Relevance of School-Community Relations in the Development of Primary Education in Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this survey is to identify the relevance of school-community relations in the development of primary education in Delta State. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique is used to sample 1697 respondents from a population of 16961 headmasters, assistant headmasters, teachers in primary schools and community elders in Delta State. The instrument used for data collection is self-designed questionnaire entitled "School-Community Relations and Development of Primary Education Questionnaire" (SCRDPEQ). The study employs descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviation to analyse the data collected for the study. Proving the relevance of school-community relations on the development of primary education in Delta State, the study reveals among others that the community provides lands for building of primary schools, helps in funding the primary schools, helps in provision of more classrooms in the primary schools, the community makes use of the school surrounding during election, classrooms can be used by the community during holiday, school play grounds can be used by the community for local games and school parks can be used by community during festive seasons. Based on the findings, the study recommends among others that school heads should make themselves accessible to community members. School facilities such as the field, hall should be made available to the community for use when necessary, this will bring more bond between the school and the community.
Keywords: School-Community Relation, Development, Primary Education, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Primary education is the education given in institution for children aged 6 to 11 plus as the case may be. The rest educational system (that is, secondary and tertiary) is built based on the primary education, thus making primary education level the key to the success or failure of the whole education system. The goals of primary education are to; inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and ability

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to communicate effectively, lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking, give citizenship education as a starting point for effective involvement in and contribution to the life in the society, mold the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child, develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment, give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will facilitate the child to function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity and provide the child with fundamental tools for further educational development, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality, (FRN, 2004). To achieve the above stated goals of primary education, there is need for cordial relationship between the school and the host community. School community relations can be considered to be a two-way interactive process between the community and the school. It involves genuine cooperation in planning and working for the schools, with the public or the community giving and receiving ideas. This provides the foundation for mutual understanding and effective teamwork. School as a social institution and agent of socialization needs to have a good relationship with immediate and far communities. Symbiotic relationship always exists between the school and the community which result to the success of the two.

Bakwai (2013) perceived that school-community relationship is a two-way symbiotic arrangement through which the school and community cooperate with each other for realization of goals of the community and vice versa. The need to achieve universal basis education (UBE) has led to the establishment of many primary schools and expansion of the existing ones. This trend has grown to an extent that Delta government has been unable to single-handedly provide qualitative education to all those who demand it due to financial implications. Therefore, a school is a mini society that needs a good relation with the community for it to function effectively. However, the community as well needs school for its survival and progress.

The community needs to play a role in the curriculum implementation, monitoring of school and out of school activities of teachers and students, communicate more often. The community should be treated as an integral part of the school and their roles seen more as complementary rather than supplementary. School-community partnerships have the potential of developing education in relation to access, attract, retention and quality if well established and nurtures. This partnership is left to individual schools and administration to come up with own initiatives and models which works by experimentation. There is no unified approach by the government even when so much has been written about the relevance of school-community relations. This study therefore seeks to examined the relevance of school-community relations in the development of primary education in Delta State. The purpose of this study is to examine the relevance of school-community relations in the development of primary education in Delta State. Hence, the following questions are raised to guide the study:

1.   Is school-community relations relevant in the development of primary
       education in Delta State?
2.   Should school-community relations be encouraged in Delta State?

School-Community Relations

Madumere (2004) posits that school as a social system means that the school is part and parcel of the society. He adds that the sociologist sees the school as belonging to the community in which the school is built. Cordial relationship between the school and community is a pre-requisite for achieving a significant educational objective in our community and nation at large (Gital, 2009). Generally, community has a vital interest in what schools do and how they do it. The schools always reflect and promote community's values and interest. There is a vast of knowledge out there, more than any school can possibly hope to teach and so one of the tasks confronting school is to select what to teach. Each country chooses the curriculum to match and advance its view, history, values, interest and culture as a whole. Sadker (2005) states that community transmits its culture and view to the world. It should be noted that community's values, ideas, norms and beliefs are to be perpetuated by the school being a social institution and at the same time, the pupils in the school come from the community (Aminu, 2006).

Therefore, for successful development of education and primary one in particular depends so much on the relationship between the school and the community. Mitrofanova (2011) and Bibire (2014) were of the opinion that schools and communities should work closely with each other to meet their mutual goals of provision and management of education as well as teaching, learning and enforcement of processes. This is a kind of relationship in which both the school and the community contribute directly to the strengthening and development of each other and provide a firm foundation for both educational renewal and community regeneration. School as an open system and a social organization thrives on the effective interrelationship within it and with its host communities. What happens in a school affects the community, and what happens in the community affects school (Nwankwo, Nwokafor, Ogunsanwo and Ighalo, 2005). This means that community builds its schools and the schools build their communities (Sidhu, 2007). Therefore, school community interdependence is unbreakable. There is a reciprocal relationship, the two works for one another and the two have direct impact on one another. If schools are expected to be successful in their primary mission of educating the community's children, they need to know a great deal about the community and the families from which the children come. This means that a school cannot exist in isolation but in co-operation with the community in which it finds itself (Ihebereme, 2008).

The processes of social interaction are the bases for creating social relationship, (Bakwai, 2013). According to Calhoun, Light and Keller (1998)

social relationships are relatively enduring patterns of interaction between two or more people. Most people have many social relationships, from casual acquaintance to intimate friendships and close family bond. School community relationship is a two-way symbiotic arrangement through which the school and the community co-operate with each other for the realization of goals of the community and vice versa. It is the degree of understanding and goodwill, which exists between the school and the community (Okorie, Ememe and Egu 2009). School as a training centre helps develop pupils into efficient social beings and to train them to further educate and uplift members of the society.

The pupils are prepared to launch a vigorous and systematic crusade against social evils, anti - social habits and unhygienic habit. School interacts with people of the community and is linked with the larger society. The school is a special environment where a certain quality of life styles of activities and occupations are provided with the object of securing child's development along desirable lines (Mishra, 2007). The function of community towards maintaining and supporting its relationship with school and which ultimately lead to the development of education cannot be overemphasized. It is a known fact that there can never be a school where there is no community. The communities normally provide lands in which the schools are built as well as providing children enrolment.

Nasiru (2008) and Gital (2009) note that community provides school with the land to be established, fund it, provide facilities to it and help greatly in the improvement of the performance of pupils and general development of education. Generally, the school utilizes the community resources for teaching and learning purposes and at the same time derives its curriculum from the community (Mahuta, 2007). Ogundele, Oparinde and Oyewale (2012) opine that school community relationship has significant impact on the provision and maintenance of school facilities, school discipline, teachers job performance, academic achievement of students and overall success of the schools. This indicates clearly that school community relationship exists and helps greatly in the development of education. On the other way round, community maintains its relationship with school by providing resource mobilization. This is mostly done through the Parent Teachers Associations. When there is any urgent need by the school, the community mobilizes resources from its members. It is through this kind of relationship that community members donate a lot of materials to their immediate school, like furniture, teaching materials including notebooks textbooks, chalk etc. Sa'ad and Nasiru (2010) opine that community donates many resources to their immediate schools.

In addition to that Ogundele, Oparinde and Oyewale (2012) was categorically of the view that community members have significant impact on the provision and maintenance of school facilities through PTA and other community based organizations. This also clearly indicates that there is school

community relationship and it assists a lot in the development of education, particularly primary education. The school has a lot of resources which it uses to develop, maintain and strengthen school community relationship in addition to its main role of imparting knowledge and socialization of the younger generation. Bibire (2014) asserts that the impact of the schools on the community will largely depends on bonds as well as on how the school systems are organized and degree to which they are organically integrated with the community needs and aspirations.

One of the important resources of the school which aid in strengthening school community relationship and improves education is allowing community to use school facilities. Bakwai (2013) reports that in northern Nigeria, it is common to all, that the primary school buildings or classes are used by "Islamiyya" in the evening or in the night. In relation to that, Mitrofanova (2011) states that encouraging non-profit community groups to use the facilities is not only good use of resources but also provide opportunities for the schools to get involved in community projects. In addition to that. community members make use of the school compound for parking their valuables, particularly cars in the night for security reasons. School halls and play grounds are used by the community for meetings, conduct of cultural festivities and games.

Nasiru (2008) and Bakwai (2013) opine that allowing the community to make use of school halls for community meetings, play grounds for games and cultural activities; and the school building for emergency cases will encourage school community relation. The school also assists the community in sharing good information with the public. A lot of messages reach the community through the schools. Pawlas (2005), Mitrofanova (2011) and Bakwai (2013) state that school pass vital information to the community and it is normally done through news release and newsletters. This sharing of information creates better school community relationship which ultimately improves teaching and learning and general development of education. Okorie, Ememe and Egu (2009) conduct a research on school-community relations in the development of secondary schools with the focus on Aba Educational Zone. The data was collected with the use of 10-item modified 4-points Likert instrument from a sample of 472 teachers and principals which total population were 1888. The authors established that communities play important roles in ensuring the academic performance of students and provision of facilities in schools.

Abdulhakim (2013) examined school-community partnership in the development of education in primary schools: a case of Lamu East District, Kenya and discover that the relationship between teachers and parents was limited to meetings and prize giving days. Most parents felt that school work should be left to teachers. Also there are no guidelines by the government on school - community partnership. Bakwai (2013) investigates the roles of school community relationship in the development of secondary education in Zamfara State and comes up with the findings that school community relationship is very significant

in the development of secondary education in Zamfara State because it helps in the discipline of students, welfare of teachers, the planning of curriculum, information sharing and dissemination, provision of school facilities, finance, policies, security and management decision and in monitoring students' progress. The author also discovered that resources which Zamfara State Secondary Schools required for encouraging school community relationship are classrooms, halls and lecture theatres, playgrounds, libraries, business centres, restaurants and/or canteens, furniture, parks and gardens and school farms. Sa'ad and Sadiq (2014) examine the relevance of school community relationship in the development of primary education in Azare Metropolis of Bauchi State, Nigeria. They discover that school community relationship is very relevant in the development of primary education in Azare metropolis due to the fact that community provides lands for building schools, funds, facilities, supervise what is going on in school, build additional classrooms and help in the maintenance and sustenance of discipline. It was also discovered that the school on the other hand, has resources which it uses to improve school community relationship and ultimately develops education which, include classrooms, play grounds, halls, surroundings, information dissemination to community and making itself available for consultations.

METHOD

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population comprises of headmasters, assistant headmasters, teachers in primary schools and community leaders in Delta State. The sample for this study consists of 1697 headmasters, assistant headmasters, teachers and community elders drawn from the population of the study. The sampling procedure was proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The sampling procedure was used because it allows taking representative from each category of the population. In other words, the sampling techniques allows for taking sample from headmasters, assistant headmasters, teachers and community elders. The instrument used for this research was self-designed questionnaire entitled: School-Community Relations and Development of Primary Education Questionnaire (SCRDPEQ). It consisted mainly of close-ended questions which require the respondents to tick their best option and was structured on four point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree to Disagree. The instrument was validated through face validity. Thereafter, it was subjected to a split-half reliability test using 50 headmasters, assistant headmasters, teachers and community elders which were excluded from the main study. Using Pearson Moment Correlation Co-efficient Statistics, a co-efficient of 0.748 was obtained. The study employed descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviation to analsyse the data collected for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Table 3, respondents agreed on relevance of school-community relations in the development of primary education with mean scores of 3.11 for community provide lands for building of primary schools, 2.92 for community helps in funding the primary schools, 3.05 for community helps in provision of more classrooms in the primary schools, 3.08 for community make use of the school surrounding during election, 2.86 for classrooms can be used by the community during holiday, 2.98 for school play grounds can be used by the community for local games and 2.51 for school parks can be used by community during festive seasons. While respondents disagreed on community supervise what the teachers are doing in the primary schools with mean score of 2.32, community helps in maintenance of discipline in primary schools 2.41 and school library can provide books for parent to use 2.21 as relevance of school-community relations on the development of primary education in Delta State.

The table 3 further indicates that community provides land for building of primary schools, helps in funding the primary schools, helps in provision of more classrooms in the primary schools, uses the school surrounding during election, classrooms can be used by the community during holiday, school play grounds can be used by the community for local games and school parks can be used by community during festive seasons as relevance of school-community relations on the development of primary education in Delta State. This finding support Mahuta (2007) who states that school utilizes the community resources for teaching and learning purposes and at the same time derives its curriculum from the community. The finding is also in line with Nasiru (2008) and Gital (2009) who opine that community provides school with the land to be established, fund it, provide facilities to it and help greatly in the improvement of the performance of pupils and general development of education. The finding also supports Sa'ad and Nasiru (2010) position that community donates many resources to their immediate schools. The finding also supports Okorie, Ememe and Egu (2009) who conducted a research on school-community relations in the development of secondary schools with the focus on Aba Educational Zone and establish that communities play important roles in ensuring the academic performance of students and provision of facilities in schools. The finding also supports Ogundele, Oparinde and Oyewale (2012) who were of the opinion that school community relationship has significant impact on the provision and maintenance of school facilities, school discipline, teachers' job performance, academic achievement of students and overall success of the schools.

The table 4 reveals that school heads should make themselves accessible to community members. They should demonstrate active interest in the community life, school facilities such as the field, hall should be made available to the community for use when necessary, part of community culture should be included

in the curriculum, community members should be invited to participate in school functions, school heads should understand the nature of the community where the school is located and good character should be displayed by the school heads for community to emulate as measures adopted to encourage school-community relations. This finding supports Nasiru (2008) and Bakwai (2013) who opined that allowing the community to make use of school halls for community meetings, play grounds for games and cultural activities; and the school building for emergency cases will encourage school community relation. The finding is in line with Mitrofanova (2011) who states that encouraging non-profit community groups to use the facilities is not only good use of resources but also provide opportunities for the schools to get involved in community projects. The finding also supports Bibire (2014) who asserts that the impact of the schools on the community will largely depends on bonds as well as on how the school systems are organized and degree to which they are organically integrated with the community needs and aspirations.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Headmasters, Assistant Headmasters, Teachers and Community Elders

S/No	Categories	Population
1.	Headmasters	857
2.	Assistant Headmasters	857
3.	Teachers	14497
4.	Community Elders	750
	Total	**16961**

Source: Survey, 2017

Table 2: Sample Summary of Headmasters, Assistant Headmasters, Teachers and Community Elders

S/No	Categories	Population	% of Population
1.	Headmasters	857	5.05
2.	Assistant Headmasters	857	5.05
3.	Teachers	14497	85.47
4.	Community Elders	750	4.43
	Total	**16961**	**100**

Source: Survey, 2017

Table 3: Mean Scores Analysis on Relevance of School-Community Relations on the Development of Primary Education

S/N	Relevance of School-Community Relations	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Community provide lands for building of primary schools	3.11	0.82	+
2.	Community helps in funding the primary schools	2.92	0.73	+
3.	Community supervise what the teachers are doing in the primary schools	2.32	0.58	-
4.	Community helps in provision of more classrooms in the primary schools	3.05	0.76	+
5.	Community make use of the school surrounding during election	3.08	0.78	+
6.	Community helps in maintenance of discipline in primary schools	2.41	0.62	-
7.	Classrooms can be used by the community during holiday.	2.86	0.71	+
8.	School library can provide books for parent to use	2.21	0.55	-

9.	School play grounds can be used by the community for local games.	2.98	0.74	+
10.	School parks can be used by community during festive seasons	2.51	0.63	+
	Aggregate Mean Score	2.75	0.69	+

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed   *Source:* Survey, 2017

Table 4: Mean Scores Analysis on Measures Adopted to encourage School-Community Relations

S/N	Measures Adopted to Encourage School-Community Relations	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	School heads should make themselves accessible to community members	3.00	0.75	+
2.	School heads should demonstrate active interest in the community life	2.72	0.68	+
3.	School facilities such as the field, hall should be made available to the community for use when necessary	2.72	0.78	+
4.	Part of community culture should be included in the curriculum	2.85	0.71	+
5.	Community members should be invited to participate in school functions	3.17	0.79	+
6.	School heads should understand the nature of the community where the school is located	3.03	0.75	+
7.	Good character should be displayed by the school heads for community to emulate	3.90	0.97	+
	Aggregate Mean Score	3.06	0.78	

Keys: + = Agreed; - = Disagreed

Source: Survey, 2017

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the school-community relations is relevant in the development of primary education in Delta State. Since the community provides land for building of primary schools and other facilities needed for the school to grow. On the other hand, the school allows the community to make use of the facilities when need arises. Based on the findings, it is recommended that school heads should make themselves accessible to community members. This will help the community members understand the areas where the school needs their help. In addition, School heads should acquaint themselves with educational resources available in the community in order that they can be utilized to enrich and enhance the school. School facilities such as the field, hall should be made available to the community for use when necessary, this will bring more bond between the school and the community.

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