

Effective School- Community Relations as a Key Performance Indicator for the Secondary School Administrator in Aba South District, Nigeria

Abraham, Nath. M.^{1*} & Ememe, Ogonna N.¹

¹ Department of Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: Department of Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
Tel: 234-803-340-9364 E-mail: nathabraham@yahoo.com

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Abstract

This study investigates Effective School-Community Relations as a key Performance Indicator (KPI) of Secondary Schools Administrator in Aba South District, Nigeria. Descriptive survey method was adopted. All the 248 teachers made up the population and sample in a purposive sampling technique representing 100% of the entire population as sample. A two-part, 10-item, 4-point scale instrument known as 'School-Community Relations Performance Questionnaire' (SCR PQ) was used to generate data for answering two research questions and for testing two null hypotheses. The instrument was validated by a team of experts at the Department of Educational Management, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and a reliability value of 0.82 established using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. Mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings reveal among others that communities employ teachers in core subjects, build library and donate land for building school facilities and concluded that effective school-community relation is a key performance indicator for the administrator. It was recommended that efforts be made to encourage community active participation in ensuring adequate academic performance of students.

Keywords: *Effective school-community; Performance indicator; School administrator*

Background

No school situates in an island. Every school is found in a community (Abraham, 2003). This is because the community makes the catchment area of the school. The community is a social system which has an unrestricted geographical area. With reference to the school the community may be synonymous to the neighbourhood. It may be a state local school district, or area served by an elementary or secondary school. Every school lies on its community entity for almost everything it requires such as teaching and non-teaching personnel, students, equipment, facilities funds and other resources. The school therefore does not exist in isolation of the community. A symbiotic or mutual relationship needs to exist between the school and its community as neither can do without the other (Okorie, Ememe & Egu 2009; Abraham, 2003).

It has been observed in most places that the school depends on the community for most of its needs; water, land, skilled and unskilled labour, staff, accommodation, sponsorship in times of financial needs and for the continued existence of the school. Nnabuo and Emenalo (2002) disclosed that the term school-community relation is a genuine co-operation in planning and working for the benefit of the school with the public giving as much as receiving ideas and resources. It involves a two-way process and flow of ideas between the school and the community to ensure mutual cordial understanding and effect teamwork for the realization of educational and institutional goals of both the community and the school. School community relations involves series of activities and media through which the school seeks to learn more (when necessary) the purposes, programmes, problems and the needs of the schools (Arthur & James, 1957).

There is no gainsaying the fact that schools situate in a community, most schools are built by the community and handed over to the government, inputs in the form of funds, personnel, ideas, societal norms, values and ethical beliefs are sent to the school by the community that prescribes conditions for the control of the school activities and demands to know the happenings in the school (Abraham, 2003; Emenalo, 2008).

Additionally, the inputs are processed through teaching, assignments, exercises, researches, discussions, excursions, guidance, counselling and later sent back to the community as refined products made of disciplined, functional and employable individuals who are properly equipped to be useful to themselves, others and to serve the community in different capacities. In effect, both the school and the community are social entities which are interdependent, interrelated and with a mutual relationship.

Okeke (1997) observes that the public demands that schools justify the resources given to them as to disabuse their minds from the fact that these resources are misused, mismanaged and sometimes embezzled. In continuation, Okorosaye-Orubite (2001) observes that the classrooms have doubled as classroom for adults, for adult literacy activities nationwide, public health activities like immunization and public health enlightenment exercises and in emergency epidemic situations, school buildings are converted into makeshift hospitals and health centres. During electioneering, school buildings have been used for registration of voters, political campaigns voting proper and a lot of social engineering takes place within the school premises and the community.

The school exists primarily for teaching and learning (Abraham, 2003; Abraham & Leigha, 2007). Therefore, whatever the school administrator does, and however he galvanizes the efforts and activities of the various stakeholders to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place in the school, and that the pupils/students genuinely achieve marks him (the school administrator) out as effective.

The community will not ordinarily come to assist the school in one form or the order if the school administrator does not maintain a friendly and respectful relationship with the community. In the light of the foregoing therefore, this work investigates effective school-community relations as a key performance indicator for the secondary school administrator in Aba South District.

The Problem

The merging of junior and senior secondary schools further increased the scope of requirements of these schools in terms of classrooms, personnel, furniture, accommodation for staff and students. Government alone because of lean budgetary allocations cannot provide all these requirements.

The problems of these schools are further heightened by dilapidations caused by lack of attention and renovation, and the proliferation of secondary schools within the neighbourhood. The solution to these problems lies in the school's relationship with the local community and friends of the school to ensure that the needs of these schools in the area of classrooms, personnel, finance, facilities and other resources are met and that whatever is provided is protected from vandalization by miscreants.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study therefore is to:

- 1) Determine the role of the community in ensuring the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Aba South District.
- 2) Determine the role of the community in the provision of facilities in secondary schools in Aba South District.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- 1) What roles do the communities play in the improvement of academic performance of secondary schools in Aba South District?
- 2) What roles do communities play in the provision of educational facilities in secondary schools in Aba South District?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were posited:

- 1) There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of principals and teachers on the role communities play in ensuring the academic performance of students.
- 2) There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of principals and teachers on the roles communities play in the provision of educational facilities in the schools.

Methodology

This paper adopted the descriptive survey approach. In this design, data collected are presented as they are which describes events as they occur. The design was used to determine the extent effective school-community relations acted as a key performance indicator for the secondary school administrator. A population of 240 teachers and 8 principals representing 100% of the teachers and principals made up the population.

All the 240 teachers and all the 8 principals in Aba South District made up the sample representing 100% of the population through a purposive sampling technique. A 2-part, 10-item, 4-point Scale instrument known as school-community relations performance questionnaire (SCR PQ) was used to generate data for answering 2 research questions and 2 null hypotheses. The instrument was validated by a team of experts at the department of Educational Management, UNIPORT, Nigeria and a reliability value of 0.82 established using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The 2 research questions were answered with mean while the 2 null hypotheses were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 1

What is the role of the community in ensuring the academic performance of students?

Table 1: Role of community in ensuring academic performance of students

	Roles of Community in Ensuring Academic performance of students	— XP	— XT
1	Community employs teachers in core subjects.	3.25	3.17
2	Community gives scholarship to students.	3.25	3.38
3	Community gives counselling to students.	3.50	3.17
4	Community equips the laboratory for students use.	2.13	1.88
5	Community donates books to the library.	3.75	3.00

Data in table 1 indicate that community employs teachers in core subject scored a mean of 3.25 for principals and 3.17 for teachers. Community gives scholarship to students pooled 3.25, 3.38 for principals and teachers respectively. Community gives counselling to students generated 3.50 and 3.17 for both. Communities equip laboratory for students use had 2.13 and 1.88 respectively. Communities donate books to the library recorded 3.75 for principals while teachers had 3.00.

From the data analyzed, answers to research question 1 are:

- 1) Communities employ teachers in core subjects, give scholarship, counsel the students and donate books to the library.

Research Question 2

What roles do communities play in the provision of facilities in the school?

Table 2: Roles communities play in the provision of facilities in the school

Roles Communities play in the provision of facilities to schools.		— XP	— XT
1	Communities provide accommodation to teachers.	3.25	3.42
2	Communities provide land for building school facilities.	3.38	3.25
3	Communities tax themselves to provide amenities to school.	3.63	3.33
4	Communities form vigilante to protect school facilities.	3.50	3.25
5	Communities supply water and light to the school.	3.50	3.38

Table 2 shows that communities provide accommodation to teachers had 3.25, 3.42 for principals and teachers. Communities provide land for building school facilities made 3.38 and 3.25 for both groups. Communities tax themselves to provide amenities to school generated 3.63, 3.33 for principals and teachers respectively. Communities form vigilante to protect school facilities 3.50 and 3.25 for both. Communities supply water and light to the school pooled 3.50 and 3.38 for the two groups.

In the light of the foregoing, communities play the following roles in the provision of facilities in the school: Provide accommodation to teachers, land for building school facilities, tax themselves to provide amenities to school, protect school facilities, supply water and light.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean opinions score of principals and teachers on the roles communities play in ensuring the academic performance of students.

Table 3: t-test of difference between the mean opinion score of principals and teachers on the roles communities play in ensuring the academic performance of students

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	P	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Decision
Teachers	240	14.60	3.96	246	P<0.05	2.46	1.96	Reject H_0
Principal	8	15.88	1.26					

The table above shows that teachers had a mean of 14.60 and a standard deviation of 3.96, while principal had a mean of 15.88 and a standard deviation of 1.26. Thus, at 246 degree of freedom calculated t value of 2.46 is significant at 1.96 critical value and 0.05 probability level.

Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of principals and teachers on the roles communities play in ensuring the academic performance of students' stands rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of principals and teachers on the roles communities play in the provision of facilities in the school.

Table 4: t-test of difference between the mean opinion score of principals and teachers on the roles communities play in the provision of facilities in the school.

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	P	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Decision
Teachers	240	16.63	0.86	246	P<0.05	0.24	1.96	Accept H_0
Principal	8	17.26	4.57					

The table above indicates that teachers generated a mean of 16.63 with a standard deviation of 0.86, while principals recorded 17.26 with a standard deviation of 4.57. At 246 degree of freedom, calculated t value of 0.24 was not significant at 1.96 critical value and 0.05 probability level.

Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion score of principals and teachers on the roles communities play in the provision of facilities in the school is therefore upheld.

Summary of Findings

From the data analyzed, the following findings emerged;

- 1) Community employs teachers in core subjects.
- 2) Community gives scholarship to students.
- 3) Community gives counselling to students.
- 4) Community donates books to the library.
- 5) Community provides accommodation for teachers.
- 6) Communities provide buildings for school facilities.
- 7) Community provide security for school facilities.

Discussions

Findings reveal that communities employ teachers in core subjects, give scholarship and counselling to students. Those results are in terms with the work of Igwe (2000) who maintain that communities provide houses for teachers, land for building school facilities, maintenance of facilities, provision of materials and furniture. In keeping with these findings, Emenalo (2010) observed that communities through their town unions engage in the building of secondary schools to make education accessible to the rural dwellers. Nnabuo, Okorie and Agabi (2004) emphasize that it is important that the community imposes the audition that govern the use and the acquisition of resources which make the implementation of school goals a possibility.

In support of the above, Okorie, Ememe & Egu (2009) found that communities have been known to organize local vigilante groups to protect school property. Rangel (2000) observe that the school depends on the community for a number of things such as water, land skilled and unskilled labour, accommodation for staff and sponsorship in times of financial need. Schools draw upon the rich array of planning resources in the wider community which grammatically increased the educational opportunities of their children. Continuing, the school needs the continuous support of the community in order to carry out its functions of finance, human and material resources (Mgbodile, 2003)

Furthermore, the community should be able to execute any programmes so fashioned out through the provision of resources, manpower and funds to the schools in their areas (Koko & Nwiyi, 2006)

The above scenario which has far-reaching implications for the continuous community insurance of academic performance and the provision of amenities in the school ensures that effective teaching and learning take place, leads to the achievement of adequate school goals and objectives and the community will be happy for it.

Conclusions

Communities play active roles in making sure that academic performances of students are enhanced by the provision of teachers in core subjects, provision of free accommodation to teachers within the community, provision of scholarship for indigent students, and counselling to students. Communities equally played important roles in the provision of certain amenities like pipe-borne water, library services, light and provision of furniture to the students. It is hoped that active community involvements in the development of secondary schools in Aba South District will go a long way in elevating the status of secondary schools in the District.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were generated from the study:

- 1) The school laboratories should be adequately equipped by the community. This will enable the teaching and learning of science related subjects to be more practical oriented.
- 2) Communities should be made more actively involved in every aspect of school activity for instance, the maintenance of discipline. This will create comfortable atmosphere for teaching and learning.
- 3) Educated and enlightened members of the community should be allowed to monitor academic activities in the school. This will create academic-ready consciousness in both the teachers and the students.

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