ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE FUNDING OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the extent of community participation in funding primary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. The study was guided by one research question and one null hypothesis. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of study comprised 1,223 head teachers, 10,760 teachers in the 1,223 public primary schools in Enugu state. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to arrive at the sample size of 30 head teachers and 170 teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire with four-point rating scale titled Extent of Community Participation in Funding Primary School (ECPFPS) with a reliability index of 0.08, using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research the question. The hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that the communities to a low extend participate in funding primary education. This finding implicates further research in the area of school funding by the community in Enugu state. Based on the finding, it was recommended among others that community members should be made aware of the importance of funding primary education.

KEYWORDS: Community participation, Funding, Primary school, Enugu State, Nigeria

Received: Dec 04, 2020; **Accepted:** Dec 24, 2020; **Published:** Jan 21, 2021; **Paper Id.:** IJMPERDFEB20218

INTRODUCTION

Education and academic achievement and the wellbeing of children at school is a major concern of parents, teachers and stakeholders in education industry. Globally, education remains the most effective instrument for social and economic transformation as well as for national building and development. Primary education is the first level of education (FRN, 2013) and the primary school as an institution of learning is the primary agent of socialization for children outside the home (Kombe, 2019). The primary education as the foundation level of education is vital to children's education and learning provides the structural framework upon which every other level of education is anchored (Bello & Yusuf, 2017).

In spite of the indispensable position of primary education in the education system and learning, many Nigerian children perform poorly in primary school. Ekundayo (2019) pointed out that from the analysis of 1991 national census in Nigeria, not less than 20 million children are of primary school age out of which the majority are performing very poorly. Affirming this stance, Santos (2020) stated categorically that uncountable number of Nigerian

pupils are performing below average in primary school. TCB & ASSOCIATES (2019) reported that the performance of learners in first school leaving certificate examinations has fallen from grace to grass. The report of the TCB & ASSOCIATES indicated that in recent years, fewer pupils make distinction these years in First School Leaving Certificate Examinations than in previous years. These confirm that there is poor academic performance and achievement among pupils in public primary schools in Nigeria, in spite of efforts to improve human and material resources and facilities in the primary schools to boost primary education in the country.

School facilities refer to all the school plants, which are mobilized for the smooth running of the school. School facilities are those materials that are organized, harnessed and utilized for instructional purposes and well-being of the learners (Lackney, ND). This idea lead Ugwulashi (2017) to insist that educational facilities encompass all the infrastructure and instructional amenities in the school aimed at greater school performance. Nevertheless, it seems that availability of educational facilities in the Nigerian primary schools leaves a lot to be desired. According to Omisore (2016) millions of Nigerian children are out of school due to inadequate structural facilities occasioned by poor funding. Still pointing to lack of facilities in primary schools in Nigeria Ekundaya (2019) pointed out that the educational system in Nigeria is enmeshed in assorted predicaments; inadequate and infrastructural decay, neglect, waste of resources, poor funding among others. Ugwulashi further indicated that school facilities are necessary determinant of efficient and effective teaching and learning processes.

Adequate and appropriate school facilities makes the school attractive, safe, conducive, and inspires the teacher, caregivers and pupils to greater heights in contrast to inappropriate and unsafe facilities. Mba (2019) lamented that presently there is gross inadequate number of primary schools and teacher available to the Nigerian children for basic education and that the problem is aggravated by poor and inadequate facilities. According to Ugwulashi (2017) poor, damaged, lack or even non-existence of school facilities are primary sources of danger and hazard that affect school performance adversely. Similarly, Mba pointed out that dilapidating infrastructure, unqualified and poorly trained teachers negatively affect children's morale in Nigerian schools. Ibrahim et al. (2017) indicated that for the attainment of education goals, there must be adequate provision and maximum utilization of school facilities to enable the learners achieve maximally. Ahmodu et al. (2018) opined that the academic performance of learners is significantly tied to the school facilities. This goes far to show that the school facilities influence the academic performance of pupils. Furthermore, Ahmodu et al. observed that though school facilities are significant factor in ensuring quality teaching and learning, school facilities are cost effective and requires a lot of funding for provision and maintenance.

The issue of funding primary education has been a hot topic among stakeholder in education sector. Funding refers to the amount of money available for particular project or purpose. According to Egberibin (2014) despite the preeminence of primary education as the foundation stone of education, the Nigerian primary schools and education are poorly funded. According to Ekundayo (2019) the most chastising obstacle confronting the education sector in Nigeria is funding and lamented that 7.04% of the nation's budget allocated to education in 2018 is grossly inadequate in comparison to UNESCO's recommended 15 – 25%. It has been near impossibility for the governments of Nigeria to fund primary schools adequately. Amoo (2019) lamented that the inability of the government to fund primary education has left parents and community members with the task of funding primary schools within their capacities. It is on this note that the researchers are interested in the extent of community participation in funding primary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Adeyemi (2011) discovered that government funding of education in Nigeria is too poor. However, Adeyemi linked the

underfunding of education in Nigeria to the rapid expansion of education in the country and that other sources of funding such as external funding on education is also inadequate. Empirical studies have revealed the status of funding education in Nigeria. In a study that investigated the level and sources of funding education in Nigeria, In another study Nwachukwu (2016) discovered that all levels of Nigerian governments underfund education and that the worst struck is the primary level of education that regular contributions by parents, large companies and monetary support from international bodies is too merger to compliment the huge lack. Ubogu and Veronica (2018) found out that education in Nigeria in underfunded by the government and that for over a decade now the federal government's spending on education is below 10 percent of its overall budget. Furthermore, the study concluded that parents, guardians, private sector and the society seem to augment the government's inadequacy.

Furthermore, Eje et al. (2016) indicated that community participation is inevitable and that communities participate in funding secondary education in Nigeria, nevertheless, Eje was silence on the extent of community participation in funding primary education. In a similar study, Kwashabawa and Oduwaiye (2016) indicated that there is a high level of community participation in financing infrastructural development in Basic Schools in North-West, Nigeria. But quickly pointed out that labour and material supply were the areas of community contribution in financing of infrastructural projects.

Further empirical evidence by Loeurt (2019) indicated that community participation in primary education is more in provision of resource materials than funding. In a related study, Amoo (2019) revealed that in addition to federal, state and local governments' funding of basic education in Nigeria, community members and non-governmental organizations assist the government in funding basic education. According to Amoo, there are no available data to quantify the extent of community participation in funding basic education in Nigeria. Furthermore, Chidinma et al. (2020) pointed out that there is a well-orchestrated strategy for community involvement in funding secondary schools in Nigeria while no attention is being directed to basic education in terms of community assistance through funding. Unfortunately, there seems to be little or no studies on the extent of community participation in funding primary education in Nigeria.

Funding is the bedrock of education, and the paucity of government funding of education in general and primary education in particular seems glaring. This is evident most primary schools in Enugu State have administrative issues, such problems range from personnel to funding. Some schools need funds to employ teachers to supplement the government teachers, construct classrooms and office blocks, provide learning and instructional resources. In many primary schools in Enugu state, most of the buildings are dilapidated and at the verge of collapse. The schools need funds to put all these in place and it is obvious that the government and the school authority do not have the capacity to provide the needed funds. Effective school funding is almost an impossible task without community involvement. Therefore, there is need to have a systematic assessment of community involvement in funding primary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria with a view to underscoring possible ways of strengthening school - community collaboration, and assessing the means of improving community funding of primary schools for efficient service delivery and general improvement of the schools. So, the problem of this study is to investigate extent of community participation in funding primary education in Enugu State, Nigeria? Therefore, the purpose of the study is to determine the extent of community participation in funding education in primary schools as perceived by the head teachers and teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This lone research question guided the study:

1. To what extent do communities participate in funding primary education in Enugu State of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

This one null hypothesis guided the study, and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals, teachers and community leaders on the extent of community participation in funding primary education in Enugu State, Nigeria.

METHODS

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is a research method that allows the researcher describe various aspects of the phenomenon or a subject through data collection without influencing the subject in any way (McCombes, 2020). This design has been adopted by Eze et al. (2020), Okeke et al. (2020a,b), Ugwuanyi et al. (2020). The population of the study comprised all 1,223 head teachers, 10,760 teachers in the 1,223 public primary schools in Enugu state. (Source: Enugu state ministry of education, August, 2019). The sample size of the study consisted of 30 head teachers, 170 teachers. The sample size was arrived at through multiple random sampling procedure. In the first stage, simple random sampling technique was employed to draw 10 Local Governments Areas out of the 17 Local Government Areas in Enugu State. Secondly, stratified random sampling technique was employed to draw 700 schools from the 10 Local Government Areas. The schools were stratified under urban and rural locations. Finally, a simple random sampling technique by balloting was used to sample 30 head teachers, 170 teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire with four-point rating scale titled Extent of Community Participation in Funding Primary School (ECPFPS). The instrument was validated by experts in the fields of Measurement and Evaluation, Childhood Education and Educational Psychology, all in the faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability of the instrument was determined by a preliminary survey in Benue State, Nigeria. Using Cronbach Alpha estimate, a reliability index of 0.80 was obtained which is an indication that the instrument is reliable. The researcher with the assistance of two research assistants administered the instruments to the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question: To what extent do communities participate in the funding primary education in Enugu State of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean analysis of the ratings of head teachers and teachers on the extent of communities participate in the funding primary education

Item statement	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
Community participation in:					
1. Funding the construction of structures such as classrooms, toilets, chairs, and tables	Head Teachers	30	2.06	1.04	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.83	.94	Low Extent
2. Funding the provision of instructional materials and education resources	Head Teachers	30	2.06	1.04	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.83	.94	Low Extent
3. Funding the installation and maintenance of workshops and laboratories	Head Teachers	30	1.90	1.09	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.71	.88	Low Extent
4. Funding the renovation of dilapidated buildings	Head Teachers	30	2.13	1.19	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.75	.92	Low Extent
5. Funding the maintenance of functional equipment like generator	Head Teachers	30	2.00	1.05	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.71	.83	Low Extent
6. Employing and paying specialized subject	Head Teachers	30	2.03	1.06	Low Extent

teachers like music	Teachers	170	1.71	.78	Low Extent
7. Sponsoring school activities like prize giving day, sports festivals and parent's day	Head Teachers	30	2.10	1.15	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.75	.92	Low Extent
8. Sponsoring school academic competitions	Head Teachers	30	2.16	1.17	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.83	.98	Low Extent
9. Sourcing for funds for the schools from other organizations and wealthy individuals	Head Teachers	30	2.03	1.12	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.83	.98	Low Extent
10. Organizing fund raising for the school	Head Teachers	30	1.96	1.03	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.67	.79	Low Extent
Overall Mean	Head Teachers	30	2.04	1.01	Low Extent
	Teachers	170	1.76	.83	Low Extent

Table 1 shows the mean rating of head teachers and teachers on the extent communities participate in the funding primary education. The analysis showed that the mean ratings of both head teachers and teachers are within the mean range of 1.50 to 2.40, implying that both respondents agreed that the communities to a low extent participate in the funding primary education. However, the overall mean ratings of 2.04 and 1.76 indicate that the head teachers had higher mean rating than the teachers.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of head teachers and teachers on the extent of community participation in funding primary education in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean ratings of head teachers and teachers on the extent of community participation in funding primary education

Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Head Teachers	30	2.04	1.01	198	1.637	.103
Teachers	170	1.76	.83			

Table 2 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of head teachers and teachers on the extent of community participation in funding primary education in Enugu State, Nigeria, $t(198) = 1.637, p = .103$. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected at $p > .05$.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the results, it was discovered that community participation in funding primary education is low. The head teachers and teachers agreed that communities to a low extent fund primary education in the state. This finding is in line with the findings of Nwachukwu (2016), who discovered that contributions of parents and other community members are too meager to complement the huge lack in primary education. The finding of the study also validated the finding of Chidinma et al. (2020), that whereas there is a well-orchestrated strategy for community participation in funding secondary education, no attention is being directed to primary education in terms of community assistance in funding. Also, the findings of the study contradict the position of Kwashabawa and Oduwaiye (2016) indicated that there is a high level of community participation in financing infrastructural development in Basic Schools in North-West, Nigeria. This finding implicates further research in the area of school funding by the community in Enugu state.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the level of community participation in funding primary education in Enugu state is low. This

implies that the amount of funding that goes to primary schools from the host communities is so meagre that it is not able to upgrade primary education to give the Nigerian child a sustainable and quality primary education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- That seminars and workshops should be organized for parents and community members to educate them on the need for community participation in funding primary education.
- That school administration should be educated on the need for good school-community relationship and on the need for the community to be aware of the needs of the school.
- That community members should be part of the school administration and management.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers are grateful to all the participants used for the conduct of this research for their wonderful cooperation throughout the course of the research and also appreciate Rev Fr. Emmanuel C. Okenyi for serving as a contact person for any information concerning the conduct of this research.

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