



SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON IMPROVING COMMUNITY SERVICE THROUGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

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Abstract:

This study was aimed at exploring teachers' and school principals' perceptions of the school as an institutional instrument that strengthens community service, through the lens of two junior private secondary schools. This study got its data through a qualitative data collection approach that reflected school leaders' and teachers' experiences and perceptions of what community service is and how the school can be an instrument to strengthen community service. During this study, a teacher's instructional strategy is found to be a vital tool in creating community service consciousness in the students. The engagement of the students in community service activities in their early school years helps them to be better community-conscious and socially responsible in their adult years, as the principals and teachers highlighted the value and significance of the pupils' participation in community service, such as giving back to society and making it a better place, enhancing their 21st-century skills, and relating academic content to real-life contexts. Awareness of community service, sensitization, and re-orientation of students and parents were stressed by almost all the participants, and the findings also revealed that the majority of the respondents clamoured for school collaborations with the parents, the government, and other schools as a way of strengthening community service. In conclusion, this study has indications for teachers, school leaders, and stakeholders in education to identify how their work contributes to strengthening community service

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participation and how school roles contribute to the increase in social responsibility awareness and willingness of students.

Keywords: community service, social responsibility, perceptions, instructional method, school-roles, teaching, leadership

1. Introduction

Community service learning is to ensure that every member of the interdisciplinary department is working toward a unified objective and shared vision, and a shared definition of what constitutes community involvement is necessary (Fierke & Palombi, 2018). The American Heritage Dictionary (Dictionary, 2016) states that the phrase "community service" is a broad one that includes services provided voluntarily by people or organizations in order to help the community or its institutions. In relation to this study specifically, community service can take the form of required or optional, curriculum- or non-curriculum-based activities completed as part of school-wide events, independently planned school programs, or school-sponsored projects carried out by outside organizations like the Boys and Girls Club and National Honor Society. Cleaning up a neighbourhood park, visiting the elderly, or gathering and delivering food to people in need are a few examples of service projects (Corporation for National & Community Service, 2008).

The offering of one's time and talents to meet a social need may be historically traced to an American tradition with deep roots, but meaningful opportunities to engage in community service have continually increased over the past few decades (Griffith, 2012). This may be seen in the ways that community service has been framed in experiential learning at many schools throughout the world, allowing students to take part in worthwhile projects outside of the classroom. Researchers generally agree that engaging in community service has a favourable impact on students' academic, social, and moral development as well as on the school and community. Despite the findings of several studies on community service that show how it might improve the failing educational system, young apathy, and societal decadence, the topic of community service continues to receive only cursory attention in many parts of the world, study contexts included. The topic of community service continues to receive only cursory attention, despite the conclusions of numerous studies on the subject. Even in fields where research studies have produced an abundance of knowledge about related topics like service learning, civic engagement, volunteering, and social responsibility, the emphasis has typically been on college students, volunteer activities, and participant experiences. Students' experiences with community service in high school and college are evaluated since they are important to understand. The study sought to analyse how schools operate in a community and add to the conversation around volunteerism. The creation of a knowledge base on educational practice, which not only promotes practice

advancement but also bestows acknowledgment of scholarliness, is another cause, according to (Billig & Waterman, 2014).

This study focused on the analysis of principals' and teachers' perspectives on community service at two junior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria, and Baku, Azerbaijan, the study also motivates additional study. This study is organized as follows: a review of existing research on the topic of community service in junior high schools in the context of countries and globally, a report on data collecting and methods, a presentation of results, and result discussions and conclusions.

2. Statement of Problem

There is a low level of awareness and continued decreasing interest of young people in civic engagements, especially, community participation through meaningful services. Children of school age grow up with the existing belief that only the government or other leadership levels should perform the role of development or engage in activities that make the community a better place to live.

2.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how teachers and principals perceive community service and student participation in it in a junior secondary school in Azerbaijan and a junior secondary school in Nigeria, respectively.

2.2 Objective of Study

Considering the settings of Azerbaijan and Nigeria, this research study aims to investigate the principals' and teachers' perceptions of community service and the school as a setting that can support students' involvement in community service.

2.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to help the study's findings inform our understanding of how teachers and school administrators view community services and the school as a setting that supports volunteerism.

- What effect does community service learning have on students' participation in community projects, according to a systematic review?
- What are the principals' and teachers' perceptions of encouraging students to volunteer by using instructional strategies to strengthen community service?

3. Literature Review

This section of the study gives an overview of earlier research that has been done in our area of interest. To address the effect of community service learning on students' involvement in community projects and to provide the case in favour of the findings of

the present study, the literature analysis for this study was carried out utilizing a systematic review article selection.

3.1 Theory of Action

Schools have historically been essential in teaching kids to become contributing adults in society. This position has been predominantly characterized in academic terms during the last few decades, with a focus on making sure students have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for success in both college and the workplace. (Farrington *et al.*, 2019) A theory of action is a prediction of the results of the application of a few tactics. Being deliberate is aided by a theory of action. A theory of action forecasts the results of putting a specific set of tactics into reality. When creating a theory of action, it is crucial to make decisions on which tactical actions will produce the intended outcomes. It entails connecting our objectives with the results we want to accomplish. The author analyses the implications for action and implementation in the management classroom, describes the essential concepts of a theory of action perspective that are most appropriate to learning and teaching, and offers examples of a case writing process and teaching technique that complies with the criteria (Argyris, 1997). Action theory implementation and dissemination in the realm of education; see (Need & De Jong, 2001; Hoch, 2007).

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework theory of action for teaching and engaging students in community services. When the concept is applied the hypothesis is that there will be increased public knowledge and ability for problem-solving. Students would be able to learn more about societal issues. They can brainstorm solutions and practice their decision-making and communication skills. The function of the school principal and their assistance in creating a favourable atmosphere for teaching and learning for both teachers and students. The function of teachers as change agents who promote and carry out change, use meaningful approaches to implement the change for a whole school and community development. The conceptual framework can be found below in (Figure 1)

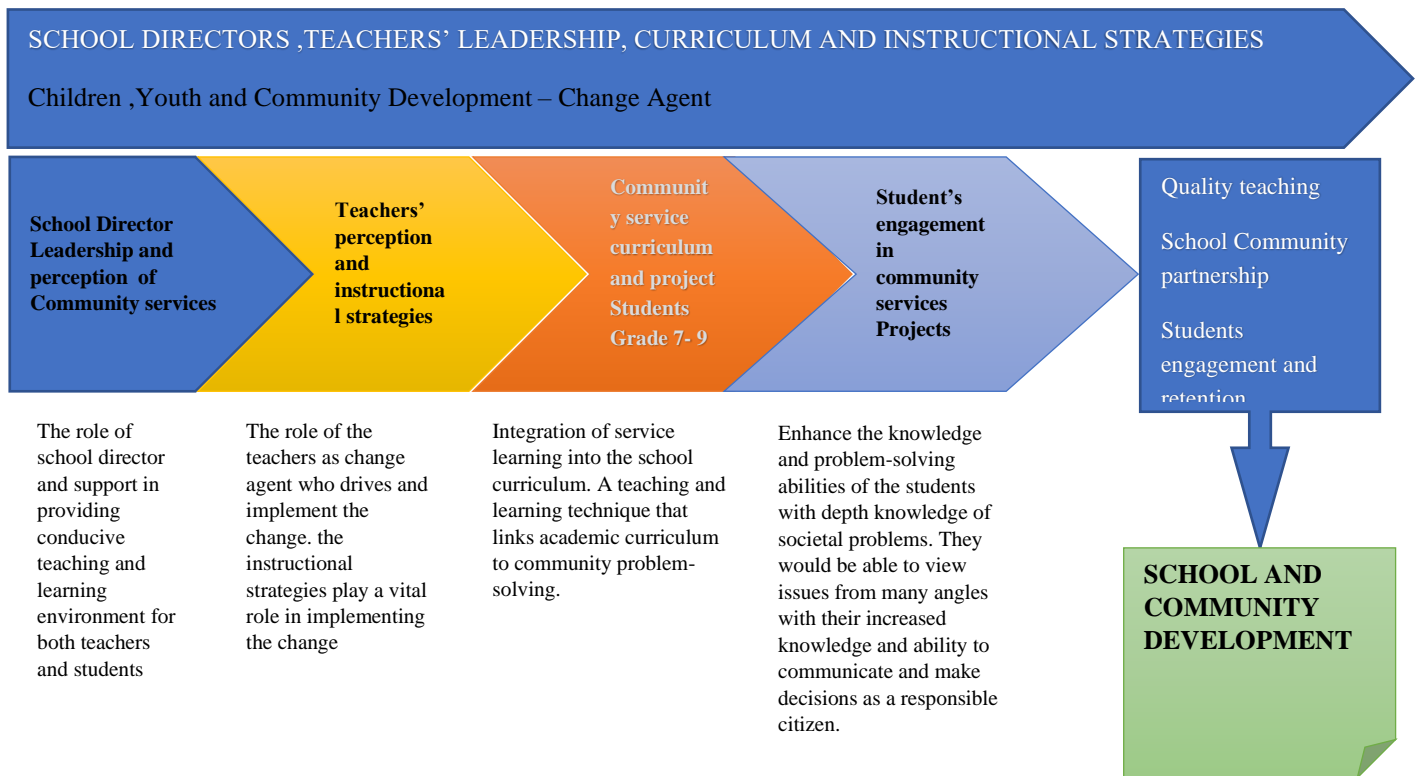


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Implementation of Community Services Curriculum at School

3.3 Perspectives of Community Service-learning Pedagogy

According to Levinson (2012), schools should be settings where students are given the freedom to put their community engagement and interest abilities to use in practice. Numerous studies also highlight the role of schools in encouraging youth service to the community and acknowledge that, despite the importance of the roles played by families and the community in creating a welcoming environment for student community engagement, the school plays a hugely different role. In a variety of community settings, the dynamics of informal education are examined in this course. The impact of social history and culture on students' social identities and academic success is examined by the class (Rosenberger, 2014). As stated by Wang & Calvano (2018), service learning (SL) is gaining popularity in business schools as a means to supplement traditional pedagogies. Although there is evidence that SL improves some learning outcomes, nothing is known about how this happens. The authors establish a conceptual framework that clarifies how service learning affects the learning outcomes of academic knowledge, career advancement, personal growth, and civic responsibility by activating the four cycles of experiential learning.

On the other hand, (Becker *et al.*, 2015) also stated that academic service-learning is a "high-impact technique" that is applied across a wide range of academic fields to give students access to practical learning opportunities and opportunities to develop lasting

relationships with faculty members and community partners. To enhance the learning process, promote civic responsibility, and improve communities, this teaching and learning approach combines meaningful community service with instruction and reflection. Academic service-learning pedagogy is used by teachers, according to research, since it helps students grasp the course subject, the problems facing the community, and their own social responsibilities as seen in (Darby & Newman, 2014) and (Reichert & Print, 2018) concluded that civic education and community service are frequently promoted in educational settings as ways to foster a vibrant and informed citizenry. They looked at the meaning of formal civic education, related subjects like community service, and the function of schools in encouraging students to engage in a range of service-related extracurricular and curricular activities. Their research, which involved multilevel evaluations of theoretical approaches, produced results that were remarkably consistent across two cohorts of Australian secondary schools. A startlingly small portion of students' desire to participate in future civic, community, and political activities may be attributed to their schools. This implies that civic participation, volunteerism, and other democratically inclined behaviours' must be learned. However, the responses to the issues of how, when, where, and in what manner it is learned influence our comprehension and application of social responsibility.

3.4 Community Service Perspectives from Around the World

According to Levinson (2012), schools should be places where students are empowered to practice and develop community interest and engagement skills. Many studies also emphasize the role of schools in fostering youth community service and acknowledge that even though family and community play crucial roles in creating a supportive environment for student community engagement, the school plays a far distinct role (Benson *et al.*, 2011.; Schools & 2006) (Cheon *et al.*, 2010). Important relationships serve as a buffer against risky behavior, helping students who participate in more service learning to achieve higher levels of academic (Benson, P. L. (2007) performance. Schools can promote resilience in teachers and staff, improve social competency in kids, strengthen relationships between students and adults, communicate high standards, maximize meaningful engagement, and form alliances with families and community resources. These contributions make the most of the qualities that enable adolescents to thrive during adolescence.

Considering examples around the world, community service in the United States is regularly compared to that in Canada. Research works in Europe and Australia revealed community service is an alternative for numerous criminal sentences as an alternative to imprisonment. In Australia for instance, civic learning and civic activity openings in school settings are expected to advance the improvement of dynamic and enlightened democratic citizens, a major objective of Australian education (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training, and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA] 2008). Flanagan (2010) noted that civic learning and community service activity openings that are available in school settings are commonly claimed to advance a dynamic and

educated citizenry. In their research, they examined what formal civic education and related topics like community service meant and the role of schools in students' participation in a variety of service-related curricular and extracurricular activities. Using multilevel analyses of theoretical approaches, their findings yielded quite stable results across two Australian secondary schools' cohort. Although their findings revealed that schools account for a shockingly small share in students' eagerness to take part in future civic, community, and political activities, the study failed to substantiate the reasons for the low account of schools' participation in civic and community service-related activities and this study aims to investigate the perceptions, experiences, and, beliefs of these school personnel who would be directly involved in acts that nudge the interests in community-based engagements.

Community service is seen as one of the ways democracies are supported and is considered significant in maintaining democratic institutions such as schools. John Dewey, many years ago argued for schools to serve as a key source for learning about democracy and its related subjects like civic and community participation

The implication of this is that civic engagement, community service, and other democracy-inclined acts must be learned. But the answers to the questions on where, how much, when, and in what ways it is learned help determine our understanding and practice of social responsibility.

As noted by (Preus *et al.*, 2016), American schools play a crucial role in preparing young people for citizenship, which is most times expressed in community service and/or engagement. The Corporation for National Community Service sponsored a national study of the prevalence of community service in k-12 public schools in 2008. They collected data on the scope of community service using surveys as previously conducted to establish the trend in school-based community service over the decade. Some of the key findings revealed a decline in the percentage of participation from 32% to 24%; the perceptions of 51% of elementary school principals in comparison with the secondary school principals was that their students were too young; 19% of the school principals noted that their school district policy encourages the incorporation of community service-learning into the curriculum while 28% were not aware if there was a policy that backed the integration up or not. These findings reveal a lot about how the experiences and the perceptions of school principals affect the level of community service that goes on in their schools whereas, there is no scholarly work that reveals the conduct of any related study in the contexts of this study and this is one of the gaps this study will address.

In South Africa, (Jordaan & Pretoria, 2007) conducted a study that aimed at determining teacher-training students' perceptions and attitudes about community service learning in the teacher-training curriculum before integrating such modules into their academic programs. They used a quantitative survey to measure the attitudes and perceptions of 168 third-year teacher-training students at a research university in South Africa. Their findings indicated that students who had prior knowledge of and/or participated in a community service project had favourable perceptions, and attitudes towards Community Service, considering the added value to their career development,

credits that would be earned, as well as personal and social development enhancement. The use of a quantitative survey to gather data on perceptions is considered a gap here as perceptions are not measurable, but are better gathered, using a qualitative instrument. This study will, therefore, use a qualitative data collection instrument to gather in-depth perceptions of the teachers and principals who are participants of the study. Another highlight of their study revealed the scantiness of the literature review of previous research on community Service in different disciplines, especially on teacher-training students' attitudes to and perceptions of Community Service. They noted it was a field that had not been much explored as the existing studies focused on teacher-training students' attitudes to and perceptions of Community Service after it had been integrated into the curriculum, or on the value, Community Service held for teaching and learning (Kuh, G. D., 2008).

In the context of Azerbaijan, the school instruction framework has experienced several difficult periods all throughout its history. Preeminent, is that the nation has been challenged to break off from obsolete approaches to civic instruction and community service ideas that were based on the dictator communist standards embraced in the Soviet period. The field of education has experienced a few changes since freedom in the early 1990s. Taking after educational changes, the subject of humans and participation in his community began to be taught in schools. The civic mission of the present-day education system in Azerbaijan is contained in the Education Law of the country, which states that secondary education ensures the physical and intellectual development of learners, acquisition of necessary knowledge, development of active civic/citizenship position based on healthy lifestyle and civic values, respect to national and universal values; rights and responsibilities for family, society, country, and environment (Education Law, 2009, amended in 2019, Article 19.2). Whether this civic mission is achieved remains a big question. (Wistrand, 2020) drawing on ethnographic data collected in Azerbaijan, examined the civics education program that existed in Azerbaijan in the 1990s and the early 2000s, before its incorporation into a newly created "life skills" (*həyat bilgisi* in Azerbaijani) course. The researcher gathered data from 5 different schools where she made observations and interacted with students, teachers, and, school administrators. In her findings, it was argued that a disconnect existed between curriculum reform and classroom practice that resulted in what she termed "missed opportunity" for the "first cohort of post-Soviet Azerbaijanis" to gain from a civics instruction program that could confer an important understanding of community engagement/service, social responsibility, and democracy and in this manner contribute valuable inputs to the concepts of community service and engagement, civic education, and democratic skills. The study's findings are reminiscent of the unpopularity of community service in the context. Besides, the study did not state what was measured in the observations and interactions with the students, teachers, and, administrators hence, a gap that is worthy to be rectified in further researches.

In Nigeria, community service is a feature of many higher education strategies that are seeking to respond to societal needs (Joint Education Trust, 1997). However, in many

African contexts, and especially in Nigeria, institutions of higher instruction are yet to interface with the community due to globalization and its challenging qualities and it is so because of the appallingly low commitment of African academics to research. A study conducted by Adekalu *et al.* (2018), noted a gap of no frantic correction efforts for the cognizance of career development through community service engagement in academic settings in Nigeria. Through their qualitative method, they sought the perceptions of (n-9) faculty in a conventional Nigerian university and their analysis revealed how faculty members can be attracted to community service for both societal and personal development. However, efforts to duplicate these kinds of studies in secondary schools are still laid back. The gap that they noted concerning the lack of relevant literature remains a gap that this current study noted as well.

3.5 The School as a Catalyst for Community Service

The role of the school as a catalyst for community service has emerged in recent years as one of the effusive topics in the current literature of many academic fields, including this. To be realistic, schools are the open setting in which young people spend the greatest whole of their time from age 6 until 17, and instructors are exceptionally arranged to impact civic information, demeanours, and behaviours across socio-economic groups (Preus *et al.* 2016.) Each society, irrespective of its measure is desirous of and works towards achieving levels of development. Interestingly, the school as an educational institution plays a vital part in encouraging the much-wanted improvement as education is key to each society's development and a vital tool for national advancement. Since schools do not exist in segregation but are hosted by communities, there needs to be a relationship that would help set up and encourage mutually beneficial collaborations between both parties (Olanrele *et al.*, 2011).

Preus, Payne, Wick, & Glomsk (2016) in a study, explored the perspective of young school students on civic engagement and other community services by examining why a group of high school students participated in community engagements, the benefits they gained doing that, the effect of their activities on their school and community, and their recommendations on how the school and its personnel can help improve community service participation among young people. They employed the case-study method which started by obtaining permission from the stakeholders and monitoring the social media posts of the (n-13) participants. The study also used a survey to gather information on the students before they were interviewed. The researchers noted that their paramount focus was to gain the perspectives of students through interviews and analyse their data in light of youth development studies. Their findings affirmed past researches recommending the two-way nature of improvement, in which the students with basic developmental abilities both contributed to the community and gathered extra personal and social forte as a result of their engagement. In the recommendations of the researchers, they called out for the school personnel to cultivate a school climate favourable to civic engagements that included community services. Besides, teachers should be more intentional through meaningful dialogues with students on community

problems and how they could be prepared to be socially responsible towards them. However, it would have been more significant if the perceptions of the school personnel were also investigated to learn their perceptions towards the recommendations and the subject of community service itself.

3.6 Community Service and the 21st Century Skills

From the perspective of leadership and developing 21st-century skills, (Boomer *et al.*, 2005) noted that if each student is to end up a beneficial, fruitful adult, we must make schools that provide instruction that is both thorough and significant. No longer can schools' success be judged based on the proficiency of content alone but schools must also be moved forward in grasping the full extent of knowledge, abilities, and expressions that will permit students to be effective in a global world (Luterbach *et al.*, 2011) several significant emerging content areas that are germane to the success of youths in the 21st century to include civic literacy and social responsibility. Therefore, the strengthening of community service is a basic procedure in giving a rigorous and relevant curriculum that can prepare students to succeed in the 21st century (Kaufman, 2013).

3.7 Literature Review Summary

According to Bamber & Hankin (2011), schools ought to make reciprocally advantageous affiliations with communities to encourage the sharing and transmission of suitable information and transformation of learning utilizing service learning. Each society is faced with shifting degrees of social issues and community service is to a large extent, an organized reaction to many of the different social issues in society, and the school is undoubtedly believed to be one of the instruments to ensure a provision of panacea to these issues. While previous studies on community service have delved into college student experiences, cause and effect, community-based activities/experiences, and all other related studies, there has been little research support for community service in high schools, especially in the study's contexts. The experiences and perceptions of the school leaders and teachers who work closely with the students and communities are also not explicitly covered in the research. This study, therefore, explores the experiences and perceptions of the school leaders and the teachers as well as the ways schools as institutions can strengthen community service.

4. Method

One of the major components within the undertakings of research is the choice of suitable methodology as diverse research purposes require diverse research designs and analysis techniques (John W. Creswell, 2007). As the study is one that seeks to explore the school as an instrument that could strengthen community service, the study used qualitative research methodology and instruments to find answers to the questions that guide the research because qualitative research seeks to understand concepts, experiences, perceptions, or opinions. It collects and analyses non-numerical data in the forms of

audio, video, or texts to gain in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research (Creswell, 2007). This study, therefore, used the oral interview, semi-structured interview questionnaire, and document analysis (collection, and examination of lesson notes and lesson plans) to gather data. Having considered that qualitative research design is most times considered to be subjective and the reliability questionable, this study addressed the qualitative reliability through a good number of qualitative research credibility strategies. The strategies utilized to enhance the study's credibility during the design and implementation of the research are described in depth in the validity, reliability of instruments, and generalizability section of this chapter.

4.1 Research Design

This study is a qualitative one that allows the collection of non-numerical data to dig deep into the research problem. The whole data collection begins and ends with qualitative procedures to gain the perceptions of the school heads and teachers in two different contexts, discuss how they relate, and identify the ways the school functions to strengthen community service. The oral interview was used to get data from the principals, an open-ended questionnaire from the teachers, and document analysis (collection and examination) of the teachers' lesson plans/unit was done too.

4.2 Participant Selection Process

In conducting this research, the participants' selection process followed the research protocol for an ethical procedure. ADA University's School of Education approved the letters for the selection of the participant schools and their teachers for the data collection process and sent the letters via email. The consent of the participant teachers and principals was also sought and gained through letters sent via email.

4.3 Study Group

The selection sample for this study uses convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling that allows the researcher to draw the sample from some part of the larger population that is easily accessible. The population of this study is not large as it is a qualitative study that used convenience sampling due to the prevailing circumstances under which it is conducted. The factor of the language barrier was also considered in choosing private schools that use the English language as a medium of instruction and these schools were chosen in convenience because of the readiness of the school heads and teachers to provide the necessary data for the study. There are two secondary schools in all, the principals of these schools, and four teachers who teach grades 7-9 in each of these schools in Baku, Azerbaijan, and Lagos, Nigeria. The teachers who teach English Language, Humanities (classified as Global Perspective in Nigeria), History, and Science were chosen based on the recommendations of the school principals and their relevance to the subject matter. It is worthy of note that the science teachers were chosen too to check if the general perception that only humanities subjects are mostly linked to the

topic of community service is true. Below in Table 1 is the participants' selection and sample size.

Table 1: Participants Sample

Number of Private Schools	Population for Convenience Sampling	Teachers' Teaching Grades	Total Participants Size Qualitative Data Collection
2 Nigeria (1) Azerbaijan (1)	2 Private Secondary Schools Nigeria (1) Azerbaijan (1)	Grades 7-9	Teachers: 8 Nigeria (4) Azerbaijan (4) Principals: 2 Nigeria (1) Azerbaijan (1)

4.4 Data Collection Tools

The data for this study was collected using a semi-structured interview with 2 school Principals in Baku, Azerbaijan, and Lagos, Nigeria. Both interviews were conducted online on Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions. The semi-structured interview questionnaire too was administered online through emails with four teachers who teach English Language, Humanities (classified as Global Perspective in Nigeria), History, and Science in each research context. The document analysis was retrieved online via emails and cloud apps. The result and the analysis of the data collected are found in chapter four of this research study.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Azerbaijan Participants' Demography

This section of the study provides the demography of the Azerbaijan context participants, and this is done to help have an overview of the educational levels of the teachers and principals and their years of experience. A knowledge of this will help to have an insight into why they hold a perception of community service and how this contributes to their roles as school leaders and instructional facilitators in their work respectively. The first group of participants consists of one principal (n = 1, female; experience - 15 years). While the second group consists of four teachers in Azerbaijan (n = 3 females, n = 1 male). The subjects, years of experience, and education levels of the participant teachers in Azerbaijan are: English Language - 16years (M.A); Humanities / Global Perspective - 15 years (M.A); History – 13 years (M.A); and Science – 15 years (MSc).

5.2 Nigeria Participants' Demography

Just as it is stated in the Azerbaijan context, the demography of the Nigerian context participants is also done to help have an idea of their educational levels and their teaching experiences to how they understand the topic of community service and how their experiences may have shaped their responses. The first group of participants consists of

one principal (n = 1, female; Experience – 16 years). The second group consists of four teachers in Nigeria (n = 2 male, n = 2 female). The subjects, years of experience, and education levels of the participant teachers in Nigeria are: English Language- 15 years (M. A); Humanities/ Global Perspective-15years (M.A.); History-13years (M.A.); and Science-16years (MSc).

5.3 Responses and Perceptions on Community Service from Azerbaijan Principals and Teachers

Here, the principal perceived community service as 'giving back to the community. Her deep reflective responses looked at what schools used to be in the past and what they should be doing in this era. She reflected that the system of education she followed was very routine, necessarily not always applicable to real-life situations. Whereas it should go beyond learning theory and regurgitating information to the practicality of ideas such as giving back to the community in beneficial services. She created awareness with her response on parents' lack of time for their children's education and students' focus on themselves without much thought for their environment. This led the study to the understanding of why this principal perceived and advocated sensitizing the parents to get more involved in their children's education/projects and become role models, 'educating students from the early school years to think globally, act locally' and 'the teachers' use of service-learning instructional strategy to make sure that whatever students learn in their academics is put into society.

The G.P teacher in this context perceived community service as 'learning which encourages individual to give back to the society. She opined that 'sensitizing the students on various issues around the globe and discussing great individual contributions; 'helping students create community service goals that they can regularly reflect on' are ways to help strengthen community service through the school. Furthermore, she perceived that 'educating students that they can contribute to society at any age; involving the parents and teachers to be role models.

'Mindfulness brought into learning.'; 'Educating students on equality in the society that no one should be looked down on'; 'small acts like walking/cycling can make a difference instead of using the car' are all ways the school can function to strengthen community service.

The English language teacher sees community service as activities and actions that benefit the community. 'She believes 'it is a responsibility to help someone else'; 'educate students and invite parents to be responsible by ensuring that somebody else has similar access to what is free for them' as well as 'coming together and contributing to make our society a better place.' In addition to that, her perceptions are that 'creating awareness on community needs', 'sensitizing kids to understand giving back to the community/offering service to the community', 'educating both students and parents on outreach opportunities' are ways schools could help strengthen community service.

The History teacher's perception of community service is 'not being indifferent to those that need help; or what benefits others.' She also thinks that the school should

'regularly inform students about everything that happens in the community and needs a change.' On the part of the science teacher, community service and the school's role in strengthening community service are 'accomplishing some activity/action/project for sake of the society' and 'schools raising awareness among students and teachers' on community service best practices. He added that the 'administrations of schools and the teachers should encourage and support each other in collaborations while focusing on more educational projects.' A striking insight from this teacher is about more parental involvement and diversification of community service actions while showing students how to take on lifelong projects.

5.4 Responses from Azerbaijan Context on Community Service Activities

The community service activities that the Azerbaijan context principal highlighted included 'raising funds and getting things to the soldiers at the Azerbaijan-Armenia war in 2020'; 'fundraising to buy books'; 'tree-planting drives', 'being in the forefront for any kind of national program or anything that is celebrated or commemorated in the country'; 'students working with the local schools to help kids with English literacy and showing the teachers resources that they could use for teaching'. The G.P teacher had joined her school to engage in community service activities where her students visited a village and painted the walls using folk art learned in the art lesson to depict the importance of trees and animals around us; created a Robin Hood army collecting food and served it to people in the nearby slums; did an awareness program of educating girl child using street play performed by students in nearby villages and market places. The English language teacher joined her school to be involved in 'clothing, food, and toiletries donations for families and soldiers who were impacted by the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020'; 'made bird homes; 'collected diapers, wipes, food, and clothing for babies in an orphanage. The History teacher mentioned that she had been engaged in her school's visit to the war-torn areas to support soldiers at war, as well as a 'visit to an animal shelter and orphanage homes to give donations and provisions.'

According to the Science teacher, he had previously partaken in the community service activities of 'visiting animal shelters, orphanages, alms-house, special care kids, and frontline soldiers with donations and provisions. In addition, he joined the 'tree planting drive of his school and helped 'raise awareness about the environment. Azerbaijan has a growing culture of volunteerism and civic engagement. People take part in community service activities including volunteering for social and environmental causes, helping out at-risk populations, and working to preserve local cultures. Youth in Azerbaijan are strongly encouraged to take part in volunteer work. Volunteer programs, projects, and initiatives are organized by schools, universities, and youth organizations to help young people grow as leaders, give back to society, and have a good impact. Sustainability and environmental protection are important to Azerbaijan. Tree planting, cleanup efforts, and awareness-raising initiatives to promote sustainability and environmental protection are frequent examples of community service activities. Community service projects in Azerbaijan concentrate on maintaining and promoting the

country's rich cultural heritage. To conserve traditional arts, crafts, and music, as well as to organize cultural events, festivals, and exhibitions. In Azerbaijan, NGOs, governmental organizations, and local communities work together on community service projects. Government partnerships and assistance play a vital role in providing resources, coordination, and policy frameworks for community service initiatives while NGOs play a significant role in their conception and execution. The Azerbaijani government supports organizations and people engaged in volunteer work because it understands the value of such endeavours. For their contributions to community development, people and organizations get honours and awards.

5.5 Responses and Perceptions on Community Service from Nigerian Principals and Teachers

Starting with the Nigerian context principal, she holds the perception that 'community service is being useful in the community by looking at and helping to empower the community positively'. She also perceives the parents as a community as she takes the position that 'parents are very busy and do not have the time for their children's education.' This she said in her consideration of the question of what problems the community faces from the perspective of a school leader. She further noted that 'schools are not many and good enough to serve the purpose of the community.' Her other thoughts included 'educating students and doing a lot of follow up; communicating with the parents and engaging them in meetings'. She believed that the school 'has much impact to make on the community but funding is a bane that makes schools do things differently. The collaboration of schools in pulling forces together to take on community-beneficial projects is a major perception she holds on how the school can strengthen community service. Unexpectedly, she asserted the difference between the government-owned and the private-owned schools and that everyone does their own, without much of a relationship with the community. The G.P teacher considered community service to be 'sensitizing people in a community to come together and work for the good of the larger community. She noted that creating awareness of what a community needs, 'building effective communication with parents and other stakeholders, teaching teamwork, social skills, social connectedness and sensitivity to students' are ways the school can help strengthen community service. The English language teacher perceived community service as a 'very sensible thing that relates very clearly with the community.' He further noted that educating students on the 'revival of the spirit of Ubuntu', 'teachers creating awareness on community needs, sharing ideas and helping each other develop professionally' are ways the schools can function to strengthen community service. He also thinks that 'big schools could go to local schools to conduct diagnostic tests on intelligent students to bring them to be tutored in the good school, which is a symbiotic relationship.'

The History teacher's perception of community service is not in any way different from the perceptions of other teachers in this context. Her school has a Humanitarian co-curricular group, and she also included a dimension of 'volunteering for the development

and improvement of a community in her response and believes that is one of the education schools should give their students. Although she teaches in a private school, she extended her perceptions to the public school by commenting that 'the public education sector is in shambles, and she thinks 'bigger schools should adopt a school within their community.' This 'adoption' term coincides with perception from the English language and Science teachers surprisingly. Finally, she regarded the media as an agent that 'should share positive news about the few schools that are doing their bits to change the narratives of communities within them.' The Science teacher's perception revealed a close thought to other teachers' thus: 'giving back on skills and knowledge acquired while in school to the community.' He opined that it is very necessary and more efficient to extend topics taught in the classroom, make them more relatable, and applied outside the four walls of the classroom. He suggested that bigger schools 'should have a daughter school' to encourage a mutual interaction between the school, the community, which is also a thought shared by the History teacher on how the school can strengthen community service. Scale and diversity: Nigeria is a populous and culturally diverse country, with a wide range of community service activities taking place across various regions. These activities encompass areas such as education, healthcare, poverty alleviation, environmental conservation, and youth empowerment. Nigeria has a thriving NGO sector that is essential for advancing projects for providing community services. In Nigeria, a large number of NGOs are actively involved in tackling social problems, offering necessary services, and organizing volunteers to have a beneficial impact on local communities. Youth in Nigeria often participate in volunteer work. Through student groups, youth organizations, and religious organizations, many young people donate their time. They take part in activities including skill-building programs, neighbourhood clean-ups, mentoring programs, and advocacy campaigns. Nigeria deals with a wide range of socioeconomic issues, such as poverty, subpar healthcare, and restricted access to education. Community service initiatives frequently centre on tackling these issues through aiding underserved groups, supporting educational programs, and enhancing access to healthcare through outreach initiatives and medical missions. In Nigeria, grassroots initiatives are frequently the driving force behind community service projects. To address particular issues, local communities' band together to identify needs, gather resources, and carry out projects. These initiatives stand out for their robust community involvement, sense of ownership, and in-depth comprehension of regional settings.

5.6 Ethical Permission Information of the Study

Data on this study was gathered from individuals who were human in both Nigeria and Azerbaijan. The institution approved the data collection protocol, and we got informed consent from the participants before we started gathering data. This informed consent allowed the participants to decline or accept their participation in the study. All COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) guidelines were adhered to in this study.

6. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

6.1 Discussion

School principals and teachers play crucial roles in shaping and improving community service through school leadership. Their perceptions, attitudes, and actions significantly impact the success and effectiveness of community service initiatives within educational institutions, some key reasons why their involvement is important as found in the data collected from the school principals and teachers indicated that they perceived themselves as serving as role models for students (Higbea *et al.*, 2019). When they actively participate in community service and demonstrate a commitment to making a positive difference, they inspire students to engage in similar activities. They help children develop empathy, compassion, and a feeling of social obligation by emulating their principles of community service. Community service projects bring together students, teachers, families, and community members, which helps to build a sense of identity and cohesion. She also perceives the parents as a community as she takes the position that 'parents are very busy and do not have the time for their children's education' (Reichert *et al.*, 2020). Teachers and principals can utilize community service as a springboard to forge connections and deepen bonds among many stakeholders. Schools transform into hubs of community engagement and collaboration by enlisting families and community members in service projects (Rosenberger, 2014).

By developing a culture of service, teachers and principals can influence a school's general ethos and core beliefs. They create a culture of giving back to society throughout the entire school by encouraging and highlighting volunteering in the community. Students are urged to take an active role and a sense of collective accountability is fostered when community service becomes an essential component of the identity of the institution. The effectiveness of community service programs can be evaluated by teachers and principals. They can help with setting clear goals, developing criteria for evaluating performance, and keeping tabs on the outcomes of service projects. School administrators should regularly assess and consider the results of community service projects in order to maximize the benefits for both students and the community. They should point out areas that need work, celebrate successes, and make any required changes to their strategy (Galvan *et al.*, 2018).

For the purpose of enhancing community service initiatives, principals and teachers can establish and maintain partnerships with nearby enterprises, charities, and residents. These partnerships enable students to work on projects that specifically address local needs, offer beneficial resources, and increase the effect of their volunteer efforts. School administrators can use their networks to establish contacts and find funding for community service initiatives. Students can be given the resources they need to lead community service initiatives by their teachers and administrations. By encouraging student-driven efforts and providing guidance and support, teachers can aid students in becoming more independent and responsible. When students take

ownership of their service projects, they develop leadership skills, teamwork abilities, and confidence in their potential to effect change.

According to Wang & Calvano (2018), the impact of service-learning pedagogy is huge on students. Integrating community service into the curriculum is a task that can be shared by school administrators and instructors. Education professionals may give students meaningful experiences that relate what they learn in the classroom to current problems by implementing service-learning initiatives. Together, principals and teachers can find instances where academic material can be used to carry out community service, resulting in richer and more fulfilling learning opportunities.

7. Conclusion

Considering the data obtained from this research, it is evident that school leadership has a huge impact on the approach to teaching methods such as Service Learning. The perceptions of these school leaders about Service Learning have an even more profound impact and this goes a long way to determine the quality of lessons and classroom activities to enhance teaching and learning that engages students to become pro-community participators and global citizens that will drive positive changes in their respective communities for the betterment of all. It is worthy of note that some of the actions the participants of the study took started on a simple level of awareness that progressed into a bigger picture which stems whether implicitly or explicitly from an understanding of what change 21st-century education has to drive, the teaching methods to engage students and the actions needed to take to make our world an abode of excellence. In conclusion, teachers and school administrators are crucial in enhancing community service through good leadership. They influence the culture of service in educational institutions and give students the tools they need to become engaged, responsible citizens through their views, deeds, and support networks. School leaders give students the chance to gain important skills, have a positive influence, and help their communities by incorporating community service into the curriculum, encouraging partnerships, and developing student leadership.

7.1 Recommendation

This article discusses the role of school directors and teachers regarding the influence of school principals and teachers that could assist students become more involved in their communities to develop social assets. It emphasizes the significance of school administrators and teachers as leaders and the part they may play in fostering goodwill and a sense of community in their educational institutions. The advantages of community participation in education and how it might enhance kids' educational settings. It emphasizes how important leadership and the school are in developing a culture of cooperation and helping one another, as well as the numerous ways in which community collaborations can serve to forge stronger bonds and enhance the performance of pupils. The value of capable and successful leadership is emphasized, and it is recommended

that leaders be prepared to collaborate with many communities with the goal of forging constructive connections and fostering a climate of engagement and encouragement.

Conflict of Interest Statement

I, Adedoyin Adebolarinwa hereby declare that there is no conflict of interest in the writing processes of this article. We did not receive any grant or financial support to write this article. It is my intellectual property and in collaboration with my co-author Oluwaseyi Olubunmi Sodiya.

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