

Community Participation in Decision-Making in North West Zone Basic Schools, Nigeria: The Need for Revitalizing School-Based Management Policies

BAKWAI BALA

Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education and Extension Services,
Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
E_mail: bakwaibala@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines community participation in decision-making in North West Zone basic schools, Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprise of 21220 UBE schools and their SBMCs. Simple random sampling technique was used to select four states (Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara States). A sample of 370 basic schools were selected from Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara States using proportionate, stratified and systematic random sampling method at different stages. In each of the selected school, six SBMC members were selected to respond the questionnaire. The members selected include the chairman, the secretary, the teachers' representative, the students' representative, the women leader, and any other member available. Validated Community Participation Questionnaire (CPQ) was used in this study. Pilot test was conducted and test-retest method was used to determine the reliability index of 0.79 for the CPQ. Descriptive statistics of percentages and mean scores were used to analyze the research questions. The level of community participation in decision-making in North West Zone basic schools was found high. It was also found that, community participated in identifying projects to be executed in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria. The paper therefore recommended that the SBMC policies should be frequently evaluated to identify areas of improvement regarding how community should participate in decision-making in basic schools. Also, the SBMCs at school level should on their part endeavour to work harder in mobilizing members of their community to participate in decision-making. This will make community members feel the complete ownership of their school and get most committed.

Keywords: Community Participation, Decision-making, Basic Schools, School-Based Management, School-Based Management Committee.

Introduction

Since the time government took over schools from the missionaries, it has been devising means to involve community in school management. Hence, school boards, education committees, education authorities and education commissions were all introduced at different points in time. It was believed (Adesina, 1990; Alani, 2002; Nwagwu, 2002; Okendu, 2012) that the earlier School Management Boards (SMBs) have charted the course unto which the schools were able to

achieve the accolades in the past. The inability of these boards to continue to performed as expected was indeed the beginning of what has dwindled public schools today. It is in view of this fact that School-Based Management (SBM) was introduced to take over the responsibility of school management boards (Adeyemi, 2011). In 2007, guidelines for the implementation of the National Council on Education (NCE) policy were issued by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to all State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) to implement School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in their states. The first problem SBMCs have in Nigeria was in the original SBMC guidelines that did not take care of the diversity in the country and the peculiarities of the different states (UBEC, 2011). This is because every local community has its own unique and peculiar problems and a remedial programme that successfully solves a problem in one community may not necessarily do the same in another community (Alabi, 2003).

Revised guidelines for the development of SBMC were issued in 2011. In these guidelines, it was categorically stated that one of the main objectives of SBM is to promote the participation of community members from all groups in the every decision affecting their schools (UBEC, 2013). SBMCs therefore, are expected to make community members to be actively involved in planning school activities.

Community participation in schools is an area of interest for many researchers. For instance, Tshabalala (2006) stresses that until the middle of the last century, responsibility for educating children rested with the community. Community participation is not something new in the education delivery. It did not suddenly appear as panacea to solve complex problems related to education (Aref & Redzuan, 2009). In fact, not all communities have played a passive role in children's education. One of the cornerstone of democracy in education is the participatory decision making process which is required by those managing schools (Tshabalala, 2006). Although there still are places where communities organize themselves to operate schools for their children today, community participation in education has not been fully recognized nor extended systematically to a wider practice. Presently, the community participation needed in schools was found impressively good in some part of Nigeria where community schools are found even in smaller communities. But community participation was found low in Northern Nigeria where community schools are rarely found (UN, 2005) and the SBM policy did not specify clearly how this participation is to be carried out in that part of the country.

The literature on community participation in basic schools, with reference to policies particularly in Northern Nigeria, appears to be few and scanty. This

research therefore examines community participation in decision-making in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria with focus on revitalizing SBM policies.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of this study is to find out:

1. the level of community participation in decision-making in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?
2. whether communities participate in identifying projects to be executed in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?
3. whether communities participate in disciplinary processes in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?
4. whether communities participate in organizing school programmes in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?

Research Questions

The following are the research questions set for this study:

1. What is the level of community participation in decision-making in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?
2. Do communities participate in identifying projects to be executed in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?
3. Do communities participate in the disciplinary processes in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?
4. Do communities participate in organizing school programmes in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

Chester Barnard Co-operative theory defines school organization as a system of co-operation whereby people work together for a common goal. School cannot succeed without the co-operation of several individuals within the community. School-based management tries to create mutual co-operation between school and community. It brings people and school together. School-based management therefore is co-operative in nature and man oriented. Barnard co-operative theory is essentially man oriented (Oyedeji, 1998:19).

Chester Barnard Co-operative theory and social system theory are somewhat related in the sense that they see school system as an interaction between several interest groups which need the co-operation of each other. For example, Getzel and Guba in Manga (2015) confirm in their model of social system that a social

system is a system in which the components are people. Each individual's behaviour within the social system is shaped by his psychological uniqueness and sociological attribute.

Literature Review

The UBE Programme is an educational programme aimed at eradicating illiteracy, ignorance and poverty. The implementation of the universal basic education scheme in Nigeria started with its official launch on 30th September, 1999 in Sokoto, Sokoto State. The vision of the UBE is that at the end of 9 years of continuous education, every child should have acquired appropriate and relevant skills and values and be employable in order to contribute his/her quota to national development (Tahir, 2005). The UBE act of 2004 covers; early child care development and education (ECCDE), six years of primary Education and three years of junior secondary education (Tahir, 2005).

The UBE programme is expected to help the country achieve quality education, achievement of the MDGs, creation of more jobs, and curbing indiscipline among other things (Anaduaka & Okafor, 2013). According to Anaduaka & Okafor (2013) some of the challenges affecting UBE scheme include inadequate funding, inaccurate data for planning, lack of enough and competent teachers, poor implementation of the new UBE curriculum, poor public enlightenment, poor monitoring/evaluation, poor motivation of teachers.

The UBE programme was left with no choice, but to depend partly on community for its successful implementation. Hence, the creation of SBMCs and many other community based programmes. Asiyai (2012) found in her study that the benefits of community participation in educational management to include improved delivery, improved quality and equal access to education. The SBMC in Nigeria which is expected to complement the UBE programme is a form of community involvement in school governance, based on regulation with elected but voluntary membership (UBEC, 2011). Certainly, the intention behind the committee is to implement democratic participatory decision-making. The function goes beyond resource management and its utilization as some observers view it. This is a narrow concept of SBMC. The communities are to ensure quality both in educational inputs and outcomes and quality in learning environment for schools. This can only be effective if we have learners who are of good quality (Ogundele & Adelabu, 2009).

SBMC should be representative of the diverse groups in communities, with an interest in improving the learning outcomes of pupils/students in schools. It is a

voluntary and non-political committee and its membership should not draw any allowance or stipend (UBEC, 2011). According to UBEC (2011: P. 25) “the SBMC will generally be made up of 12 to 19 people” and “should be a reasonable gender balance in selecting the members of each SBMC”.

Osei-Owusu and Sam (2012) conducted a study in Ashanti, Ghana to assess the role of School Management Committees (SMCs) in improving quality teaching and learning in Ashanti Mampong Municipal Township Basic Junior High Schools through the views of head teachers, teachers and SMC Members. Their findings indicated that SMCs were ineffective in the monitoring and supervision of head teachers', teacher's and pupils' attendance. They also found that even though SMC's are not doing enough to assist teachers to improve teaching and learning, they are seen as very effective in solving school community relationship since SMCs are relatively on task on the issue of serving as a vehicle for promoting community participation in the provision of quality education.

Another serious challenge affecting SBMC in Nigeria and in many other countries of the world is stakeholder's trust. Stakeholders confidence in SBMCs and their activities affairs very low. That was why Gamage and Antonio (2006) conducted a study titled “effective participatory school administration, leadership, and management: does it affect the trust levels of stakeholders?”. They found that PSALM was very effective and useful tool in leading and managing schools in Philippines. He found that regardless of the type of stakeholders involved in participatory management, trust may either increased or decreased on the basis of their individual performance. He also found that there was correlation between the indicators of PSALM effectiveness and the trust levels of stakeholders except in their perception on the power and authority granted to the Advisory School Council (ASC) (equivalent to the SBMC in Nigeria).

Community participation is not something new in the education delivery. It did not suddenly appear as panacea to solve complex problems related to education. In fact, not all communities have played a passive role in children's education. For instance, Tshabalala (2006) stresses that until the middle of the last century, responsibility for educating children rested with the community. Although there still are places where communities organize themselves to operate schools for their children today, community participation in education has not been fully recognized nor extended systematically to a wider practice. Community participation in education occurs when a community organizes itself and takes full responsibility for managing its problems. Theron (2005) pointed out that there are different shades of opinion on either citizen or public participation and it related to the process of giving people more opportunities to participate effectively in development activities by empowering them to mobilize their own creative

potentials, manage the resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives. United Nation (UN) (2005) viewed community participation as the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a community to actively contribute to and influence their school development process and to share equitably in the fruits of school development. People's participation is essential in order to establish economic and political relationship within the wider society and it is not just a matter of involvement in school project but rather the process by which rural people are able to organize their school, ability to identify their own educational needs, share in designing, implementing, and evaluating their school programmes (Kumar, 2002; Laah, Adefila & Yusuf, 2013).

Community participation helps to fulfill the right to access an education in schools in which attainment and achievement are similar to or higher than others in the context. It also increases the accountability of schools by reducing teacher absenteeism, increasing teacher effort and these generally seem to contribute to improved student outcomes (Aref & Redzuan, 2009). As such, participation contributes to communities fulfilling their responsibilities for the education of children and the accountability of schools. However, there remain concerns around the extent to which equity is enhanced at community level and whether community benefits extend beyond those participating directly in SBMC (Mnaranara, 2010; Russell, 2009; Bray & Lillis, 2004).

There are many other challenges affecting community participation in basic schools. Among these challenges included the failure of some parents and guardians to attend PTA and SBMC meetings, inadequate funds due to untimely payment of dues. Again, most parents failed to contribute financially towards school projects. These challenges are at the core of community participation and educational infrastructure management and constitute baseline indicators for assessing the effectiveness of community efforts (Lunenburg, 2010).

Methodology

The research design for this study was descriptive survey. The population of this study consists of 21220 UBE schools and their SBMC in North West Zone, Nigeria. There were total number of 18719 primary schools and 1913 junior secondary schools under UBE (UBEC, 2013b). The North West zone of Nigeria comprised of Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara States. In the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select four states (which was made up of Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara State) from the zone. Consequently, multi stage sampling technique was used to select 370 basic schools across the selected state. In each of the selected school, six SBMC

members were selected. The members selected include the Chairman, the Secretary, the Teachers' Representative, the Students' Representative, the Women Leader, and any other member available. In this research, a validated questionnaire with a reliability index of 0.79 titled Community Participation Questionnaire (CPQ) was used in collecting the data. The data collected for this study was analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) using descriptive statistics of percentages and mean scores.

Data Presentation

In this section, the data was analysed using mean scores and percentages. Research question one was measured on a scale of five points. A mean score below 2.50 was considered as low-level, while that of 2.50 and above was considered high-level participation. In question 2, 3 and 4 result was interpreted using percentages. In each result, 50% and above was used to draw conclusion on the research question.

Research Question One

RQ1: What is the level of community participation in decision-making in North West Zone basic schools, Nigeria?

In this part, the data about community participation in decision-making was presented and analysed. Table 1 presents data on the level of community participation in decision-making in the North West Zone basic schools.

Table 1: Level of Community Participation in Decision-Making in North West Zone Basic School

Value	Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	No Response	54	2.4	2.4
1	Very low	36	1.6	4.1
2	Low	79	3.6	7.6
3	Moderate	543	24.5	32.1
4	High	652	29.4	61.4
5	Very High	856	38.6	100
Total		2220	100	

Mean = 4.14

In Table 1, it is indicated that community participation in decision-making was high. This was because the mean of the values was 4.14. Considering the values individually, 856 (39%) respondents believed that the community participation in decision-making was very high. Another group of 652 (29%) respondents claimed that community participation in decision-making was high, and another group of 543 (25%) of the respondents maintained that it was moderate. In this table, only 79 (3.6%) and 36 (1.6%) respondents claimed that community participation in decision-making was low and very low respectively.

It can be concluded that community participation in decision-making was high. This goes contrary to Kambuga (2013) finding that community members were generally not actively involved in decision-making, planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. But in favour of the finding of Njunwa (2010) that community participation empowers community to make decision that directly affects their life. It creates the sense of ownership of the development process to the community itself. Development processes become integral part of the community and helps the community to believe that they own their development process. Participation in decision-making also helps ensure sustainable school development and continuity of the school development processes.

Research Question Two

RQ2: Do community participate in identifying projects to be executed in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?

To verify these, the respondents were asked whether community members participated in identifying project to be executed in their schools. Table 2 presents the data on research question two.

Table 2: Community Participation in Identifying Project to be Executed in North West Zone Basic School

Value	Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	No Response	18	0.8	0.8
1	Don't Know	339	15.3	16.1
2	Yes	1700	76.6	92.7
3	No	163	7.3	100
Total		2220	100	

In Table 2, it is indicated that communities participate in identifying project to be executed in their schools. This was because only 7.3% (163) of the respondents said “No” to the question that asked whether community members participate in identifying project to be executed in their school. In this table also, 15.3% (339) of the respondents claimed they did not know whether community members participate in identifying project to be executed in their schools. It was observed in the table that 1700 (76.6%) respondents believed that community members participate in identifying project to be executed in their schools. Since 76% of the respondents believed that community members participate in identifying project to be executed in their schools, it can be concluded that community members participated in identifying projects to be executed in North West zone basic schools. This agrees with Osei-Owusu & Sam (2012) finding that even though SMC’s are not doing enough to assist teachers to improve teaching and learning, they are seen as very effective in solving school community relationship since SMCs are relatively on task on the issue of serving as a vehicle for promoting community participation in the provision of quality education.

Research Question Three

RQ3: Do communities participate in the disciplinary processes in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?

Table 3: Community Involvement in Disciplinary Processes in Basic School

Value	Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	No Response	33	1.5	1.5
1	Don't Know	385	17.3	18.8
2	Yes	1516	68.3	87.1
3	No	286	12.9	100
Total		2220	100	

The respondents were also asked whether community members participate in the disciplinary process in their schools. The answers they provided were presented in Table 3. In the table, 33 (1.5%) respondents did not attempt the question. Three hundred and eighty five (17.3%) claimed they did not know the answer. A total number of 1516 (68.3%) respondents have said that community members did participate in school disciplinary process. While only 286 (12.9%) believed that community members did not participate in disciplinary process in their school. This means that community participated in disciplinary process in North West zone basic schools.

Research Question Four

RQ4: Do communities participate in organizing school programmes in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria?

Table 4: Community Participation in Organizing School Programmes in North West Zone Basic School

Value	Value Label	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	No Response	35	1.6	1.6
1	Don't Know	334	15	16.6
2	Yes	1120	50.5	67.1
3	No	731	32.9	100
Total		2220	100	

In table 3, 35 (1.6%) respondents did not attempt the question. A group of 334 (15.0%) respondents claimed they did not know the answer. Those who believed that community members participated in organizing school programme were 1120 (50.5%) respondents. The remaining 731 (32.9%) claimed that communities did not participate in organizing school programme. By implication, it can be concluded that community members participated in organizing school programme in North West zone basic schools, Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Since the communities were found to be participating in decision-making in basic schools, what policy makers only require is to specify clearly ways and manners by which community members should participate in decision-making their schools. This will make individual communities to have complete sense of ownership of their schools.

Therefore, the study recommended that the SBMC policies should be frequently evaluated to identify areas of improvement regarding how community should participate in decision-making in basic schools. This will help in revitalizing this policies to promote stronger community involvement in school decision-making. Also, the study recommended that SBMCs at school level should on their part endeavour to work harder in mobilizing members of their community to participate in decision-making. This will make community members feel the complete ownership of their school and get most committed to it. SBMCs at state,

local government and school levels should continue to provide conducive atmosphere for communities to be able to participate in decision-making to an excellent level.

It was also recommended that more programmes about SBMCs should continue to be sponsored on media (TV, Radio, Magazines, Newspapers, and Cinemas). This will complement the efforts of SBMC members at the local community level where efforts to get people's involvement in decision-making appeared somewhat difficult.

References

- Adeyemi, M. (2011). Communities role in universal basic education: partnership policy on facilities provisions in Nigerian primary schools. Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria.
- Alabi, M. (2003). The research process. In T. Agbola, L. Egunjobi, & C. O. Olatubara, *Research method: A practical guide*. (pp. 17-32). Lagos: MURLAB Searchwisdom Education Services Publishers, Editors and Management Consultants.
- Alani, R. (2002). Planning for universal basic education in Nigeria. Paper presented at conference organized by the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, Ondo May 30-31.
- Anaduaka, U. S. & Okafor, C. F. (2013). The universal basic education programme in Nigeria: Problems and prospects. *Basic Research Journal of Education Research and Review*, 2 (3): 42-48.
- Aref, F. & Redzuan, M. (2009). Assessing the level of community participation as a component of community capacity building for tourism development. *Journal of scientific research*. 28(3),443-450, available on <http://www.eurojournals.com/ejsr.htm>.
- Bray, M. & Lillis, K. (2004). *Community financing of education; issues and policy implications in less developed countries*. Oxford: Pergaman Press.
- Gamage, D. & Antonio, D. S. (2006). Effective participatory school administration, leadership, and management: does it affect the trust levels of stakeholders? Retrieved on Saturday, January 18, 2014 from <http://cnx.org/m14112/latest/>

- Kambuga, Y. (2013). The role of community participation in the ongoing construction of ward based secondary schools: lessons of Tanzania. *International Journal of Education and Research*, **1** (7). ISSN: 2201-6333 (Print), ISSN: 2201-6740 (Online). Retrieved from <http://www.ijern.com>
- Kambuga, Y. (2013). The role of community participation in the ongoing construction of ward based secondary schools: lessons of Tanzania. *International Journal of Education and Research*, **1** (7). ISSN: 2201-6333 (Print), ISSN: 2201-6740 (Online). Retrieved from <http://www.ijern.com>
- Kumar, S. (2002), *Methods for community participation. A complete guide for practitioners*. London: ITDG Publishers.
- Kumar, S. (2002), *Methods for community participation. A complete guide for practitioners*. London: ITDG Publishers.
- Laah, E. D.; Adefila, J. O. & Yusuf, R. O. (2013). Community participation in sustainable rural infrastructural development in Riyom area, Plateau state of Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, **4** (19). ISSN 2222-1700 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2855 (Online). www.iiste.org
- Laah, E. D.; Adefila, J. O. & Yusuf, R. O. (2013). Community participation in sustainable rural infrastructural development in Riyom area, Plateau state of Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, **4** (19). ISSN 2222-1700 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2855 (Online). www.iiste.org
- Mnaranara, T. L. (2010). *Importance of community participation in ongoing construction of primary schools*. Unpublished Master Thesis in Development Management. University of Agder, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences Centre for Development Studies.
- Njunwa, K. M. (2010). Community participation as a tool for development: Local community's participation in primary education development in Morogoro, Tanzania -A case of Kilakala and Mindu Primary Schools. Unpublished master thesis, University of Agder, Tanzania.
- Nwagwu, N. (2002). From UPE to UBE: Some basic planning considerations for effectiveness. Lead paper presented at a conference organized by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, Ondo, May 30-31.

- Ogundele, J. A. & Adelabu, M. A. (2009). Improving pupils quality through community advocacy: the role of School – Based Management Committee (SBMC). *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi- The Journal of International Social Research*, 2 (8).
- Okendu, J. N. (2012). The Role of School Board, School Heads and Parent-Teachers Association in the Effective Management of Public Schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3 (8): 201-207. ISSN 2222-1735.
- Osei-Owusu, B. & Sam, F. K. (2012). Assessing the role of school management committees (SMCs) in improving quality teaching and learning in Ashanti Manpong municipal basic schools. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)*, 3 (5): 611-615.
- Russell, K. A. (2009). Community participation in schools in developing nation: Characteristics, methods and outcomes. A qualifying paper. Retrieved from <http://www>.
- Tahir, G. (2005). Universal basic education in Nigerian. the journey so far. In Maduewesi, E. (eds). *Nigeria Journal of Teacher Education and Teaching. Asaba*, 1 (1): 217-24.
- Theron, F. (2005). Public participation as a micro-level development strategy. In Davids, F. Theron and K. J. Maphunye (Eds.). *Participatory development in South Africa: A development management perspective*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Tshabalala, E. L. (2006). The role of community participation in the integrated development plan of Govan Mbeki Municipality. Department of social work and criminology: University of Pretoria. Available (Online) <http://www.up.ac.za/dspace/bitstream/2263/12247/1/>.pdf
- Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (2011). *Revised guidelines for the development of school-based management committees*. Abuja: Social Mobilization Department. Retrieved on Tuesday 21 January, 2013 from <http://www.ubeconline.com>.
- UBEC (2013a). Facts and figures: 2012 enrolment by state. Retrieved on 3rd February, 2014 from <http://www.ubeconline.com/facts-figures/enrolment/>

UBEC (2013b). Executive summary. Report of the community entry exercise for the establishment of school based management committee in 36 states and FCT 28th July-3rd august, 2013. Retrieved on 21st January, 2013 from <http://www.ubeconline.com/>

United Nations (UN) (2005). A division for sustainable development. Indicators for sustainable development: Review and assessment, background paper, New York.