

EXTENT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH-EAST OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Given the various challenges confronting governments and educational administrators in the management of schools, and the need to look for alleviating alternatives, this study investigated the extent of community participation in managing public secondary schools in South East States. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study, while data were collected from a sample of 500 principals, using a 15-item researcher designed questionnaire. A stratified proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw the study sample, while descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the collected data. Major findings reveal that communities participate to a “great extent” in funding many school projects and also in providing various infrastructural facilities. Accordingly, it was recommended, among other things, that organizers and mobilizers of community support for education, should focus on the various areas communities have shown interest.

Keywords: *educational administrators, community participation, public secondary schools*

I. Introduction

Education is recognized as the cornerstone for sustainable development. Education is a veritable instrument for achieving economic development and social transformation of every society. Fartig (2016) regards education as a social responsibility that every citizen should enjoy as a member of a country and that everyone has a right to education. FRN (2012), also accepted education as an instrument that brings even and orderly development for a country. Senge (2006) opined that socio-economic development of any nation hinges on its level of educational development. The author further stressed that any country that fails to educate her citizens is playing with the level of her development; hence education is regarded as an investment which must yield high dividends.

Consequently, Ogundele (2014) noted that Nigeria as a country is faced with a lot of crises in her educational industry. These crises had been attributed to inadequate funding, poor and irregular payment of

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salaries, students population explosion, poor teachers' job satisfaction, inadequate supply of educational facilities and needed equipment for effective teaching and learning process. The result of this brings about low quality and falling standard of education in our secondary school system. The excuse of the government is that government alone cannot take up total responsibilities of education that it has to be paid for all and sundry.

Due to inability of government to attend to these issues, appraisal of community participation in the management of public secondary schools becomes necessary. Appraisal is an expert estimation of quality, quantity and other characteristics of someone or something. According to Bondessio (2015), appraisal is the act of assessing an expert or official value of something for the achievement of goals and objectives. In this context, appraisal is used to determine the level of community participation in the management of public secondary schools in South East of Nigeria.

Community could be viewed in terms of all the people or group of people living together within a specific geographical area such as a village, a town, a city, a neighbourhood or even a whole state. Community when conceived in this way is used in two senses. First, as social unit, second, as geographical unit. This implies that such groups of people are closely joined together and organized. This togetherness among the people spells out a common feeling of community (Oghuvgu, 2017) the researcher further perceived community as a people or group of people who share common interest in functions such as farming groups or culture, religion etc. this group may not include everyone within the geographical area or boundary, but who have a particular interest or functions in common. Ugwu (2010) described a community as people obliged to one another not because of birth, race, sex, religion but people bound to one another and governed by shared trust, value, specific words for common interest. Throughout history, the relationship between the school and the community has been a matter of major concern. Yusuf (2016) opined that the school and the community should have mutual relationship to foster cordial existence. The researcher further stated that the community where the school is situated forms a focal point of assessing the activities of the school and make necessary contributions towards its growth. The community through a healthy working relationship with the school management and the entire school community would get to know the school strengths and weaknesses (Obiechina, 2015).

Community participation in the management of secondary schools has become necessary as a result of lack of proper management, lack of funding, facilities and equipment, poor learning environment, inadequate provision of teaching materials, problem of indiscipline and proper supervision of instructions. The community has immense input in the funding of educational projects such as endowment funding, sponsoring of projects and Parents' Teachers Association (PTA) involvement (Okoro and Okoro, 2012). All these indicate that the community and the schools exist side by side and always being in existence as a pre-existing condition for effective school management. The most involvement of parents in school matters in most of the communities is usually through Parents Teachers' Association. Through the Parents Teachers' Association (PTA), with a few exceptions, the traditional role of the PTA has been the making of financial contributions (Ugwu, 2010).

The participation of communities in the management of public secondary schools in South East has gone beyond mere financial contributions. On educational development generally some parts of the country have witnessed increased involvement of the whole communities. Some communities in Nigeria have established secondary schools through their own initiatives as the east in Ohaozara and Afikpo in Ebonyi State. The Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) helps in the general development of schools along with other community members

by providing schools with classrooms, dormitory blocks, staff quarters, Science laboratories and equipment, electric plant generators, school vans, libraries, books and classroom equipment (Ogbuvbu and Iyeke, 2017). For management to be effective, there are various human and material resource that must be harnessed and utilized for the achievement of set organization goals. Secondary school management entails working with and through teachers, non-teaching staff-students and the general community to get things done effectively.

State of the Problem

The provision of education is primarily the responsibility of government at all levels (Local Government, State and Federal). Nigeria as a country is faced with a lot of crises in her educational industry. These crises have been attributed to inadequate funding, poor and irregular payment of salaries, Students' population explosion, poor teachers' job satisfaction, poor learning environment and inadequate supply of educational facilities for effective teaching and learning. The result is the low and fallen standard of education in our secondary school system. The flimsy excuse of the government is that, it cannot take up total responsibilities of education alone; that it has to be paid for by all and sundry. These problems have become a recurring decimal in the history of Nigerian education.

Unfortunately, most school principals do not allow communities to participate in the management of their schools because of selfishness, poor public image making and rusty behaviour as they seem to be out of tune with changes. The home therefore, provides the foundation on which the school builds, but some parents believe that as soon as the child starts to go to school, they can hand over their training to the teachers. For many years, budgets of education has been under enormous pressure as a result of declining budgetary allocations and increase in enrolment. The effect of this on education management is better imagined. In spite of the efforts of different donor countries in providing assistance for education, the system still lacks the necessary fund, human and material resources to implement the various programmes. This situation calls for the involvement of many stakeholders in the funding and management of education. The communities have a role to play in this direction.

Purpose

1. Determine the extent of community participation in funding public secondary schools in South Eastern States.
2. Ascertain the extent of community participation in the provision of infrastructural facilities in South Eastern States.
3. Identify the strategies for motivating community members for effective school management.

Research Questions

The following research question will guide the study:

1. To what extent do communities participate in funding public secondary school in South East of Nigeria?
2. To what extent do communities participate in the provision of infrastructural facilities in South East States?
3. What are the strategies for motivating community members for effective school management?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide the study and will be tested at 0.5 level of significance.

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural teachers and urban teachers on the participation of communities in the funding of public secondary schools in South Eastern State.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of rural teachers and urban teachers on the strategies for integrating community members for effective school management.

II. Methodology

Design of the Study

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study as the opinions of the respondent will be sought on community participation in the management of public secondary schools in South East of Nigeria. According to Ali (2012), a descriptive survey design seeks to document and describe what exists or the present status of existence of what is being investigated. Thus, with this design, both systematic and objective collection and analysis of data will be adopted to elicit responses from the respondents in order to find solution to the problem under investigation.

Area of the Study

The study will be carried out in all public secondary schools in the South East of Nigeria. The states under this zone include: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. These states are major Igbo speaking areas of Nigeria. Abia, Ebonyi and Imo states have 3 education zones each, while Anambra and Enugu states have five and six education zones, respectively. These states show a lot of features in common, including their cultural, political, educational and social orientations. They embraced formal education quite early and therefore have a lot of interest in education.

This study is an appraisal of community participation in the management of public secondary school. Thus, one would like to find out how really communities contribute towards the development of education in the area. One would observe that most secondary schools in South East are lacking vital facilities that would enhance teaching and learning, and this is affecting the effective management of secondary schools in this area. It also a common knowledge that there are dilapidated structures in the area of the study, inadequate supply of fund, lack of instructional materials, lack of laboratories and library equipment, among others and these have motivated the researcher to appraise the participation of communities in the management of public secondary schools in the area, as an effort towards the resolution of the problems of schools.

Population of the Study

The target population of this study consists all the principals in all public secondary schools. The population of the principals is 1214, made up of 708 males and 506 females. The secondary school principals will be used for the study because, as the heads of the school administration and also the head of some school-

community associations (e.g. DTAS), they are in position to validly appraise the various communities participate in school management.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for this study was consisted of 500 secondary school principals drawn from the public secondary schools in South East states (283 males and 217 females). To compose the sample, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used. The schools in each state will be first stratified into male and female categories. Within each category, 41.2% were proportionately applied to determine the total number of schools and principals to be selected for the study. the use of this percentage is informed by Nwana's (1981) position that if the population of a study is a few thousands, a 10% sample or more will do, but if a few hundreds, a 4% sample will do. Thus, a total number of 283 male and 217 female principals were obtained. Simple random sampling technique, involving balloting with replacement were used to sample the actual schools to be used for the study. Consequently all the principals in the sampled schools were used for the study. This will yield a total of 500 principals, made up of 285 males and 217 females.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection were structured questionnaire designed by the researcher, titled "Appraisal of Community Participation Questionnaire" (ACPQ). The instrument is designed to answer the four research questions posed for the study. It is made up of two parts. Sections A and B. Section A seeks for demographic information while section B contains 30 item statements arranged in 4 clusters according the research questions. Cluster A contains 9 items to elicit information on the community participation in funding secondary schools, Cluster B contains 8 items with information on the community participation in the infrastructural facilities, Cluster C contains 6 items which deals on the problems militating against effective school management in the South East States. The instrument is structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was given to two experts in Educational Administration and Planning as well as one expert in Measurement and Evaluation from Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Based on their comments and suggestions, the instrument was modified to suit the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the readability of the instrument, internal consistency reliability test using Cronbach Alpha method was used to compute estimate for the 4 clusters put together, and for each of the 4 clusters. Internal consistency was considered appropriate in order to determine the extent of homogeneity of the items in the clusters. The data used for computing the reliability indices were obtained from the questionnaire instrument randomly sampled from the 233 public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Cronbach Alpha was used to computer the reliability. The use of Cronbach Alpha method was informed by the fact that the items were not dichotomously scored. The internal consistency reliability coefficient obtained for the four clusters put together was 0.91, Cluster A had 0.84, Cluster B 0.89, Cluster C 0.91, Cluster D 0.75.

Method of Data Collection

The research with the help of ten (10) trained research assistants visited the schools concerned to administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered and collected back through direct delivery and retrieval method. This method was ensured that the administered questionnaires are returned without loss or much delay.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean score and standard deviation will be used and standard deviation will be used in answering the research questions while the hypotheses will be tested using t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The decision level will be determined by the use of criterion mean of 2.50 for clusters A, B, C and D respectively. Any mean of 2.50 and above will be accepted, while the one below 2.50 will be rejected.

III. Results

Results are presented in tables, based on the research questions and hypotheses developed for the study.

Research Question I: To what extent do communities participate in funding public secondary schools in South East of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean rating responses on the extent of communities' participation in funding public secondary schools.

S/No	Item Descriptions	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Efficient funding and provision of educational facilities	3.23	0.53	GE
2.	Provision of scholarships, grants, and monetary aids to brilliant and outstanding students	3.31	0.58	GE
3.	Efficient monetary assistance of financially incapacitated indigent students to pay their fees and other academic engagements	2.98	0.60	GE
4.	Raising of funds to establish school classroom blocks, dormitories, laboratories, etc and procurement of teaching aids	3.54	0.76	GE
5.	Issuance of prizes and awards for outstanding school performance	3.36	0.59	GE
	Grand Mean	3.28		

Key: GE = Great Extent

Data in Table 1 reveal that all the items received mean ratings above the criterion mean value of 2.50. Again, with the grand mean value of 3.28, results indicate a Great Extent level of communities' participation in funding public secondary schools in the rated items.

Research Question 2: To what extent do communities participate in the provision of infrastructural facilities in secondary school in South East States?

Table 2: Mean responses on the extent of communities' participation in the provision of infrastructural facilities in secondary schools.

S/No	Item Descriptions	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6.	Provision and construction of adequate classrooms, classroom furniture, dormitory blocks, sciences laboratories, toilets etc	3.30	0.78	GE
7.	Construction of staff quarters, school bus-stop, eating centers or cafeterias, sports stadium etc	3.38	0.57	GE
8.	Provision of electric plant generators and other electrical powering equipment and tools	2.46	0.65	GE
9.	Provision of sports recreational facilities	3.11	0.75	GE
10.	Provision of teaching and instructional materials	3.63	0.66	GE
	Grand Mean	3.17		

Key: GE = Great Extent, VGE = Very Great Extent, LE = Little Extent

As could be seen from the data in Table 2, all the items except items 8, received mean values above the cut-off point of 2.50. Item 10, received the highest mean value of 3.63. A grand mean score of 3.17 clearly indicate that communities participate in the provision of infrastructural facilities to a Great Extent.

Research Questions 3: What are the strategies for motivating community members for effective school management?

Table 3: Mean ratings of respondents on the strategies for motivating community members for effective school management

S/No	Item Descriptions	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
11.	Cooperation of principals with community leaders in decision making and general school management	3.60	0.63	Accepted
12.	Admission of sizeable quota of community members as students	3.26	0.57	Accepted
13.	Enrollment of sizeable quota of capable and qualified community members as members of staff	3.08	0.77	Accepted

14.	Satisfactory attitude and behaviour of the principal and the school staff in general school management	2.86	0.53	Accepted
15.	Healthy relationship between the principal and the community leadership	2.91	0.62	Accepted
Grand Mean		3.14		

Results obtained from Table 3, indicate that all the five items, have mean values above the 2.50 acceptance level. A grand mean value of 3.14 is a further indication that the respondents generally agreed and accepted the suggested items as strategies for motivating community members for effective school management.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent of community participation in the funding of public secondary schools in South East States.

Table 4: t-test analysis on the mean responses of male and female principals on extent of communities' participation in funding public secondary schools

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal	t-tab	Level of Sign	Decision
Males	283	3.49	0.28	0.506	1.93	0.05	Not significant
Females	217	3.16	0.36				

Given that t-cal value of 0.506 is less than the t-tab value of 1.96, as could be seen in table 4, the null hypothesis (H_0) is therefore upheld. The implication is that there is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents of the extent of communities' participation in funding secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the strategies for motivating community members for effective school management.

Table 5: t-test analysis on the mean responses of male and female principles on the strategies for motivating community members for effective school management

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal	t-tab	Level of Sign	Decision
Males	283	3.18	0.62	1.40	1.96	0.05	Not significant
Females	217	3.08	0.58				

It is observed from table 5 that t-cal is less than t-table, that is $1.40 < 1.96$, at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore upheld, suggesting that no significant difference exists in the mean ratings of respondents on the strategies for motivating community members for effective school management.

IV. Discussion

Analysis of data on the extent of community participation in funding schools, revealed that communities do this in a variety of ways, including: giving financial aids to indigent students ($\bar{X} = 2.98$), raising funds for school projects ($\bar{X} = 3.54$), awarding prizes for outstanding performances ($\bar{X} = 3.36$) and awarding scholarship to brilliant students ($\bar{X} = 3.31$). It was also established statistically, that there was no significant difference in the opinions of the respondents on the rated items. These findings are corroborated by Bray (2013) who made similar observations in the case of Tanzanian communities, where donations from parents were used to finance several school projects.

As regards the extent of communities' participation in the provision of infrastructural facilities, data analysis revealed that communities' participate to a "Great Extent" in such specific areas as: construction of laboratories and classroom ($\bar{X} = 3.30$), construction of staff quarters ($\bar{X} = 3.38$), provision of teaching and learning materials ($\bar{X} = 3.63$) and provision of sports and recreational facilities ($\bar{X} = 3.11$). These findings are in the expected direction, because there are corroborative evidences from other studies. For example, Enyi (2011) made a parallel observation in the case of Idoma and Oju communities in Benue state, where provision of staff quarters has been an age-long pheromone. In Lesotho, Motanyane (2013) in Bray and Lillis (2016), noted that communities usually meet 25 percent of school building costs.

In the case of strategies for motivating effective community participation in school management, respondents were in general agreement that, cooperation of school heads with community leaders in decision-making matters, admitting indigenous students, employment of indigenous teachers and maintaining good principal/staff conduct, are acceptable motivating strategies. These findings are partly in agreement with Nwankwo's (2016) observation that schools' cooperate involvement of communities in decision-making, encourages communities in participate actively in school activities. Similarly, Enyi (2011) noted that cordial school-community relationship, si a major means of mobilizing community resources for school management.

V. Summary of Findings

Based on the foregoing discussions, the following findings are made:

1. That communities participate to a Great Extent, in funding different aspects of school programme, incorporating: provision of educational facilities, awarding of prizes and scholarships, making financial assistance to students and raising funds for school projects.
2. That communities have demonstrated capabilities in participating in the provision of infrastructural facilities. To a great extent, they participate through such means as construction of classrooms,

laboratories, classroom furniture, staff quarters, provision of teaching and instructional materials, sports and recreational facilities.

3. That different strategies exist for motivating communities to participate in effective school management, and basically involves the school administration being open, accessible and proactive to community issues.

VI. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in light of the study findings:

1. As regards of public secondary schools, any policy or invitation to communities for participation, should be primarily limited to the following:

- Raising of funds for school projects;
- Provision of scholarships and grants to outstanding students;
- Financial assistance to indigent students; and
- Giving prizes and awards for outstanding school performances

2. In the case of communities' participation in the provision of infrastructural facilities, organizers of community efforts should focus on the following areas:

- Construction of classrooms, laboratories, classroom furniture, staff quarters, eating centres and sports venues.
- Provision of instructional materials; and
- Provision of recreational facilities

3. As for strategies for motivating communities to participate in school management, the following measures should be adopted;

- Cooperation between school heads and community leaders on school management decisions;
- Good admission quota for community children;
- Employment community members as staff;
- Good principal/staff conduct; and
- Good school-community relationship.

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