

Extent of Community Participation in Funding of Secondary School in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State

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Abstract

The study aimed at determining the extent of community participation in funding of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. All the 59 principals and 1,922 teachers in the 59 public secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone comprises the population of the study. Four hundred and forty three (443) respondents out of which 59 principals and 384 teachers formed the sample of the study. This sample was drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A researcher's structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The results showed that communities to a very high extent participate in the funding of secondary schools. Based on the aforementioned, it was recommended that government in conjunction with state Ministry of Education and Secondary Education Board (SEB) should make provisions for constant seminars/workshops

and conferences for principals, community members and traditional rulers on the need for effective community participation in the funding of secondary schools.

Keywords: Community, Community Participation, Funding, Education, Secondary Education

Introduction

Education is regarded as an instrument par excellence in achieving national development. Hence, No nation can rise more relevant than it's education. As a result of this, countries in the world are investing heavily on education to position it on sound pedestal to achieve their national goals and aspirations. Education whether at the lower or higher level does not exists on its own, but is achieved through available human and material resources.

According to Onuselogu (2007), education is seen as a means of enlightenment and a process of training and preparation for useful living in the community. Education is also a vital instrument for national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Consequently, the formulation of ideas, its integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education. This is to say that education is the process of training and developing the mental potentials, physical knowledge, skill and character of individuals through formal and informal schooling. Education was brought by Christian religion in virtually all communities within Abakaliki Education zone of Ebonyi State, without the efforts of the colonial government. In the early years of Christian education, the then British Colonial Government in Nigeria concerned herself more with the establishment, control and expansion of political government and exploitation of the nation's Natural resources rather than education (Igwe, 1999, Obomanu, 2010; Ugwuaji, 2012). The voluntary agencies were in control and management of funding, provision and management of education till mid 19th century. These agencies mainly comprised Christian Missionary bodies such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Wesleyan Methodist Church Mission (WMCM), and the Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) that were in charge of primary and secondary education (Obomanu, 2010).

Secondary education is that level of education which children receive after primary education and before the tertiary level. Secondary school level is therefore the bridge between the primary and tertiary level (Unachukwu, 2014). The broad aims of secondary education according to NPE (2004) include preparation for useful living within the society and preparation for higher education. Secondary education is made up of Junior and Senior Secondary School level. Secondary school being an institution of learning is usually situated in a place or community whether rural or urban area. According to Owoeye and Yara (2012) in Nigeria context, the Local Community of a school is often a rural or urban town.

A community is referred to as a group of people living together in one place or having a common religion, race or culture. It can also be seen as a social unit larger than a small village. Hornby (2001) defined a community as a group of people living in same place or having particular characteristics in common. According to Scott (2001) a community is seen as a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to "rejoice together, mourn together", and to delight in each other make others' condition their own. A community is a group of people sharing the same geographical location and under the same government. Members of a community are likely to possess similarly of attitudes and interests. There include parents/guardians and among others. Ugwu (2000) described a community as a people obliged to one another not because of the place of birth, race, sex, religion, but people bound to one another and governed by

shared taste, specific needs or common interest. They develop a strong sense of belonging when activities are shared by the same group of people in a setting. Community participation is seen according to Greenwood (2009) as a process by which consultation in decision making, goal setting, profit sharing, teamwork and other such measures through which the community tries to increase its members' commitment to collective objectives is enhanced and achieved. What this means is that the generality of the individual members of the community are directly or indirectly involved in the activity. Community participation in other words means that many people are involved, the activity is not considered to be the special province of a knowledgeable few (Norman, 2000). From the aforementioned, it is deduced that community participation is not limited to taking part in facility construction only but extends to the provision of schools for the education of her members. Evidence has shown that community establishes schools for the education of her members and also actively participate in the funding of such schools. Funding depicts the provision of economic resources (funds) which invariably means money for a project, a business or any other private or public institutions. Moris (1990), defined funding as the provision of money to an organization for the achievement of organizational goals. Igbiniedion (2006), described funding as the application of money, men and material to the efforts aimed at the achievement of goals and objectives of the community or other educational institutions like the school. Okpala (2003); Okwor (1997) which stated that communities through parents' teachers association (PTA) assist in the funding of education; and Tobeho (2000) who maintained that parents fund schools through fees and other channels. Ugwu (2000) stated that the community forms the Parents Teachers Association with enormous functions such as fund raising, maintenance of school discipline and participatory of efforts of the community to building schools, so as to afford their children the benefits of educating. Stressing the necessity of community participation in the running of Secondary Schools in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education, Stated that, "School System and consequently their management and day-to-day administration shall grow out of the cultural and social ethos of the community which they serve" (FRN, 2004)

In this era of economic recession and globalization, the government or the school administrators cannot manage schools alone but with combined efforts of the community. This is because the management of schools has become very difficult with its unique problems as posited by (Obi, 2003). According to Obi these problems arise from such areas like increase in cost of education, technological influence explosive students' enrolment, school-community conflicts and staff and students indiscipline. The educational system according to FRN (2004) is cost intensive and demands adequate funding and specialist personnel, Science laboratories, technical workshops, music and language laboratories and art studios to be constructed and experts to teach these specialist subjects. These require adequate funding to enable the school acquire resources needed for effective teaching and learning. Taiwo in Igwe (1999) stated that the national policy on education was made at a time when there was economic boom, but its implementation is taking place at a time of economic 'doom'. With the present state of the nation's economy, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement the education programme satisfactorily in the various communities across the country without the communities active involvement in the funding of such programme. Most schools in rural areas, according to Ugwu (2000); Olagboye (2004); Obomanu (2010), lack human and material resources for development and maintenance of the existing infrastructures due to illiteracy and lack of exposure on the part of the community members and are often neglected by the government unlike their urban counterparts. Abdulkareem

(2011), observed that before and shortly after independence in Nigeria, schools were adequately funded while available physical facilities were sufficient for staff and students, but, presently due to some numerous challenges in the Nigerian education sector, it becomes paramount for most of the schools (primary and secondary) to have PTA to assist in solving their problems. In the light of the above, there is the need to critically examine the extent of community participation in funding secondary schools with a view to re-engineering secondary schools to achieve their aim and objectives within the structure of educational system.

It is against this backdrop that the researchers focused on the extent of community participation in funding secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The general purpose of the study was to determine the extent of community participation in funding education in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone as perceived by the principals and teachers. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

How communities participate in funding secondary education in Abakaliki Education Zone as viewed by principals and teachers.

The Research Question for this Study is

To what extent do principals and teachers view community participation in funding secondary education in Abakaliki Education Zone?

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance

H01 There is no significant difference between the mean response scores of principals and teachers on the extent of community participation in funding education in Abakaliki Education zone.

Methods

The design of the study was descriptive survey. The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Abakaliki Education zone is made up of four local government areas namely: Abakaliki, Ebonyi, Izzi and Ohaukwu local government areas. The population of the study comprised of all the principals and teachers in the 59 secondary schools in the zone. There are 59 principals and 1,922 teachers in the 59 Secondary Schools in the zone (source: Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) Unit, SEB, Abakaliki, January, 2016). The sample for the study is 443 respondents. All the 59 principals were used for the study, so there was no sampling of the principals because they are few in number. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 20% of the teachers from the zone. This gave a total of 384 teachers. On the whole, there were 443 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher's structured questionnaire. It was a four point rating scale. The face validity of the instrument was determined by giving it to experts in the department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation option), and Educational Administration and Planning, all from the Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The reliability of the instrument was determined by a preliminary survey in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Using Cronbach Alpha coefficient to determine the reliability of the instrument, a positive reliability index of 0.90 was obtained which was an indication that the instrument was reliable. The researcher with the help of six research assistants administered copies of the Questionnaire to the respondents. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research question. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question: To what extent do principals and teachers view community participation in funding secondary education in Abakaliki Education Zone?

Table 1

Mean and standard deviation of the responses of principals and teachers on the extent communities participate in funding secondary education

S/N	Items	Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1.	Communities fund the construction of structures such as classrooms, toilet, chairs and tables	Principals	59	3.29	.56	High Extent
		Teachers	384	3.29	.72	High Extent
2.	Communities fund the installation and maintenance of technical workshops, Home economics laboratories, science laboratories	Principals	59	2.30	.65	Low Extent
		Teachers	384	2.44	.62	Low Extent
3.	Communities fund the renovation of dilapidated buildings and maintenance of functional equipment like generator	Principals	59	2.22	.53	Low Extent
		Teachers	384	2.40	.67	Low Extent
4.	Communities help to employ teachers for subject that lack teachers in your school	Teachers	384	2.97	.61	High Extent
		Principals	59	2.74	.91	High Extent
5.	Community support sponsoring school activities like prize giving day, sports festivals and parent's day	Teachers	384	2.76	.63	Low Extent
		Principals	59	2.13	.79	Low Extent
6.	Community support sponsoring school academic competitions and other extracurricular activities.	Teachers	384	2.58	.72	High Extent
		Principals	59	3.06	.83	High Extent
7.	Sourcing for funds for the schools from other organizations or wealthy individuals	Teachers	384	2.68	.84	High Extent
		Principals	59	2.96	.86	High Extent
		Teachers	384	2.85	.42	High Extent
		Principals	59	2.47	.44	Low Extent

The analysis of data in Table 1 showed the mean response scores of the principals and teachers on the extent of community participation on funding secondary education in Abakaliki Education zone with their corresponding standard deviations. Table 1 revealed that the respondents had their respective mean scores with respect to the 7 items with overall

mean scores of 2.47 and 2.85 for the principals and teachers respectively. Standard deviation of 0.45 and 0.42 showed that the responses of the two groups did not vary much. It implied that with principals' responses, communities to a low extent participate in funding of secondary education in Abakaliki Education Zone while the teachers' responses revealed that communities to a high extent participate in funding of secondary education in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Table 2

T-test analysis of the responses of principals and teachers on the extent communities participate in funding of secondary school education

Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-calc	Sig. (2-tailed)
Principals	59	2.9709	.44767	441	-2.966	.003
Teachers	389	3.1484	.42491			

The analysis of data in the above table showed that the probability associated with the calculated value of t (-2.966) was 0.003. Since the probability value of 0.003 was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not accepted. Hence, there was a significant difference between the mean response scores of principals and those of teachers on the extent of community participation in funding of secondary school education in Abakaliki Education zone in favour of the teachers. This means that, in teachers' opinion, communities to a high extent participate in the funding of secondary education in Abakaliki Education zone.

Discussion

In order to determine the extent of community participation in the funding of secondary schools in Abakaliki Education zone, the opinions of principals and teachers were sought. The findings of the study revealed that the opinions of the respondents, principals and teachers, vary. In some of the items, the responses of the respondents implied that the communities participate to a high extent in the funding of secondary schools while in some, their responses showed that the communities to a low extent participate in the funding of the secondary schools in Abakaliki education zone. The overall mean response score of the principals showed that the communities to a low extent participate in funding secondary education in Abakaliki Education Zone while the teachers' overall mean response score indicated that communities to a high extent participate in funding secondary education in Abakaliki Education Zone. The findings also revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of community participation in funding secondary education in Abakaliki Education zone in favour of the teachers. Thus, communities to a high extent participate in the funding of secondary school in Abakaliki Education zone. This finding agreed with the findings of Okpala (2003); Okwor (1997) which stated that communities through parents' teachers association (PTA) assist in the funding of education; and Tobeho (2000) who maintained that parents fund schools through fees and other channels. In their respective studies, they found that some influential members of the communities make donations to schools for effective administration of the school by principals.

Conclusion and Implications

Secondary school is an institution created by the community for its own continued enhanced existence. Though the secondary school is a community of its own, it exists in a large external community which could be the town, state or the nation. The running of secondary schools is

capital intensive and so requires every hand on deck to achieve academic excellence. Thus, communities need to assist the present day government in funding secondary school for sustainable improvement in educational system, and consequently the development of the nation and eradication of hunger and poverty through acquisition of skills and competencies in school. The implications of the finding of this study is that a proper awareness, orientation and education of the community members, who are also the members of the Parents - Teachers Association (PTA) on the need to assist the school financially is of paramount importance. This will enable the schools to be better equipped for standard and quality education in teaching and learning process to improve the quality of school leavers. Again, it will boost the morale of the teaching and none teaching staff which will in turn benefit the society at large.

Recommendations

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

Government as well as the State Ministry of Education and Secondary Education Board (SEB), should make provisions for constant seminars/workshops and conferences for principals and community members on the need for effective community participation in the funding of secondary school.

The community should deeply be involved in the funding, procurement and maintenance of secondary schools for the achievement of educational goals in the community

The strengthening of the Parents – Teacher association to assist the school financially and otherwise should be advocated and made functionality.

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