of interest or focus from what the mission schools of the past held as goals and

what the mission schools of the present is pursuing. It is in the light of this conception that this study attempted to compare the activities of the past and present mission schools in Nigeria.

2. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the activities of the past and present mission schools in Nigeria to see where and how they differ. Specifically, this study verified whether:

1. The cost of training in the past mission schools in Nigeria was cheaper than the present mission schools
2. The past mission schools in Nigeria had adequate infrastructures more than the present mission schools
3. Discipline was enforced in the past more than the present mission schools in Nigeria
4. The past and present mission schools in Nigeria differ in the quality and quantity of personnel employed
5. The goals or objectives of the past and present mission schools in Nigeria differ.

3. Research Questions

The following questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent will the mean score of respondents indicate that cost of training was cheaper in the past than in the present mission schools in Nigeria?
2. What will the mean score of respondents indicate on an instrument that compares the adequacy of infrastructural facilities between the past and present mission schools in Nigeria?
3. What will the mean score of respondents indicate on an instrument that compares enforcements of discipline between the administrators of the past and present mission schools in Nigeria?
4. To what extent will the mean score of respondents show that the quality and quantity of personnel employed into the services of past and present mission schools in Nigeria differ?
5. What will be the direction of the opinion of respondents as shown by their mean score on an instrument that suggests that the goals and objectives of past and present mission schools in Nigeria differ?

4. Methods

This was a survey research design. This study juxtaposed the mission schools of both the past and the present in Nigeria by obtaining data from the sampled section of the public. The population comprised all married adults in Kogi East who were above forty (40) years and that may have had the privilege of receiving education in mission schools or those that had trained any of their children or who were currently training their children in mission schools. Included in the population too were parents above forty (40) years who were neither in any of the two categories stated above but were old enough to understand the nature of operations of these missions schools-past and present. Through purposive sampling technique therefore, two hundred (200) parents were sampled for this study. The instrument for this study was designed by the researcher. The instrument was divided into five (5) sections A-E. Section A fielded questions on cost of training, questions in sections B, C, D, and E, were on infrastructures, discipline, quality and quantity of staff and then the goals or objectives of the schools respectively. A total of twenty one (21) items were included in the instrument and the instrument was a four (4) response rate likert type. The instrument was face validated by two colleagues in the department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, Kogi State University, Anyigba. The instrument was administered personally by the researcher and collected back immediately on completion. The return rate was one hundred percent (100%). Mean and standard deviation statistical tools were used to analyze the data. Any mean score of 2.0 and above is accepted to be positive indicating a difference in the item between the two variables being examined-past and present mission schools and that the positive score is in favor of the past mission schools. Conversely, when the score is below 2.0, it is negative and is in favor of the present mission school.

5. Analyses of Data

The data collected for this study were analyzed according to the research questions raised.

5.1 Research question one

To what extent will the mean score of respondents indicate that cost of training was cheaper in the past than in the present mission schools in Nigeria?

Items 1-5 (i.e. section A) of the instrument sought answers to this question and the responses of the respondents are shown on table one.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses on whether cost of training was cheaper in the past than in the present mission schools in Nigeria

S/No	Item	- X	SD
1	Cheaper to train in the past mission schools than the present mission schools	3.5	0.79
2	Past mission schools charged lower school fees than the present mission schools	3.8	0.53
3	Past mission schools were not as profit oriented than the present mission schools	3.4	0.73
4	Past mission schools gave more scholarship to indigent and vulnerable students than the present mission schools	3.2	0.78
5	The managers of past mission schools sympathized and empathized with the economic situation of their indigent students than managers of the present mission schools	3.3	0.88
Grand mean and SD		3.44	0.74

N= 200; Source: Field Survey, 2016

The result of the data presented on Table 1, shows that it was cheaper to receive education in the past mission schools than the present mission schools in Nigeria ($X=3.44, >2.0$)

5.2 Research question two

What will the mean score of respondents indicate on an instrument that compares the adequacy of infrastructural facilities between the past and present mission schools in Nigeria?

Items 6-10 (i.e. section B) of the instruments provided answers to this question and the responses are shown on Table two.

Table 2: Mean and SD responses of respondents on infrastructural adequacy of the past and present mission schools in Nigeria

S/No	Item	- X	SD
6	Past mission schools had more classrooms than the present mission schools	2.0	0.79
7	Past mission schools had more hostel accommodation than the present mission schools	2.0	0.85
8	Past mission schools supplied regular electricity than the present mission schools	2.2	0.91
9	Laboratories of past mission schools were more equipped than the laboratories of the present mission schools	2.2	0.95
10	Libraries of the past mission schools had more relevant books than the present mission schools	2.5	0.98
Grand mean and SD		2.18	0.89

N =200; Source: Field Survey; 2016

Although the grand mean of 2.18 is slightly above the acceptable mean of 2.0, it still means that the respondents affirmed that past mission schools had adequate infrastructural facilities more than the present mission schools. The reason for this may

not be farfetched as past mission schools only admitted within the available carrying capacity since they were not as profit driven as the present mission schools.

5.3 Research question three

What will the mean score of respondents indicate on an instrument that compares enforcements of discipline between the administrators of the past and present mission schools in Nigeria?

Six (6) items, 11-16 (i.e. Section C) of the instrument provided the answer to this question and the result of the analysis is reflected on Table three.

Table 3: Mean and SD responses of respondents on whether there are differences in the enforcement of discipline between the past and present mission schools in Nigeria

S/No	Item	- X	SD
11	Students of past mission schools were more disciplined than students of the present mission schools	3.7	0.61
12	Staff of past mission schools were more disciplined than those of the present	3.4	0.78
13	Cultism, rape and examination malpractice were not as common with past mission schools as they are with the present mission schools	3.6	0.71
14	Immorality was not as common among the staff and students of past mission schools as it is with the present mission schools	3.4	0.76
15	Monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning were more practiced in the past mission schools than the present	3.3	0.78
16	Past mission schools had lower Student population than the present mission schools	3.2	0.95
	Grand mean and SD	3.43	0.77

N = 200; Source: Survey, 2016

The result of analysis on Table 3 showed that the past mission schools had more disciplined staff and students than the present mission schools in Nigeria ($X = 3.43, > 2.0$).

5.4 Research question four

To what extent will the mean score of respondents show that the quality and quantity of personnel employed into the services of past and present mission schools in Nigeria differ?

The questions that sought answer to this question were contained in Section D of the instrument and the result of the analysis is shown on Table four.

Table 4: Mean and SD responses of the respondents on whether the personnel employed by past and present mission schools differ in quality and quantity

S/No	Item	- X	SD
17	Past mission schools had more qualitative personnel and in their right proportions than the present mission schools	2.9	0.92
18	Graduates of past mission schools tended to be more qualitative than those of the present mission schools	3.2	0.91
	Grand mean and SD	3.05	0.92

N = 200; Source: Survey, 2016

The Grand mean of 3.05 indicated that the quality and quantity of personnel as well as that of the graduates in the past and present mission schools differ historically in Nigeria. The past mission schools had more qualified personnel and in their right proportions than the present mission schools. In addition, graduates of past mission schools were adjudged to be more qualitative than those of the present mission schools in Nigeria.

5.5 Research question five

What will be the direction of the opinion of respondents as shown by their mean score on an instrument that suggests that the goals and objectives of past and present mission schools in Nigeria differ?

Three items on the instrument, items 19-21 (i.e. Section E) provided the needed answer to this question and the result of the analysis is presented on Table five.

Table 5: Mean and SD responses of respondents to whether or not the goals and objectives of past and present mission schools in Nigeria differ

S/No	Item	- X	SD
19	Managers of past mission schools had concern for the spiritual growth and development of their students than managers of the present mission schools	3.3	0.80
20	Managers of past mission schools saw education as a humanitarian service rather than profit-oriented business than managers of the present mission schools	3.4	0.73
21	The past mission schools provided equal educational opportunities for both the children of the rich and the poor than the present mission school	3.4	0.74
	Grand mean and SD	3.37	0.76

N = 200; Source: Survey, 2016

The Grand mean of 3.37 indicated that what the past and present mission schools pursue in Nigeria differ in practice. Even if these goals may not differ in principle, they differ in practice because the present mission schools are no longer seen to be pursuing these goals and objectives vigorously. They are more profit-oriented (X= 3.4) and so less

insensitive to cries of the poor masses wishing to train in these institutions because of their relative quality or standard.

6. Summary of findings

The following are the summary of findings of this study:

1. It is more expensive in Nigeria to train in the present mission schools than the past mission schools ($X = 3.44, > 2.0$).
2. Infrastructural facilities were more adequate in past mission schools than the present mission schools in Nigeria ($X = 2.18, > 2.0$).
3. The staff and students of past mission schools in Nigeria were said to be more disciplined than those of the present mission schools ($X = 3.43, > 2.0$).
4. The quality and quantity of personnel employed by the past mission school administrators in Nigeria were higher than those employed by the present mission school administrators ($X = 3.05, > 2.0$).
5. The past mission schools practically pursued the goals and objectives that established mission schools than the present mission schools that are seen to be driven more by economic benefits as evidenced by exorbitant tuition charges and putting less emphasis on developing the relationship between man and His creator ($X = 3.37, > 2.0$).

7. Discussion

This study was driven by the desire to reposition the current mission schools in Nigeria in view of the contributions of educational institutions to national economic growth and development. The findings of this study showed that the operations of past and present mission schools differ widely in cost of training, discipline of staff and students, infrastructural provisions, quality and quantity of personnel as well as in their goals and objectives. Mission schools were established in the past primarily to make converts of other religions to Christianity (Abati, 2009; Omoloye & Opoola, 2012). Other functions though not de-emphasized, were however, ancillaries. And because soul winning was their main goal, education was provided at little or no cost, scholarships were offered to promising but indigent children particularly, the orphans, the poor and the less privileged within the community where the school was situated.

The past mission schools were again renowned for quality assurance and control. In fact, past mission schools were characteristically known for low cost, high quality and high moral standards. Admissions into past mission schools were strictly based on the number of available facilities. Students were not admitted beyond the carrying

capacity of the institution hence, available infrastructural facilities were adequate more so that, they were not profit-driven.

But today, many Nigerians are lamenting the high cost of training in many mission schools particularly, the universities (Omoloye & Opoola, 2012; and Oguntola, 2012). The present administrators of many mission schools, colleges and universities in Nigeria now run them principally as business ventures and so are much concerned about derived economic benefits rather than being the medium for improving first, the spiritual wellness of the students and then the social and economics. Running mission schools like private enterprises and charging exorbitant fees could have psycho-social and spiritual implications that will oppose what the church supposedly should exist for. Expectedly, mission schools are to help redistribute wealth in the society by upgrading the statuses of the poor, the orphans and the less privileged. According to Adeboye (2017), *“there is no other way”* that a Christian could *“show the world the true nature of Christ without identifying with the challenges of people. Jesus was compassionate toward all those He met who were in need. How can you claim to be a Christian when you live in affluence but do not bother about what happens to the man beside you.”* A church that has lost concern for sinners, assisting the poor, the less privileged and those termed outcasts and which is not thinking of how to rehabilitate them for better life in time and eternity has lost its relevance and purpose for existence. Apart, the psychosocial and spiritual implications of this unchristian attitude of some of these churches could be disastrous on the society as will soon be examined.

7.1 Psycho-social and spiritual implications of high tuition fees by mission schools in Nigeria

When mission schools charge exorbitant fees, the following implications will be unavoidable:

- a) **A further widening of gap between the rich and the poor:** The gap existing currently in the society between the haves and the have-nots is so wide that the concern of many people is how to close rank. Education is one of the ways that this gap could be narrowed. The children of the poor are largely disadvantaged in terms of access to qualitative education. At the primary and secondary school levels as well as the tertiary, children of the poor cannot afford the fees that these private institutions including the mission schools charge. Largely, they are found in public schools, colleges and universities characterized with incessant strikes, inadequate infrastructures, divided loyalties and rampant cases of indiscipline. Sometimes, they are disadvantaged in seeking admissions to public universities because they do not have the connections. It is obvious that products of mission schools have better advantages over their counterparts from other private and public universities if not in other areas but in character training and

development which is most important. The children of the privileged because, they have the money, they train in these universities and this puts them perpetually ahead of the children of the less privileged. Should mission schools support this?

- b) Increasing the feeling of inferiority complex:** Another implication of charging exorbitant fees by mission schools is the breeding of inferiority complex among children of the less privileged who like the children of the privileged would have desired to train in such schools adjudged as good. Mission schools do not close down because of workers' strike, non-payment of salaries to staff and students' riots or agitations. Such universities are the desire of many including the less privileged in the society if fees were moderate and affordable to many.
- c) Increasing the tendencies for social and economic crimes:** The children of the poor and less privileged who are left behind in the society because they were short of the requirements or demands for qualitative education, good jobs, and improved life, conversely will enlist as prostitutes, drug traffickers, suicide bombers, political thugs, armed robbers, kidnappers or terrorists. Take the statistics of the road side cobblers, mechanics, drawers of water and hewers of woods as well as hawkers of food on the streets and see if any of them is a child of a professor, vice chancellor, army generals (serving or retired), and justices of courts as well as medical doctors. If there are, they are insignificantly few. Because there is no vacuum in nature, they must live either by hook or crook hence they take up menial jobs while some will survive as miscreants.
- d) Increasing the likelihood for poverty, sicknesses and diseases:** Illiteracy or paucity of relevant knowledge could breed poverty and likely health related sicknesses and diseases such as high blood pressure, ulcer, anemia, poor brain development, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other related sexually transmitted infections (STI). Anger, hatred and inability to eat balanced diet and to also live in clean and healthy environments are most times directly related poverty as well as lack of qualitative education which again could be due to high cost of training.
- e) Tendency to promote bad neighborliness:** Christians are charged to be good neighbors, *"Which now of these three, thinkest thou was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, go and do thou likewise"* (Luke 10:36-37). All through the earthly life of Jesus Christ, He went about healing the sick, delivering the oppressed, feeding the hungry and bringing the dead back to life at no cost. Matthew 10:8 instructed the Christians to *"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give."* Again, the word of God says in Isaiah 55:1 *"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat;*

yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." Merchandizing God's grace is contrary to the life style of Jesus Christ who is the founder of the Christian faith and for anybody to think of exploiting people contradicts the teaching of Jesus and is capable of keeping people away from the Christian faith.

8. Conclusion

The mission organization that is privileged to establish school, college or university should be grateful to God and see this as an opportunity to practically demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to humanity that He (Jesus) lived and died for. Education is central to both human and national development hence, the quest by the government of any nation for her citizens to be educated. But qualitative education is expensive to both governments and individuals, not everybody can afford it. Most mission schools provide qualitative education like some other private institutions but unlike the privately owned, they are not to be as expensive and exploitative. They are to be Godly and fix reasonable and affordable fees. It will not speak well of mission schools if average Nigerians who desire their services could not afford to pay for them. Particularly worrisome is the fact that children of some members of such church organizations who provided the fund that established the school still could not afford the fees to train their wards in the school they established, this is ridiculous. This behavior was not known of the past mission schools in Nigeria.

9. Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward to improve accessibility to and affordability of training in mission schools, particularly the mission universities in Nigeria:

1. Tuition fees should be reduced significantly below what obtains currently by the managers of mission schools. There is hardly any established mission university in Nigeria that charges a tuition fee of less than 500,000 Naira in a session in the same economy where most public universities do not charge up to 100,000 Naira. Particularly worrisome is the fact that these huge amounts of money that these mission universities charge do not include feeding for the students. Mission universities unlike other private universities should think of either breaking even at the end of every session or make minimal but not super normal profits as obtains currently.
2. Mission schools are not to be run as business ventures but as a social and humanitarian service. It should be seen as a religious obligation to the people to help improve their lives and that of the society, immediate and remote. One of

the responsibilities of churches to their immediate communities is social works. Nigerians had in the past benefitted from the magnanimity of the pioneer missionaries in the areas of free medical service, free education, construction of community roads and bridges. Current mission agencies should tow this line because *“to whom much is given, much is required.”*

3. Mission schools should operate as a model in all ramifications. They are to serve as models of good administration, qualitative teaching and learning, moral and academic discipline and in charging reasonable and affordable tuition to the larger percentages of people in the middle and low income brackets. In fact, mission schools are supposed to be cheaper and more humanitarian than even public schools. It is until this is realized that the message of the church as the “light bearer” could be communicated more meaningfully and with more impact.
4. Mission schools’ administrators should increase award of scholarship to promising students particularly those of their institutions that are withdrawing or seeking transfer to public schools due to inability to cope with the tuition of the institution as a result of loss of job or death of their sponsors or caregivers. This should be done to exemplify the Lord Jesus Christ the head of the church.
5. Mission schools should not lose sight of what they exist for. The primary purpose is to go through the institution to evangelize the world by reaching the students who have had the privilege of admission into the institution. Every other responsibility though not de-emphasized, is an ancillary. The affordable fees they charge, the discipline of staff and students that they model, unrivalled quality teaching and learning as well as the conducive and beautiful learning environment that they maintain collaborate to preach convincingly the message of love and salvation that only could be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Doing the contrary makes the message to be lost as managers of mission schools will be seen as fraudsters and cheats because of their exploitative tendencies.
6. Administrators of mission schools are not to be afraid of how the school could be funded and quality sustained if they charge low fees. It is an established fact that any work to be done for God if done in God’s way will never lack the resources needed for its sustenance. *“Silver and gold belong to God”* including the *“cattle on the thousand hills.”*

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