ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES' (SBMCs') INCLUSION PRACTICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT IN ANAOCHA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

Eboatu, V. N[i].[1],
Golu, Joseph Arinze[2],
Ugwu, Ifeanyichukwu[2]
[1]PhD, Department of Educational Management and Policy,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria
[2]Department of Educational Management and Policy,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Abstract:

This study investigated the extent to which School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) practice inclusion in the management of secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The total population for the study was 362, comprising of all the sixteen principals, 330 teachers of secondary schools and sixteen community leaders in Anaocha Local Government Area. A sample of 8 principals, 220 teachers and 8 community leaders, totaling 236 was drawn using the multi-stage sampling technique. A ten-item structured questionnaire which was duly validated by experts was used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the test-retest method which gave a reliability index of 0.83. Data collected were analysed using mean scores and t-test analysis. The findings of this study showed, among other things, that principals and community leaders rated SBMCs in Anaocha Local Government Area as practicing inclusion in raising awareness on the importance of children's education to a high extent, while teachers rated SBMCs as practicing inclusion in raising awareness to a low extent. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that SBMCs should intensify awareness campaigns in their communities to enlighten community leaders on the right of the children to education irrespective of gender, economic background or disability.

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[1] Correspondence: email nonye.eboatu@yahoo.co.uk

Keywords: school-based management committees, secondary schools management, assessment, inclusion

1. Introduction

School Based Management (SBM) is the decentralization of certain measures of authority from government administrators to the school level, amongst school personnel and the local people. Ayeni and Ibukun (2013) described SBM as the process of devolution of power and authority to significant stakeholders to perform statutory responsibilities in the administration, monitoring, evaluation and review of educational policy issues for sustainable goal-oriented governance and effective teaching and learning to achieve set standards and quality learning outcomes in schools. The introduction of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) into the primary and secondary school system in Nigeria was, therefore, aimed at formally bringing the relevant stakeholders into the management of education by listening to what they want concerning the education of the citizens and to enlist their valuable contribution towards making education work well (Anambra State SBMC Guidebook, 2013). SBMCs afford the local communities the opportunity to work with the school to improve school process and achieve better student educational outcome.

Throughout the world people, believe in the efficacy of education as the key that unlocks development and the right of citizens to education irrespective of their circumstances. Consequently, educational provision, practice, and administration continue to undergo transformations to ensure that the rights of citizens are entrenched and the inclusion and participation of relevant groups of peoples in the school process. Inclusion in educational management, in a broad sense, is a practice that seeks to acknowledge and enlist the commitment to education for all, including vulnerable groups such as the women and children, the marginalized, the challenged and the poor (UNESCO, 2016). It is a means of enhancing the capacity of the education system to reach out to diverse learners and relevant stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process for their schools and their communities. Inclusive participation leads to better understanding of problems thereby resulting in better decisions and easier implementation of decisions (Ajuwon, 2012 & Larson, 2017).

In line with the policy of inclusive participation the Anambra State SBMC Guidebook (2013) strongly recommends the inclusion and participation of people from diverse backgrounds be nominated into SBMCs and their sub-committees. Some members are to be nominated by bodies such as the PTA, Old Students' Associations, artisans, town unions and vigilante groups; while others will be selected. The mode of constitution further ensures that vulnerable groups such as women, children and people with special needs are heard.

The document further outlined the roles and responsibilities of the SBMCs including collaborating with the PTA in the sensitization and mobilization of the communities on enrolment, attendance and retention of children in school, monitoring

staff attendance at school, promoting participation and inclusion of children and women to achieve school effectiveness, assisting in the procurement of learning materials, among others. This study will focus on SBMCs' roles of sensitizing the community on the importance of children's education and the inclusion of stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The responsibility of raising awareness of parents and guardians about children's education is of utmost importance for the reason that millions of Nigerian children of school age are still out of school. This calls for the SBMC to work alongside the PTA, pupils and the Boards of Education to stem this ugly tide. SBMCs are expected to partner with local role models, artisans, professional business people, and local charities. Some of the strategies recommended by the SBMC Guidebook (2013) include nominating women, children and different groups into the SBMC subcommittees, working with local religious groups and traditional rulers, using dramas and film shows to raise awareness about the importance of children's education. It is important that parents and guardians in host communities be aware of the importance of children being enrolled and retained in schools to complete basic education. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of the Federal Government was designed, among other things, to provide the Nigerian child diverse basic knowledge and skills that will enable him/her function effectively in the society within the limit of the child's capacity (FRN, 2013). But over ten million Nigerian school- age-children are still out of school (UNESCO, 2016). Having so many school-age-children out of school negates the objectives and goals of the UBE programme. Enlightening the community through the SBMCs, therefore, becomes very vital.

On inclusive participation in decision-making, SBMCs are expected to involve women and students in decisions affecting school and facilitate support for disadvantaged groups within the community. School-based decision is the model whereby decisions about planning and resource allocations are taken within the proximity of the school as opposed to government education board at the centre. Inclusive participation has other advantages, one of which is affording community leaders the opportunity to have their say in the education of the children. Larson (2017) found that inclusive decision-making leads to significantly better decisions. Inclusive decision making, in addition, helps to combat discrimination and apathy in school business. Decisions by SBMCs can only be effective if the views of boys, girls, and children living with disabilities, children who do not speak the main language, parents and other relevant stakeholders are taken into account (Anambra State SBMC Guidebook, 2013). The strategy for achieving this is inclusion of stakeholders in SBMC sub-committees and the present study was designed to establish the extent to which SBMCs practice the inclusion of stake holders in their decision-making process and raising awareness of community leaders on the importance of children's enrolment in and completing basic education.

2. Problem of the Study

Though SBMCs' presence in the schools has obvious advantages which can result from their practice of inclusive participation and making the communities aware of the importance of children's education, some authors observed that its practice is saddled with challenges. For example, Ayeni and Ibukun (2013) observed that key members of SBMCs lack administrative capacity and have poor attendance to SBMC meetings due to lack of incentive and financial support from the government. Others such as the PTA and school managers, misconstrue SBMCs as duplication of their responsibilities.

In Anambra State, the existence of SBMCs in schools has come a long way. The Ministry of Education and the Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) have put in a lot of effort to revise and adapt the policy guideline by the Federal Ministry of Education to produce the Anambra State SBMC Guidebook, 2013. The State has also strived to ensure proper constitution of SBMCs in primary and secondary schools and to enlighten the communities on their responsibilities. The problem of this study, therefore, was to determine the extent of SBMCs inclusion practices in secondary schools' management in Anaocha Local Government Area of Anambra State of Nigeria.

2.1 Purpose of the Study
The main purpose of this study was to determine the extent of SMBCs practice inclusion in the management of secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area. Specifically, the study did the following:
1. Established the extent to which the SMBCs practice inclusion in raising the communities' awareness on the importance of the children's education in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area.
2. Established the extent to which the SMBCs practice inclusive participation of stakeholders in decision making in secondary education in Anaocha Local Government Area.

2.2 Research Questions
The following research questions guided the study:
1. To what extent does SBMCs practice inclusion in raising the communities' awareness of the importance of the children's education in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area?
2. To what extent does SBMCs practice inclusive participation of stakeholders in decision making in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government?

2.3 Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:
1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals, teachers and SBMC members on SBMCs practice of all-inclusion in raising the

communities' awareness of the importance of the children's education in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area.

2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of principals, teachers and SBMC members on SBMCs practice of all-inclusive participation by stakeholders in decision making in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area.

3. Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. According to Akuezuilo and Agu (2003), survey research is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analysing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group, utilizing tools such as questionnaires, interviews and observation to collect data. This design was deemed appropriate for collecting information from principals, teachers and community leaders on the extent of SBMCs' practices of all-inclusion in decision making and raising the communities' awareness of the importance of children's education.

The population for this study was 362; made up of 16 principals, 330 teachers of the public secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area, as well as 16 community leaders that were on the boards of the local SBMCs. Data was from the Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC, June 2016). Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 8 principals, 220 teachers and 8 community leaders, giving a sample size of 236.

The instrument for data collection was a ten-item researcher developed questionnaire modelled on the 4-point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was duly validated by three experts: two in Educational Management and Policy and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. It was tested for reliability using the test-retest method on 3 principals and 90 teachers of public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area at two-week intervals. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the data collected yielded a sum coefficient of 0.83 which was considered high enough for the study.

Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Items with mean scores of 2.5 and above were considered High Extent, while those below 2.5 were considered Low Extent. In addition, mean scores above 3.0 and below 2.0 were considered Very High Extent and Very Low Extent respectively. The hypotheses were tested using ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

4. Results

A. Research Question One

To what extent do SBMCs practice all-inclusion in raising the communities' awareness on the importance of children's education in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area? Data collected in respect of this research question were presented and analysed in Table 1:

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which SBMCs practice all-inclusion in raising the communities' awareness on the importance of children's education in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area

S/N	Items	Principal = 8			Teacher = 220			SBMC = 8			Total = 236		
		✽	SD	Decision	✽	SD	Decision	✽	SD	Decision	✽	SD	Decision
1	My school SBMC helps to raise awareness of the right of every child to education irrespective of their background	2.75	0.5	Very High	2.36	0.8	Low	2.63	1.1	Very High	2.57	0.8	High
2	My school SBMC encourages parents to retain their children to complete Basic Education	3	0.5	Very High	2.47	0.9	Low	3	1.1	High	2.82	0.9	High
3	The SBMC in my school monitors students attendance to school	2.75	0.7	High	2.39	0.9	Low	3	1.1	High	2.71	0.9	High
4	My school SBMC helps to organize enrollment campaigns	2.88	1	High	2.39	0.8	Low	3.13	1	Very High	2.8	0.8	High
5	My school SBMCs helps to promote the awareness that government	3.38	0.7	Very High	2.61	1	High	2.75	1.2	High	2.87	1	High

provides free basic education				
Cluster Mean	**2.95**	**2.44**	**2.9**	**2.73**

Data presented on this Table, showed that principals and community representatives rated SBMCs as practicing inclusion to a high extent with total means of 2.95 and 2.90. The teachers, however, rated the SBMCs as practicing inclusion on raising awareness of the importance of education to a low extent with a mean score of 2.44.

B. Research Question 2:

To what extent do SBMCs practice all-inclusive participation by stakeholders in decision making in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area? Data collected in respect of this research question were presented and analysed in Table 2:

Table 2: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which SBMCs' practice inclusive participation in decision making in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area

S/N	Items	Principal = 8			Teacher = 220			SBMC = 8			Total = 236		
		✼	SD	Decision	✼	SD	Decision	✼	SD	Decision	✼	SD	Decision
6	My school SBMC includes students in its sub-committees	2.63	0.7	High	2.66	0.9	High	3.38	0.7	Very High	2.09	0.9	High
7	The SBMC nominates female members in its sub-committees	2.25	1	Low	2.47	0.9	Low	3.25	0.7	Very High	2.65	0.9	High
8	Different groups in the community are represented in SBMCs	2.75	1	High	2.51	0.9	High	2.75	1.3	High	2.67	0.9	High
9	My school SBMC works through religious groups to raise awareness of the importance of education	2.88	1	High	2.5	0.9	High	3.5	0.8	Very High	2.96	0.9	Very High

10	My school SBMC helps provide facilities for disabled students	2.75	1.2	High	2.4	0.9	Low	2.63	0.9	High	2.59	0.9	High
	Cluster Mean	**2.65**			**2.51**			**3.1**			**2.59**		

Table 2 revealed that the principals, teachers and the community leaders all rated SBMCs as practicing inclusion in their decision making with cluster mean scores of 2.65, 2.51, and 3.10 respectively. Further analysis showed that principals and teachers rate SBMCs as nominating female members into their sub-committees to a low extent.

4.1 Test of Hypotheses

A. Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents on SBMCs practice of inclusion in raising communities' awareness of the importance of children's education in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area.

Table 3: ANOVA test of difference in the mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which SBMCs practice all-inclusion in raising the communities' awareness of the importance of children's education

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Variable 2	Between Groups	3.440	2	1.720	3.859	.022
	Within Groups	103.845	233	.446		
	Total	**107.285**	**235**			

Table 3 revealed the result of the test for significance on the extent to which SBMC participate in raising parental-guardians' awareness on enrolment and retention of students in secondary schools do not differ in the opinions of the principals, SBMC members and teachers. The result indicated that there is a significant difference in the extent to which the SBMC participate in raising parental-guardians' awareness on enrolment and retention of students in secondary schools based on opinions of the principals, SBMC members and teachers ($F = 3.86$, $p = 0.02$). The null hypothesis was rejected and thus, it was concluded that the extent to which SBMC participate in raising parental-guardians' awareness on enrolment and retention of students in secondary schools do differ in the opinions of the principals, SBMC members and teachers.

B. Hypothesis 2: The extent to which SBMC practice all-inclusive participation in decision making in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area.

Table 4: ANOVA test of significant difference on the mean ratings of respondents
on the extent of SBMCs practice of all-inclusive participation in decision making
in secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Variable 2	Between Groups	2.817	2	1.408	2.899	.057
	Within Groups	113.205	233	.486		
	Total	**116.022**	**235**			

Table 4 revealed the result of the test for significance on the extent to which SBMC practice all-inclusion in the management of secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area. The result indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals, teachers and community leaders on the extent to which SBMCs practice inclusive participation in decision making in the management of secondary schools in Anaocha Local Government Area (F = 2.90, p = 0.57). The null hypothesis was upheld and thus, it was concluded that the extent to which SBMC promote inclusive participation in the management of secondary schools do not differ significantly in the opinions of the principals, SBMC members and teachers.

5. Discussion

SBMCs are expected to collaborate with the PTAs to enlighten the community on the need for children completing ten years of basic education under the Universal Basic Education programme. The findings of this study show that principals and community leaders rated the SBMCSs in Anaocha Local Government Area as practicing inclusion in raising awareness of the importance of children's education. This agrees with the Anambra State Guidebook (2013) provisions. However, the teachers rated the SBMCs' practice of inclusion low extent. Though the differences in their ratings were found to be statistically insignificant, the low rating by the teachers should not be dismissed with the wave of the hand because teachers are the classroom managers who are in closer touch with students and parents. According to UNESCO (2016), millions of Nigerian children of school going age are still out of school and this also applies to Anambra State children. There is need for the SBMCs to intensify their efforts at sensitization of the public on the need to not just enroll the children but to keep them in school to complete basic education which encompasses life skills acquisition.

The findings of this study further showed that SBMCs in Anaocha Local Government Area practice inclusion of stakeholders in decision making to a high extent. This is in agreement with Anambra State SBMC Guidebook, (2013) which proposed that the SBMCs involve students, parents and community leaders for effective decision making. This will also make implementation of decisions and programmes easier in line with Larson (2017). Unfortunately, SBMCs do not make adequate provision for inclusion of the physically challenged in these schools. This will make it difficult for them to be educated in mainstream normal schools. One possible explanation of this low extent of involvement and provision for the challenged could be

because people are still used to having special schools for the challenged and so they are not thinking outside the box. Having special schools for the challenged alone does not help the community develop acceptance and understanding knowing that they will eventually work with the rest of the society to contribute to nation building.

6. Conclusion

The SBMCs in Anaocha Local Government Area practice inclusion of stakeholders in decision making to a high extent. However, there is significant difference in the principals' and teachers' responses on the inclusion of women in SBMCs sub-committees. The three set of respondents in addition agreed that SBMCs practise inclusion in its sensitization of the communities on the importance of education.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. SBMCs should live up to the provision of the Anambra State Guidebook on SBMC roles and objectives by nominating relevant stakeholders such as the women into its sub-committees to foster a strong spirit of partnership.
2. SBMCs in Anaocha Local Government Area should also make provision for the physically challenged children to be well accommodated and educated alongside other children.
3. SBMCs in the local government area should intensify their awareness campaign in order to enlighten parent on the importance of retaining their children in school to complete basic education for acquiring skills for life.

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