



THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

Community is a locale group of people with collective leadership, responsibilities, consciousness and aspirations who wishes their values to be transmitted to their heirs. The school as an agency for implementing education programmes and is situated and its function within the community. That is the school as part of the community.

The schools and their host communities are expected to support each other in terms of planning, working together for good, giving as well as receiving ideas. In this regards, one research question was raised. Certain assumed expected roles of the community in support of the school were itemized, and presented to 30 school principals and 30 community leaders for responses. All the relevant research procedures were strictly complied with the use of mean rating as the statistics for analysis of data generated. The result showed that the expected management activities of the schools in which the community can be involved are: planning, organizing, reporting, staffing and budgeting. Specifically, the community can be involved in the appointment and promotion of personnel's among others communities involvement in the management of the schools in their communities were highlighted. The paper was concluded with some recommendations, amongst which was that School-Community Cooperation for Improved Education Outputs (S-CCIEO) to be properly nurtured.

Keywords: community, management-functions, rationale

1. Introduction

Nigeria, with a population of 138,300,184 people in 2006 is made up of 36 federating states and an enclave called Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Each of the federating states and the FCT is an entity comprising several communities. Communities vary in

terms of interpretations; primary community and adopted community. For this paper however, community is a locale of people collective. This definition fits the primary community type. Usually it is bounded by collective leadership, responsibilities, consciousness, aspirations of all or most of the members, which the community itself wishes are transmitted to its heirs. For the avoidance of doubts, a primary community is the one which has a group of people living in the same place, with common value and history and bonded together by multiple economic, social, religious and kinship ties (Ogunu, 2000).

Although the adopted communities appeared to have made some significant impact in support of education as a social sector, it nevertheless can be equal with that of the primary communities. In effect, it is assumed that the school is the main institution founded for implementing educational programmes and policies situate in a primary community.

As earlier noted, the school is the main institution established for effecting teaching and learning. Because the school is situated and function within the community indicates that; it is a part of the community. Unfortunately, however, over the years, the school has been seen as a separate entity deferent from the community. Obviously, this has been seen as a spate entity deferent from the community. Obviously, this has had serious implications on the level or kind of relationship which exist between the school and the community, including the management of the school.

Secondary School-Community Dichotomy

The models of secondary schools which the British bequeathed to Nigerians were such which encouraged separateness between the schools themselves and the communities. As it were, the desired educational objectives of the missionaries and the British Government were not for the development of Nigerian communities. Essentially, the aim of the owners of the school was to raise personnel required for missionary activities and government's administrative functions. Although the school curriculum has since been revised, the opinion held of the school and its relationship with the community has remained unrevised. This is because:

- a) The operators of the school system particularly the teachers hold negative opinion on the relevance of the community in terms of school management. This belief is part of the hand over Imbid by Nigerian from the colonial era. For the teachers including the principals, the school is to liberate the local community people from their social squalor. Edobor (2006) amplified this view when she stated that the missionaries often regarded their task to educate as being that of releasing local people from evil, superstition and to civilize them. She adds that,

as a result, the schools were deliberately separated from the village, while the use of vernacular, tribal customs and dance were prohibited.

- b) Parents and guardians perceive the school as an enclosure for inculcating the much needed knowledge, skill and character required to function properly in the “modern world” in their children/wards. To achieve this objective therefore, standards were set for the school, and the school itself located in a reasonable distance from the community. In furtherance of the practice, boarding schools were accorded higher status and quarters provided for the teachers.
- c) It is observed that greater numbers of the teachers including the Principals are non-indigenes of their school’s host community. This has raised the issue of acceptability between the teachers and the community. While the community regards the teachers as strangers, who do not deserve integration, particularly in the rural setting, the teachers on their part take the community as a transit place of abode. Suffice it to emphasize that the teachers are the curriculum engineers and managers of the school system. If teachers have no deep commitments and allegiance to the community, then only little or no hope exist for close relationship between the schools and the communities. In clear reference to such situation, Musazi (1992) noted that in some communities the symbol of separateness between it and the schools were high fenced school compounds constructed with different materials that varies from bricks to iron bars, aluminium sheet etc. In addition, the school had within its compound sports facilities, social organizations, chapel, shops for the exclusive use of the members of the school community only, and in most cases have no bearing with the community life and values.
- d) Unlike the present day public secondary schools, access to the secondary schools in the colonial era up to the early eighties was available only to those who satisfied the strict admission requirements. With that policy, students who were offered admission into the secondary schools system were often those that were adjudged as academically competent, majority of whom were usually not from the neighbourhood. In effect, most of the early secondary schools could not be described as community schools; hence, they had nothing to do with their communities of location.

Community Involvement in School Management

Management functions includes; planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, directing, reporting and budgeting. Therefore, participants in management exercise would be expected to be involved in the performance of the above tasks. Considering the subject

matter of this paper, the question which arose is: *which of the management tasks are the communities involved in the management of schools in their locality?*

One major aspect of the efforts being made in some African counties at linking schools closely with their communities is the encouragement of the direct involvement of local people in the work of the school as managers and as financiers. Thompson (1983) noted this several years ago when he stated that Tanzania, Zambia, Ethiopia, Guinea, and Kenya have had experience of community involvement in the devolution of responsibilities for managing schools and school systems to local people. He added that the practice varied from country to country, and in some countries where the local communities were not directly involved in management, they often possessed a genuine feeling that the school was their own. In Ethiopia, it was planned that parents be directly responsible for the management of their school, including the appointment, housing and payment of salaries of teachers. In Guinea, all schools were to be managed by local authorities (Pouvoirs Revolutionaries Locals) which will plan building operations, organize school production, supervise instructions and maintain disciplines. Contrarily, in Nigeria, nothing seems to have happened in terms of devolution of responsibilities for managing schools to the local communities. In this connection, it should be noted that, in spite of the unanimous climate of opinions on the need of the school to have an outlook of its community life, the gap between the schools and local community in Nigeria has expanded more than ever in recent years.

With regards to expected school-community relationship, (Edobor, 2006:127) pointed that the school-community relationship ought to mean genuine cooperation in planning and working together for good, giving as well as receiving ideas. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, parents and members of the community have remained isolated from places where decisions concerning "their own" schools are taken. So far, the only areas of community involvement in school management is that; they are encouraged to employ supportive teachers and non-teaching personnel and sometimes take part in activities of social, fund-raising or labour providing kind. These activities were usually organized by the parent-teachers associations and were usually teacher dominated (Thompson, 1983:268). Therefore, it can be safely concluded that, at present, community involvement in secondary school management is minimal or non-existence in Nigeria.

Expected School Management Functions By the Community

In addressing this aspect of the topic, the following question was raised and answered. Which management functions in the school can be assigned to the community? To answer the question, a descriptive survey was done. The descriptive survey is a

research approach which describe and interprets what is and seeks opinions that are held, effects that are evident or trend that are developing on an issue. Consequently, responses on the question were obtained from 10% (30 principals) of the 300 senior secondary schools principals and 30 leaders of the schools host communities in Edo State. All the relevant research procedures were strictly complied with. Using the Mean (X) rating as statistic, some findings were obtained. The item means score and decisions are shown in the table below. In taking decision, means scores below 2.00 were rejected while those above were accepted.

Table 1: Mean (X) Rating of Expected Management Activities in the Schools by the Community

Item No.	Functions	Items mean score	Decision
1.	Policy making at board of Governors/school committee Level only	1.94	Rejected
2.	Management in terms of:		
	(a) Planning	3.45	Accepted
	(b) Organizing	3.00	Accepted
	(c) Reporting	3.00	Accepted
	(d) Staffing	2.80	Accepted
	(e) Budgeting	2.12	Accepted
3.	Specific:		
	(a) Appointment and promotion	3.40	Accepted
	(b) Payment of salaries	3.31	Accepted
	(c) Maintenance and provision of infrastructure and instructional aids	2.91	Accepted
	(d) Housing of teachers	2.74	Accepted

It can be observed from the table that the opinions of the respondents indicate that the community should get involved in the performance of all management functions in the schools except that of policy making. The item rejected had a mean (X) score of 1.94.

Rational for Community Involvement in School Management

It has been asserted that the school is one of the many institutions in the community. It has also been posited that both the school and the community deserve to share resources available to each other in their common interest. Be that as it may, it is imperative that more supportive arguments be advanced in aid of the need for community participative that more supportive arguments be advanced in aid of the need for community participation in school management. The arguments are:

1. The communities have shown enough concern in the developmental aspiration of their schools. This is self-evident in the community supportive efforts in terms of resource provision for the schools in their locality. Such resources include; building and rehabilitation of schools buildings, supply of seats and desks, employment of teacher in times of shortfall, security of the school properties etc.
2. These days, many schools are educating the children out of content. In spite of the desire of the national policy on education to adapt curriculum content to reflect local community and national goals, many schools particularly the privately owned still bear foreign outlook. In some of the schools, their foreign orientation posture appears utopia, a situation which seems to be educating the children for a society which does not exist or not within the reach of the children.
3. The level of crime traceable to the school is on the increase. It is being alleged that secondary school students now get involved in capital crimes such as armed robbery, cultism, rape etc. There is also the problem of disrespect, delinquency, violence, drug addiction, vandalization and adolescent sexual activity. The schools have been identified as the breeding centers of the crimes. In the United States, 135,701 guns are brought to the 87,125 public schools daily (Larson, MH, 2002:9). He added that, the use of metal detectors, surveillance cameras, specially trained dogs, locker sweeps, identification tags, scanners and a prohibition against bring book bags to schools have not helped matters in the circumstance. The United States experience is very relevant to us in Nigeria: as teachers, we do not need to be reminded that life in the United States of America is a major role model for young Nigerians.
4. The Nigerian National Policy on Education, FRN (2004) has stated that efforts shall be made to relate education to overall community needs. This is a direction which principals are admonished to be well focused.
5. There is a consensus that to be able to educate the child, the school must integrate and reflect community and community living in the school programme. The school should not be a foreign body within the community but an emancipation of it, organizing itself steadily for the community's development (Thompson, 1993:263).
6. Devolution of managerial responsibilities to the communities will assist in engineering the spirit of self-reliance in these communities.
7. There is a belief that local members of the community are better positioned to provided guide required for the integration of the school with the local community than the teachers posted from outside the community and education administrator if left alone.

8. Now that the whole world including Nigeria and her Federating States are once again faced with economic depression, the wise things to do in order that government may cope with the economic down turn is to turn to the communities. This is because the situation imposes a growing need to tap community resources to finance educational development.
9. Apart from the harsh effect of the economic crises in education, the provision of education at any level is an expensive venture. It was in recognition of this fact, that the federal government FRN (2013) noted that education is an expensive social service, and as a result, it welcomes and encourages the participation of local communities among others. The communities cannot participate in the financing of education and would not be allowed to have inputs in the management of its investments.
10. Financing and managing schools by communities can assist in bringing about self-awareness on the part of the community. Some recorded degree of successes in their efforts at managing the local schools can bring about wide spread, among them, the awareness of their own capacity to solve other problems encountered by them. Ultimately, it can spill over to self-motivated mobilization.
11. The Supreme Court Judgment in the on-shore/off-shore suit No. SC. 38/2001 of 5th April, 2002 had serious impact on the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria. Consequently, a new mandate for the UBE programme, particularly at the federal level had to be fashioned. According to Tahir (2005) the new mandates include, among others; promoting community partnerships for the UBE through social advocacy. He added that the UBE programme must evolve a comprehensive implementation strategy that would involve all stakeholders including the communities.

Recommendations

In order to have a maximum realization of the goal of secondary education in Nigeria, there is the need for greater cooperation between the school and the community. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that each school should have a committee on School-Community Cooperation for Improved Education Output (S-CCIEO). The S-CCIEO if nurtured shall be a management team made up the community members, the principal, and other relevant staff of the school. Such committee can take a semblance of the Parent-Teachers Association; hence the relevant laws or rules establishing the PTA may be amended to pave way for the S-CCIEO. It is further recommended that the operations of the committee must take cognizance of the peculiarities of the community.

The concept of the S-CCIEO is predicated on the need to provide greater platform for the community to make inputs in the management of their schools and should relate to public schools only. The implications of the recommendation therefore are that all the public schools would attract students from only the communities which constitute their catchments areas. As usual, Ministry of Education and other relevant extra ministerial bodies will be expected to continue to play their supervisory role of ensuring standards. It is also being contended that school will be more alive to their responsibilities of appointment', posting and promoting of school staff personnel have some inputs from the community they serve. With such practice, schools particularly those built by the local people with enthusiasm and sacrifice would be properly regulated and controlled. Ultimately, the situation will bring about schools which are of the community, rather than schools for the community.

Conclusion

It has been asserted that the school is created for the emancipation of community development. So it's the community expected to be a life to its responsibilities of assisting the school to meet its needs required its fulfilment of its set goals. That being the case the school-community dichotomy becomes unnecessary. In the twenty first century more managerial roles in the schools particularly those identified in this paper should be assigned to the local community. Moreover, in this era of an invitation for community policing to curb increasing crimes, the local communities cannot be left out of school management, if desirable output of the school system is still of any national interest.

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