Full Length Research Paper

Parents’ involvement in school administration as a correlate of effectiveness of secondary schools in Nigeria

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The study examined the relationship between parents’ involvement in school administration and effectiveness of secondary schools in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population consisted of all the teachers, principals and parents of the students in public secondary schools in South-West Nigeria. The sample comprised 1200 teachers, 300 parents and 60 principals from 60 secondary schools. Multi-stage, simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the states, schools, teachers and parents used for the study. Two sets of questionnaire were used to collect the data for the study. The Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentage scores and Pearson product movement correlation. The only hypothesis formulated in the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that parents were much involved in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. The study also revealed that secondary schools in the area covered were moderately effective. However, the study showed that there was no significant relationship between parents’ involvement in school administration and effectiveness in schools. It was recommended that the school administrators should sustain the high level of parents’ involvement in school administration in order to maintain cordial relationship between the parents and the school authorities. Since parents’ involvement in school administration was not significantly related to the effectiveness of the schools, the government and other stakeholders should make the teaching-learning environment of the schools more conducive in order to improve their effectiveness.

Key words: Parents’ involvement, school administration, effectiveness, secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Secondary school education occupies a very unique position in the educational system in Nigeria, because it is that level that determines the academic and professional career of students. According to Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) in the National policy of education, the broad aims of secondary education within the overall objectives are preparing students for useful living within the society and preparing them for higher education.

Precisely, the aim of secondary education is to provide opportunity for qualitative education for primary school leavers, cater for the differences in talents of the pupils, develop Nigeria cultural heritage, produce a generation of people who respect the dignity of labour, foster Nigerian unity and to inspire its students with the desire for achievement and self improvement both at school and in later life. It must be stated that only the provision of qualitative education can guarantee the accomplishment of the above-stated goals. The extent to which the secondary school system is able to accomplish its objectives determines its effectiveness.

School effectiveness in this study refers to the extent to which secondary schools achieve its goals by producing students who have gained knowledge, who are disciplined and have developed appropriate skills and moral value system that can make them functional in the society. Over the years, the cognitive approach has been the only criterion used to measure the effectiveness of a school system. Townsend (1994) argued that the criteria for measuring the effectiveness of a school should incorporate more than achievement by including measure of self-concept, personal development, employment skills

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and citizenship. This study, however incorporated the three domains of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) in measuring school effectiveness.

It has however been observed that, one major obstacle bedeviling the secondary education in Nigeria today is the persistent poor performance of students in public examinations. According to West African Examination Council (2007), the percentage failure rate for English language in the past five years surpasses that of the percentage of credit level in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) conducted by it between 2001 and 2005 while in Mathematics, a fluctuation trend was recorded by the candidates.

Mass failure in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) has led to public outcries and demand for more educational accountability in the country on several occasions (Dada, 1987). According to Ajayi (1997) the mass failure of students in public examinations has made parents lost confidence in the ability of the public schools to deliver quality products and therefore resort to sending their children to private schools where higher schools fees are paid.

Experience has also shown that some of the products of today’s secondary school system in Nigeria can neither usefully live in the society nor move into higher institutions because of poor academic performance. Some of them cannot think for themselves or respect the views and feelings of others. It appears some of the products of the secondary schools do not respect the dignity for labour but have the desire for things that will give them quick money. According to National Universities Commission (2004), Nigerian University graduates are failing to meet the needs of the labour market, not because of inadequate education in the University but because of the poor garbage in from the secondary school level.

Looking at the quality of products that Nigeria’s secondary schools turn out, it appears the quality of education received by the students is low in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor development thereby making the secondary school system ineffective. Omoregie (2006) lamented that the secondary education which is the pivot of the entire educational system in Nigeria is fast loosing relevance, as it is not fulfilling the national objectives as set down in the National policy of education. The author posited that, whatever our leaders are today, is the off-shoot of life in the secondary schools.

The ineffectiveness of the secondary schools could be attributed to several factors but this study was restricted to parents’ involvement in school administration as a potential factor in school effectiveness. It has been noticed in some areas, that school principals do not involve the parents in the administration of the schools for fear of being criticized. It appears in some cases, parents are no longer allowed to participate in school programmes and parents are no longer allowed to visit their children in school regularly to see how they fare. There are instances where some principals no longer make use of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) in school administration. All these tend to make the parents handicapped in assisting the school in the provision of qualitative education to its students.

According to Cotton and Wikeland (2001), many benefits are accrued for the school and for parents themselves when parents become involved in their children’s school activities. They maintained that, school personnel benefit from the improved rapport that generally accompanies increased parents’ involvement. This rapport is often expressed in parents’ increased willingness to support school with their labour and resources during fund-raising activities or special projects.

Besides, Henderson (1987), Hicks and Sammons (1992) and Hillman and Mortimore (1995) had showed in their various studies that parental presence in the school activities and participation in committee’s events and other activities all had positive effects on achievement. Adewuyi (2002) also submitted that active parent involvement and positive home-school-community relations have been shown to positively influence effective schooling and students’ achievement.

Ajayi (1999) also posited that, effective administration of schools could be hampered where the PTA is not performing its roles as expected. Also, Ajayi (2007) posited that, the school and the community are interdependent and interrelated and for the relationship between them to be meaningful, worthwhile and productive, they must be willing to assist each other to achieve their respective goals in atmosphere of love, mutual trust and cooperation.

The literature reviewed so far has clearly shown that, parental involvement in school administration has a positive relationship with school effectiveness. It can be inferred from the foregoing that, parents’ involvement in school administration tends to build a very strong school-home relationship. It was against this backdrop that this present study found out the relationship between parents’ involvement in school administration and school effectiveness in Nigeria.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between the involvement of parents in school administration and the effectiveness of secondary schools in Nigeria. The study investigated the extent of parents’ involvement in school administration and the level of secondary school effectiveness. Based on the findings, recommendations were made on how to improve the effectiveness of the secondary schools.

**Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive research of the survey type. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers, principals as
well as parents of the students in public secondary schools in South-West Nigeria. The sample for the study was 1,560 respondents comprising 1,200 teachers, 300 parents and 60 principals selected from 60 secondary schools.

Multi-stage, simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the sample. At the first stage, a simple random sampling technique was used to select three states out of the six States in the South West Nigeria. The states selected were Ekiti, Ondo and Osun States. The second stage involved the use of proportionate stratified random sampling technique to determine the number of schools per state, the last stage was a simple random sampling technique used to select 20 teachers and 5 parents per school. All the principals of the selected schools were included in the sample.

Three sets of instruments were used for this study. The first instrument was a questionnaire tagged “Secondary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SSEQ)”, the second instrument was tagged “Parents involvement in School Administration Questionnaire (PISAQ) and the third instrument was a proforma designed to collect students’ results in the (SSCE) for 3 years (2005 - 2007) from the schools. SSEQ had two sections, section A sought the background information of the school as well as bio-data information of the respondents, section B contained 19 items designed to elicit information on school effectiveness. PISAQ also had two sections with section A seeking information on the bio-data of the respondents while section B contained 10 items seeking information on parents’ involvement in school administration. The SSEQ, PISAQ and the proforma were administered on the teachers, parents and principals respectively.

The instruments were validated by research experts in the areas of educational planning and tests and measurement both within and outside the University of Ado-Ekiti. Test re-test method of reliability was adopted for the two instruments while Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine their reliability coefficient which stood at 0.87 and 0.82 for SSEQ and PISAQ respectively.

The data collected for the study were analysed using frequency counts, percentage scores and Pearson product moment correlation. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study were presented as follows:

Extent of parents’ involvement in school administration

In order to determine the extent of parents’ involvement in school administration, frequency counts and percentage scores were used to analyse the responses on items 1 - 10 of PISAQ. The result was presented in Table 1. Results in Table 1 shows that 97.7% of the respondents agreed that the school works in collaboration with the parents to ensure that the students are well disciplined. While 96% of them agreed that parents are informed of the progress of their children in school, 94% of them also agreed that parents are allowed to visit the school anytime to see how their children fare in school.

Of the respondents, 92% agreed that PTA is involved in supervision of building projects in the school, while 88% agreed that the parents contribute well during fund raising activity in the school. The table also showed that, 87.3% of the respondents agreed that far-reaching decision are taken in the PTA meetings, while 80% of them also agreed that parents are sometimes appointed members of committee in the school. Again, of the respondents, 78.6% agreed that parents are allowed to participate in school programmes. While 77.4% of the respondents agreed that parents are involved in the maintenance of school facilities, 58.3% of them agreed that parents are sometimes made members of disciplinary committee in school.

On the average, 84.9% of the respondents agreed that parents participate in the administration of the school. This means that, parents were to a large extent involved in the administration of schools in Nigeria.

Level of effectiveness of secondary schools in Nigeria

In analysing the level of school effectiveness, section B of SSEQ and the SSCE result were used. Frequency count, percentage scores and bar chart were used to analyse the responses on items 1 - 19 of section B of SSEQ in addition to SSCE results. In order to determine the level of school effectiveness (low, moderate and high), the mean score and the standard deviation of the responses were used. The low level of school effectiveness was determined by subtracting the standard deviation score from the mean score (49.36 - 4.27 = 45.09), moderate level was determined by the mean score of the responses (53.62), while high level of school effectiveness was determined by adding the mean score and the standard deviation of the responses on the instruments (49.36 + 4.27 = 53.63).

Therefore, the low level of school effectiveness starts from 0 to 45.09, moderate level starts from 45.10 to 53.62 and high level of school effectiveness starts from 53.63 to 100 (Table 2).

Table 2 shows the level of effectiveness of secondary schools in the area covered, the result shows that out of the 60 schools sampled, 11 schools representing 18.3% had low level of effectiveness, 40 schools representing 66.7% had moderate level of school effectiveness while those that had high level of effectiveness were 9 representing 15%. This shows that the level of effectiveness in secondary schools in South West was moderate. See Figure 1 for the graphical presentation of the result.

Relationship between parents’ involvement in school administration and secondary school effectiveness

The relationship was examined using response to items 1 - 10 of section B of PISAQ and items 1 - 19 of section B of SSEQ in addition to SSCE results. The result was presented in Table 3. Table 3 reveals the relationship between parents’ involvement in school administration...
Table 1. Extent of parents’ involvement in the administration of Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The school works in collaboration with the parents to ensure that the students are well disciplined</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parents are allowed to visit the school anytime to see how their children fare in the school.</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Parents are involved in maintenance of school facilities.</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Parents are allowed to participate in school programmes.</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The PTA is involved in supervision of building projects in the school.</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Parents are sometimes appointed members of committees in the school.</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Far-reaching decisions are taken in the PTA meetings.</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Parents are informed of the progress their children are making in school.</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Parents are sometime made members of disciplinary committees in school.</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Parents contribute well during fund raising activity in the school.</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Level of effectiveness of secondary schools in Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of school effectiveness</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low (0 - 45.09)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate (45.10 - 53.62)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (53.63 - 100)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and school effectiveness.

The result obtained from the analysis shows that, the value of r-calculated of 0.211 is less than the value of r-table of 0.250 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between parents’ involvement in school administration and secondary school effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

This study revealed that, to a very large extent, parents were involved in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. The result showed that the parents and the schools worked hand-in-hand in order to ensure that the students are well disciplined. It is also shown that the parents were always informed of the progress their children were making in the schools. They were appointed members of committees in school. The involvement of parents in school activities would create strong and cordial home-school relationship required for the growth and development of the secondary schools.

It was also shown in the study that the secondary schools in the area covered were moderately effective. The implication is that the future is bright for the society and the students alike. This submission is contrary to the position of Omoregie (2006) who submitted that the secondary schools are no longer effective. The author argued that the secondary schools are haven of criminals where future thugs are bred.

The study showed that there was no significant relationship between parents’ involvement in school administration and secondary school effectiveness. Considering the level of participation of parents in school activities, it could be expected that this involvement would enhance the tone of the school and contribute to the effectiveness of the school, but this study has proved otherwise. This implies that parents’ involvement in school administration may not guarantee effectiveness in the schools. The effectiveness of the schools, as revealed in this study might have been caused by some other factors not considered in this study.

The finding of the study therefore contradicts that of Henderson (1987), Hicks (1992) and Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995). The contradictory finding in respect of parents’ involvement in school administration and school effectiveness may not be divorced from the environment where the research was carried out. While the studies of Henderson (1987), Hicks and Sammons (1992), Hillman and Mortimore (1995) were carried out in advanced countries, the present study was carried out in Nigeria where the activities of parents are still subject to
review by the principals before being involved in school administration.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that parents were adequately involved in administration of secondary schools in Nigeria and the schools were effective. Moreover, parents' involvement in school administration was not a contributing factor to the effectiveness of the secondary schools.

It was recommended that, the school administrators should sustain the high level of parents' involvement in school administration in order to maintain cordial relationship between the parents and the school authorities. Furthermore, since parents' involvement in school administration was not significantly related to school effectiveness, the government and other stakeholders should make the teaching-learning environment of the schools more conducive in order to improve their effectiveness.

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