ENHANCEMENT OF PRINCIPALS' RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SBMC) IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH EAST REGION OF NIGERIA

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Abstract
The researchers examined enhancement of principals' relationship with school based management committee (SBMC) in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 19,880 which comprised of 994 principals and 18,886 SBMC in the South-East Region of Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw 2,239 respondents for the sample of the study. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts while the reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha method and it yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.89 and 0.79 for clusters I and II respectively and the overall coefficient of the entire instrument was 1.68. The researcher together with five research assistants collected data for the study. A 95% return rate of the instrument administered was recorded. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that principals' relationship with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education in the South-East was to a high extent. It was also revealed that principals' relationship with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluation in public secondary schools in the South-East was also to a high extent. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that principals and members of SBMC should launch media campaigns through television, radio, social media and print. Use compelling stories, testimonials, infographics and success stories to showcase the transformative power of education.

Keywords: Enhancement, Principals' Relationship, School Based Management Committee (SBMC), Public Secondary Schools

Introduction

School Based Management Committee (SBMC) has been defined in different ways by different writers and authors, for example Ayeni and Ibekun (2013), defined SBMC as the process of decentralization of power and authority from government to significant stakeholders to perform statutory responsibilities in the administration, monitoring, evaluation and review of education policies, ensuring effective teaching and learning among others, for improved learning outcomes. Cheng (2016), sees school based management (SBM) as tasks that are set according to the characteristics and needs of the school itself and therefore school members have a much greater autonomy and responsibility for the use of administration to solve problems and carry out effective education activities, for the long-term development of the school. In view of Caldwell & Spinks (2018), they see school based management as a school system of education to which there has been decentralized a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions related to the centrally determined framework of set goals, policies and standards. The definitions show that in schools which practice SBMC policy, transfer of authority takes place, giving schools some degree of decision making.

The School-Based Management (SBM) framework in Nigeria started during the colonial era when School Management Committee (SMC) oversaw and raised attention for schools (Caldwell, 2005). During this time, responsibilities of SMCs, like raising assert and ensuring effective

appropriation and utilization of the assets were considered priceless. The global reform of education of the 1990s and 2000s influenced the Nigerian Government to institutionalize the SBM system because it was obvious that funding and managing education is better decentralized for improved relationship. Caldwell (2005) stressed that School-Base Management system was strengthened in 2005 when the National Council on Education (NCE) at its 52nd Meeting directed that all schools should establish School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) to ensure that local communities involve in the schools' decision making process. In consolidation to the establishment of SBMC in schools, Ahmed and Kazi (2013) added that the Federal Ministry of Education (2006), through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), thereafter issued guidelines to all State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) and Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) on the best way to build up SBMC in their schools. In a bid to ensure effective involvement of local communities in the management of affairs of schools, the National Council on Education (NCE) in 2006 supported the implementation of SBMC in all primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, as a feature of government strategy to restructure the school administrative process and ensure inclusive involvement of stakeholders in the school management at the community level. In 2007, the government made the implementation of SBMC mandatory and suggested that the SBMC be made up of 12 to 19 people in each school (Ayeni, 2012). This was expected to be achieved through the involvement of meaningful, close, strong and goal-oriented partnership between the school authority and other relevant stakeholders from the community; the Traditional rulers, Head teacher/ Principal, Parent Teachers' Association (PTA), Town Union, Teachers, Students/ Pupils, Old Students Associations, Artisans, Town Vigilante, Youth Organizations, Women Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith Based Organisation (FBO), among others.

In Nigeria, the School-Based Management Committee was set up to increase community participation in school management; this is part of the efforts of school reform in Nigeria. According to Dakar Framework of Action (2015), the experience of the past decade has underscored the need for better governance of education systems in terms of discipline, security, infrastructural facilities, efficiency and personnel, so that they can respond more effectively to the diverse and continuously changing needs of learners. Reform of educational management is urgently needed to move from highly centralized, standardized and command-driven forms of management to more decentralized and participatory decision-making, implementation and monitoring at lower levels of accountability. Although observation has shown even though inaccurately, that some school managers particularly principals see the role of SBMC as a demotion of schools' autonomy, whereas SBMC is to promote the autonomy of schools.

School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in Nigeria were established to enhance community participation in the management of schools and improve the quality of education. The involvement of SBMC in promoting awareness on the benefits of education is a crucial aspect of their role. Principals play a significant role in involving SBMC members in promoting education awareness in Nigeria. Here are some ways principals can enhance their relationship with the SBMC in this effort:

a. Orientation and Training: Principals can conduct orientation and training sessions for SBMC to educate them about the importance of education and the specific benefits it brings to individuals, families, and communities. This will help SBMC understand their roles better and equip them with the necessary knowledge to advocate for education.
b. Community Outreach Programs: Principals and SBMC can work together to organize community outreach programs aimed at raising awareness about the benefits of education. These programs can include awareness campaigns, public discussions, and workshops to inform parents and community members about the long-term advantages of investing in education.
c. Involvement in School Activities: SBMC can be actively involved in various school activities and events. They can participate in parent-teacher meetings, school open days, and other gatherings where they can interact with parents and community members to share information about the benefits of education.
d. Local Media Collaboration: Principals and SBMC can collaborate with local media, such as radio stations or community newspapers, to disseminate information about the importance of education. Guest appearances on radio shows or writing articles can help reach a wider audience within the community.

e. Advocacy and Lobbying: Principals can work with SBMC to advocate for increased government support and funding for education. SBMC can engage with local authorities and policymakers to emphasize the positive impact of education on the community's development and prosperity.

One of the major contributions of SBMC towards improving access to education focus on creating awareness on the importance of education and enlightening members of the community on the need to send their children to school, encouraging community participation in school planning, monitoring and evaluation as this will give parents a high sense of belonging and a feeling of being carried along in school management. It promotes school governance for effective community service delivery and enhancing democratization of school management thereby paving way for members of the community to take active part in decision making relating to school management and governance. School-Based Management Committee are local committees composed of various stakeholders, including parents, community members, teachers, and school administrators. Their primary role has been to support school management, participate in decision-making processes, and engage with the local community to improve the quality of education in the schools. However, it is worth mentioning that involving SBMC in data collection and monitoring could have potential benefits. By engaging SBMC in the data collection and monitoring processes, it can enhance their understanding of the school's strengths and challenges, enable them to make more informed decisions, and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for the school's improvement.

School Based Management committees work to increase communities' involvement with education and help to improve the quality and effectiveness of schools. They provide a way of helping the education authorities to listen to what the students want from schools, and a way of increasing the contributions of everyone in the school community to make education work well. However, the onus still lies on the principals not only to inform the various stakeholders that make up the SBMC of their responsibilities but also to fully relate with them along in the discharge of these responsibilities which include: promoting awareness on benefits of education and data collection for monitoring and evaluating [NSBMP esspin]. However, it seems that principals in public secondary schools in south-East Region of Nigeria do not properly involve school based management committee members in various areas of school management neither are they communicated with outcome of some of the decisions taken. These however present a gloomy scenario regarding the extent Principals' enhance the relationship with School Based Management Committee (SBMC) in Public Secondary Schools in the South East Region of Nigeria.

The poor state of public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria in terms of education awareness and data collection is the problem of this study. This situation calls for concern because one is inclined to say that if the principals had properly involved the school based management committee members, they would have helped to give the school a good face lift. This problem prompted the researcher to examine the enhancement of Principals' relationship with School Based Management Committee (SBMC) in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study.

Specifically, was to examine the extent Principals relate with School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) in:

1. promoting awareness on benefits of education in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.
2. data collection for monitoring and evaluating public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided the study;

1 To what extent do principals of public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria relate with School Based Management Committee in promoting awareness on benefits of education?

2 To what extent do principals of public secondary schools in the South-East Nigeria relate with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluating?

Hypotheses

1. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and SBMC on the extent of principals' relationship with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.
2. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and SBMC on the extent of principals' relationship with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluating in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.

Method

A descriptive survey research design was employed to determine the principals' involvement of SBMC members in the management of public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria. The population of the study was 19,880 which comprised of 994 Principals and 18,886 SBMC in the five states from the South-East Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states). The sample of this study is 2,239 consisting 112 principals and 2,127 SBMC members, using multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a researchers' developed questionnaire titled "Enhancement of Principal's Relationship with SBMC Questionnaire (EPRSBMCQ), which was face validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronach's Alpha method and it yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.89 and 0.79 for clusters I and II and the overall coefficient of the entire instrument was 1.68. The researchers administered copies of the instrument directly to the respondents with the help of five research assistants. A total of 2,239 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, 2,127 copies were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 95% percent return. Mean was used in answering the research questions and t-test was used to test the hypotheses. In taking decisions on the null hypotheses was not rejected where the calculated p-value was greater than the stipulated level of significance 0.05. On the other hand, the null hypothesis was rejected when the calculated p-value was less than the stipulated level of significance 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals of public secondary schools in South-East Region of Nigeria relate with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education?

Table 1: *Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Extent to which principals of public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria relate with SBMC in Promoting Awareness on Benefits of Education*

S/N	To what extent do principals relate with SBMC in:	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	organising community awareness campaigns within the community on the importance of education	2.52	.56	HE
2.	collaborating with NGOs to advocate on importance of education	2.55	.53	HE
3.	conducting parents workshop on benefits of education	2.53	.52	HE
4.	engaging in outreach programmes to encourage enrollement and retention of students	2.53	.53	HE
5.	utilizing training session for awareness campaign about education	2.56	.52	HE
	Cluster Mean	**2.54**	**.53**	**HE**

Results in Table 1 shows the mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which principals of public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria relate with School Based Management Committee (SBMC) in promoting awareness on benefits of education. The cluster mean of 2.54 with standard deviation of .53 indicates that principals to a high extent relate School Based Management Committee in promoting awareness on benefits of education. The analysis of the items shows that the respondents rated that principals' relationship with SBMC in all the six listed areas to a high extent with their mean ranging from 2.52 to 2.56. The standard deviation scores for all the items ranged from .52 to .56 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings were homogenous.

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals of public secondary schools in South-East Region of Nigeria relate with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluation?

Table 2: *Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Extent to which principals of public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria relate with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluation*

S/N	To what extent do principals relate SBMC in:	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
6.	reviewing of school policies and plans	2.54	.54	HE

7.	recruitment and selection of school staff	2.57	.56	HE
8.	planning the school budget with financial management	2.73	.53	HE
9.	monitoring and evaluating school performance	2.62	.61	
10.	promoting parent and community involvement in the school affairs	2.60	.58	HE
11.	advocating for the needs and interests of the school and its stakeholders	2.55	.59	HE
Cluster Mean		**2.60**	**.57**	**HE**

Table 2 shows the cluster mean of 2.60 with standard deviation of .57 indicating that principals to a high extent relate SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluation. The item by item analysis shows that the respondents rated that principals involve SBMC to a high extent in all the six listed areas of data collection for monitoring and evaluation. Their mean for the six items ranged from 2.54 to 2.73. The standard deviation scores for all the items ranged from .53 to .61 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings were homogenous.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and SBMC on the extent of principals' relationship with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.

Table 3: *t-test Comparison of Principals and SBMC Mean Ratings of the Extent to which principals' relationship with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.*

Source of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	*P*-value	Remark
Principals	112	2.90	.37	2198	11.94	.000	Sig
SBMC	2088	2.52	.33				

The results in Table 3 shows that the mean score for principals (*M*=2.90, *SD*=.37) was significantly greater than that of the SBMC (*M=2.52, SD=.33*); *t (*2198*)* =11.94, *p*=.000. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on the extent to which principals relate with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and SBMC on the extent of principals' relationship with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluating in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.

Table 4: *t-test Comparison of Principals and SBMC Mean Ratings of the Extent to which principals' relationship with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluating in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.*

Source of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	*P*-value	Remark
Principals	112	2.91	.34	2198	10.00	.000	Sig
SBMC	2088	2.59	.33				

The results in Table 4 shows that the mean score for principals (*M*=2.91, *SD*=.34) was significantly greater than that of the SBMC (*M=2.59, SD=.33*); *t (*2198*)* =10.00, *p*=.000. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on the extent to which principals relate with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluating in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria was therefore rejected.

Summary of Findings

Based on data analysis, it was found out that;

- The extent to which Principals relate with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria was high.
- The extent to which Principals relate with SBMC in data collection for monitoring and evaluation of public secondary schools in South-East Region of Nigeria was high.

There was a significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and SBMC on the extent to which principals relate with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria. Also, there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and SBMC on the extent to which principals relate with SBMC on data collection for monitoring and evaluating in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.

Discussion

Discussions It was found out that enhancement of principals' relationship with SBMC in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria was to a high extent. This indicated that principals relate with SBMC to a high extent in promoting awareness on benefits of education by organising community campaigns within the community on the importance of education raise awareness about the significance of education, not just for students but for the entire community. They engage parents, educators, local leaders, and businesses in understanding the value of education in shaping the future of young individuals and the community as a whole. These campaigns can foster a supportive environment for education. When the community rallies behind the cause of education, it creates a network of support for students, teachers, and the educational institutions themselves. Educating parents about the benefits of education enables them to provide better support at home. They can create conducive environments for learning, assist with homework, and motivate their children to excel academically.

In line with the findings of this study, Bart and Baetz (2008) advocated for improved awareness campaigns for parents and communities on the importance of being fully committed to the activities of SBMCs for efficient school administration in their communities. This is supported by Prabhakar and Rao (2011) who argued that stakeholders are highly involved in school plan development. The finding of this study contradicts Prabhakar and Rao (2011) who found that despite the established SBMC framework for schools, parents or community were not involved. Also, Bala (2017) found that one of the challenges of SBMC is the inability to improve community participation and promote basic school effectiveness by improving its strategies. The reason for the difference may be attributed to the difference in area of the study. The study by Prabhakar and Rao (2011) was carried out in India, while the present study was carried out in South-East Nigeria. This may have influence the difference in the findings.

It was further revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and SBMC on the extent to which principals relate with SBMC in promoting awareness on benefits of education in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria. This implies that principals and SBMC differ in their opinion on the extent of their relationship in promoting awareness on benefits of education. This difference may be attributed to difference recorded in self-rating situation where by people rate themselves higher in terms of possession or exhibition of positive traits and behavior than others.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that concluded that principals to a high extent related with SBMC in promoting awareness for the benefits of education and data collection for monitoring and evaluating in public secondary schools in the South-East Region of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. Principals and members of SBMC should launch media campaigns through television, radio, social media, and print. Use compelling stories, testimonials, infographics, and success stories to showcase the transformative power of education. Also collaborate with schools, colleges, and universities to organize open houses, career fairs, and educational expos. These events can demonstrate the diverse career paths and opportunities that education opens up.
2. State governments should organize training/workshop for principals, teachers and non-teaching staff to be trained on effective data collection methods. Ensure they understand the importance of data accuracy, consistency, and confidentiality. This empowers them to collect and input data accurately. Also establish standardized procedures and protocols for data collection to

ensure consistency across different departments and classrooms.

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