STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA.

By

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ABSTRACT

The study is on strategies for improving school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state. Two research questions and two hypotheses was formulated for the study respectively. Descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The population for the study consists of 314 principals and 6921 secondary school teachers that gave a total of 7235, while the sample for the study included a total of 722 respondents consisted of 31 principals and 691 teachers. Questionnaire was designed to elicit appropriate information from the respondents. The instrument was faced validated by three experts, two from educational management department and one in measurement and evaluation department all from faculty of education in Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was calculated using Cronbanch Alpha method. Alpha value was found to be 0.93 indicating high reliability of the instrument. Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, and t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study indicated that there is great extent to which community participates in financial management be used as a strategy to improve school-community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state. Based on this, it was recommended that community should be organized through the different organs to assist the schools and take active parts in some school administrative activities where they have been found to be very useful like pupil-personnel and finance management.

INTRODUCTION

Education has long been accepted as a veritable instrument par excellence for effecting family, community and national development. This is because it is a reliable means of transmitting people's culture from one generation to another. It serves as a qualitative process of bringing about a relatively permanent change in behaviour. The school is the major avenue utilized by various communities to build, preserve, maintain and upgrade their social equilibrium. The implication is that a community's bright future depends largely on the quality of its citizen's education (Akakwu, 2012).

The community needs education to ensure that its new generations are equipped with the existing knowledge of its physical environment, community organization, relevant skills for performing daily jobs, skills for enjoying leisure and skills for being morally sound. This kind of education does not only enable its beneficiaries to benefit from the community but empowers them to contribute maximally to the development of the community (Edem, 2000). Akakwu (2012) defined community as a group of people living together in one place or having a common religion, race or culture. The people of an area are also considered as a group. Members of a community are likely to possess similarity of attitudes and interests.

The school on the other hand is a community located within the four walls of an educational institution. Igwe (2004), observed that a school in a sense is both a community of its own and at the same time a part of the wider community within which it's located. He also sees school as an educational institution set aside to perform specific functions. School is therefore an institution of learning charged with the major function of producing men and women who, in addition to being able to make a successful living, can also adjust to the community and contribute to its economic and social well-being (Igwe, 2004). This assumption holds the condition that their education will be utilized to raise the interest of individual members of the society in social matters like political, economic, health related issues and invariably the quality of the whole community would be upgraded with the general standard of living enhanced (Igwe, 2004). According to Obi, (2004), community participation in the administration and management of schools has received increased attention in international and national policy in recent years. It is considered important as a means to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Community, in this study, is the environment of the school where formal education takes place including bodies like the parent teachers Association, Board of Governors, companies, community based organizations and specific groups that have some interest in what goes on in the school which all gear towards school progression, growth and development. The National policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2020) welcomed the participation of communities in education as a means for educational improvement. In United States, United Kingdom, Australia and India among others,

community participation has been identified in recent years as an essential component of the processes of educational reform and change (Adisu, 2005).

In Enugu state, increase in secondary school enrollment and decline in government funding of education, have necessitated alternative sources of resources for education. As Edem (2000) noted, in the past, the communities assisted in the provision of the necessary educational resources and infrastructures for proper management of the secondary school such as classrooms libraries, hostel accommodation and also maintained such infrastructures. However, the extent of community involvement in schools these days appear to have declined. For instance, Obi (2004) found that some community leaders, show indifference and disregard to the affairs of the schools in their communities. In the view of Emenike (2005), good school community relationship has been hindered as a result of communities encroaching on the school land, community trespassing on school's premises, school interfering in community politics, community interfering in school affairs. Bikeye (2006), observed that communities provide free-land, financial aids to schools. Today the school land which no body in the community is allowed to trespass into are been encroached. Therefore, for these reasons, the need for this study arises to investigate the strategies for improving school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu State.

The demand, aim and objectives of education by Nigerians have become progressively more complex. The setting up of educational institutions has widened to meet up the needs of the Nigerian society. The number of children eager and desirous to receive one form of education or the other has greatly outweighed the available financial resources of the parents. The shortage of classrooms needed by the students, lack of infrastructural facilities and even shortage of instructional materials, all this have been a source of worry to the education stakeholders (Bikeye, 2006). Also, it has been observed that good school community relationship have been hindered as a result of communities encroaching on the school land, community trespassing on school's premises, school interfering in community politics, community interfering in school affairs. Bikeye (2006) observed that communities provide free-land, financial aids to schools. Today the school land which no body in the community is allowed to trespass into, are been encroached.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to find out the strategies for improving school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which community participation in financial management of the school can be used as a strategy to improve school

community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state.

2. Ascertain the extent to which community participation in students – personnel administration can be used as a strategy to improve school-community relationship in Enugu state.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent can community participation in financial management be used as a strategy to improve school-community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state?
2. To what extent can community participation in students –personnel administration be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in financial management can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in students –personnel administration can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this study was descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design, according to Ali (2006), is a study in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. Hence, the researcher deems it necessary to use this design because a representative sample of the entire population was used for the study. The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. It covers all the 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the state. The population for this study comprised all the teachers and principals in the 314 public secondary schools in Enugu State. Available data show that there are 6,921 secondary school teachers and 314 principals in Enugu state. This gave a total population of 7235 secondary school teachers and principals from the six education zones in the state. The sample size of this study was 722 made up of 691 teachers and 31 school principals. The percentage of the sample to the population was

10%. The researcher used proportionate sampling technique in the selection of the respondents. While the instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled strategies for improving school community relationship (SISCR). The questionnaire developed by the researcher has two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with the bio-data of the respondents while section B dealt with strategies for improving school community relationship. The instrument was faced validated while the reliability co-efficient of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach Alpha method. Alpha value was found to be 0.93, indicating high reliability of the entire instrument. Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, in rating the computed mean scores, items whose means range from 2.50 and above were regarded as Great Extent while items that fall below 2.50 were regarded as Low Extent. And t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A four point rating scale was used to assign values to the items to be rated by the respondents as follows: Very Great Extent (VGE) 4 points, Great Extent (GE) 3 Points, Low Extent (LE) 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE) 1 point.

RESULTS

The results are presented in tables according to research questions.

Research Question 1

To what extent can community participation in financial management be used as a strategy to improve school-community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state?

Table 1:- mean rating score of principals and teachers in relation to how community participation in financial management can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

		Principal			Teachers		
S/N	Extent of community involvement in:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Responding to invitation by schools to sale of product.	3.56	0.75	G.E	3.42	0.77	GE
2.	Responding to invitations by schools to the sale of art/technical works.	3.58	0.75	GE	3.56	0.75	GE
3.	Responding to schools revenue generating activities e.g. concerts.	3.26	0.86	GE	3.12	0.55	GE
4.	Purchasing publications by school magazines.	3.42	0.68	GE	3.48	0.70	GE
5.	Awarding prizes and scholarships to students.	3.28	0.82	GE	3.33	0.77	GE
6.	Voluntary money donations and endowments.	3.66	0.71	GE	3.58	0.61	GE
7.	Imposing levies e.g. PTA levies	3.27	0.92	GE	3.54	0.70	GE

8.	Recognizing the principals as the financial head of the school.	3.31	0.79	GE	3.63	0.76	GE
9.	The board of governors doing its work of amendment and approval of budget estimate by principal diligently.	3.41	0.54	GE	3.32	0.88	GE
10.	Ensuring that such accounts are periodically audited.	3.13	0.83	GE	3.49	0.64	GE
	Cluster mean	3.38	0.72	GE	3.44	0.69	GE

The data on table 1 show that the respondents rated all the items in this cluster great extent. In other words, they share the view that community participation in financial management be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state. The cluster means are 3.38 (for principals) and 3.44 (for teachers) in a four point rating scale with corresponding standard deviation of 0.72 and 0.69 for principals and teachers respectively.

Research Question 2

To what extent can community participation in students-personnel administration be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state?

Table 2: Mean rating score of principals and teachers in relation to how community participation in students – personnel administration can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

		Principals			Teachers		
S/N	Extent of community involvement in:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision	$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
11.	Helping to resolve students' disciplinary problems. E.g. rioting.	3.64	0.76	G.E	3.14	0.86	GE
12.	Using the PTA to lend weight and prestige to the stand of the school authority in disciplinary issues.	3.65	0.67	GE	3.38	0.80	GE
13.	Desisting from using their influential position to thwart disciplinary measures taken by the principal especially when they affect their wards.	3.56	0.63	GE	3.31	0.81	GE
14.	Being willing to rent their houses to non-boarding students.	2.45	0.63	LE	2.41	0.77	LE
15.	Visiting their wards/children's schools regularly to be up to date with their progress.	3.55	0.65	GE	3.47	0.84	GE
16.	Supporting guidance and counseling programmes in schools	3.71	0.86	GE	3.35	0.82	GE

17.	Acting as resource persons when invited.	2.48	0.45	LE	2.39	0.97	LE
18.	Allowing students to attend church services and Sunday schools together with them to help religious and moral instructions in the schools.	3.68	0.82	GE	3.46	0.72	GE
19.	Helping to conduct Sunday services for pupils in the school if invited to do so.	3.66	0.42	GE	3.33	0.81	GE
20.	Allowing students to attend and participate in its festivals to help the students understand and appreciate their cultural heritage.	3.65	0.45	GE	3.24	0.84	GE
21.	Participating n health programmes e.g. giving talks on health matter.	3.81	0.83	GE	3.88	0.74	GE
	Cluster mean	3.44	0.65	GE	3.21	0.82	GE

The data on table 2 shows that the two groups of respondents independently rated all the items great extent except item 14 and 17 which are rated low extent with. In other words they greatly share the view that community participation in student's personnel administration be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state. The cluster means are 3.44 (for principals) and 3.21 (for teachers) in a four point rating scale with corresponding standard deviation of 0.65 and 0.82 for principals and teachers respectively.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in financial management can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in Enugu state.

Table 3: t-test of significant differences between the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in financial management can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in Enugu state.

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Principals	31	3.38	0.72	720	0.28	0.51	Not significant
Teachers	691	3.44	0.69				

Table 3 above present the independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in financial management can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state. The result in table 3 shows that the calculated t-value (0.28) was less than the critical value (0.51). The null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, no significant difference between the

mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in financial management can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

$H0_2$:- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in students – personnel administration can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

Table 4: t-test of significant different between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in students – personnel administration can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Principals	31	3.44	0.65	720	0.72	0.89	Not significant
Teachers	691	3.21	0.82				

Table 4 above presents the independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in students – personnel administration can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state. The results in table 4 show that the calculated t-value (0.72) was less than the critical value (0.89). The null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in students – personnel administration can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study have indicated a great extent to which community participation in financial management be used as a strategy to improve school-community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state. In other words, respondents greatly share the view that community participate actively in funding the schools. In the study, the respondents greatly agreed that well to do members of the community provide funds and some facilities for school use. The findings agree with Adeboyeji (2001) who maintain that finance is part of resources needed by any organization to run their system successfully. He further stressed that government and hosting community need to support school system by providing needed funds and facilities. The results also revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in financial management can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

The findings of this study have also indicated a great extent to which community participation in students-personnel administration be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu state. In other word, respondents greatly share the view that community assist to resolve students' disciplinary problems such as rioting, acting as resource persons when invited and supporting guidance and counseling programmes in schools. The findings agree with Adesina (2000)who stressed that students are at the centre of educational activities and all the human and materials resources are directed toward the development of their potentiates. He further stressed that school and hosting communities can improve their relationship through student administration. The findings also show that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in students – personnel administration can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

CONCLUSION

This research study examined the strategies for improving school community relationship for effective management of secondary schools in Enugu State. Base on the findings of the study, the following conclusion were drawn that community participated in financial management be used as a strategy to improve school-community relationship. It also shows that community participated in discipline students and building of introductory technology workshops. Finding from the study also revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to how community participation in the provision of infrastructure can be used as a strategy to improve school community relationship in secondary schools in Enugu state.

Base on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that the school authorities should be reoriented to see the community as an agent of progress of the school and not as a fund raising agent only.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were proffered.

1. The state government should through a possible medium make the communities, individual and groups realize that the era of free Education has gone. This will make the communities to contribute more adequately especially in the areas of provision of infrastructure and equipment to the secondary schools.
2. The community should be organized through the different organs to assist the schools and take active parts in some school administrative activities where they have been found to be very useful like pupil-personnel and finance management.

3. The school authorities should be reoriented to see the community as an agent of progress of the school and not as a fund raising agent only.
4. Principals and teachers should be ready to welcome the communities' ideas that are useful for the discipline of students and not seeing them as dictators but as partners in progress.

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