

## **Practical Administrative Measures for Involving the Communities in Primary School Administration in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** This research sought to find out the practical administrative measures for involving the communities in primary school administration in the Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research was adopted. All the 92 headmasters of the 92 primary schools in the area constituted the population. They were all involved in the study since the population was manageable. Two research questions guided the study. A “Questionnaire of Practical Administrative Measures for Involving the Communities in Primary Schools Administration” was used to obtain information from the respondents. The instrument which was duly validated and confirmed reliable was rated using the modified Likert’s four-point rating scale. A 2.50 mean score was adopted as a level of agreement. The research questions were answered using the mean and standard deviation (SD). The results revealed that the headmasters involved the communities in school curricular programmes but not in financial and physical facilities management, to an agreement level. The findings led to recommendations that the local government education authority should have operational guidelines and monitoring teams to ensure the sustenance of the school-communities’ relationships in all primary schools. Primary school teachers who aspire to higher education should be encouraged to study educational administration.

**Keywords:** Primary schools, headmasters, administration, communities

### **Introduction**

Primary education is the education of children aged between six years and twelve years. It is basically the foundation of the entire process of formal education. The Federal government of Nigeria’s policy on education (2014, revised) highlights some of the objectives including giving the pupils the basic skills for literacy, numeracy, communication, scientific abilities etc. It is a six-year educational programme that prepares children for life in the middle basic education. At this level, children are guided to develop their potentials. The teaching method is such that they are provided the opportunities to explore their environments which are made child-friendly, and are able to develop their potentials accordingly. Primary schools are therefore, the formal settings where children of ages six to twelve are provided primary education. The quality of the entire educational system is largely dependent on how firm the foundation is laid at the primary school level. The attainment of scientific and technological advancements would be facilitated if the awareness is created at the primary schools level. If this is achieved at the primary school level, the nation can be sure of bringing up youths of admirable behaviours, who rather than being liabilities to the government and the parents, contribute positively to the social, economic, and technological development of the nation.

A headmaster is an administrative head of the primary school. He is a person in charge of the day-to-day running of a primary school. He is a person with the authority of headship. This emphasis is necessary because of the

nature of the hierarchy of primary school teachers. Many teachers may be in the headmasters or head teachers' cadre (both words can be used interchangeably). For the sake of clarity, see the illustration below:

Grade level 07————→Teacher class 1/ Headmaster Grade III

Grade level 08————→Headmaster Grade II

Grade level 09————→Headmaster Grade I

Grade level 10————→Headmaster Special Class

Grade level 12————→Principal Master II

Grade level 13————→Principal Master I

Grade level 14————→Chief Principal Maser

Grade level 15————→Deputy Director of Schools

Grade level 16————→Director of Schools

### **Figure 1: Primary School Teachers Hierarchy**

**Source:** Office of the Education Secretary, Udi Local Government Education Authority (LGEA).

Even though a teacher is ranked within the cadre, he does not assume the role of the headmaster until he is so appointed by the Executive Chairman of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), on the recommendation of the Education Secretary of the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). In doing this, much respect is given to staff seniority of appointment. When two teachers have the same qualifications, and are on the same grade level and step, the teacher whose date of first appointment comes first takes it. Only those who are appointed as substantive headmasters are recognized as such. They manage the primary schools with their administrative skills to be able to do the job. They work towards the achievement of the objectives of primary education. They supervise the activities of other teachers and other members of staff which complement the educational programmes. They compile and submit monthly statistical information for administrative purposes to the education secretary.

Administration is a process by which heads of organizations or establishments direct and control the activities of other members of the organizations following laid-down rules and regulations (Eze & Ano (2004). The word administration is sometimes used interchangeably with management. Adebayo (2002) simply presents it as the organization and direction of resources which include humans and materials, to realize a specified end. This implies that in educational administration/management, the available human and material resources are skilfully organized and directed in such a manner that the specified educational goals are achieved.

Administrators of education are guided by the general principles of administration. Unity of command means that an employer has only one boss and therefore can take orders from only a person at a time. This is to avoid over stressing. Division of labour assures that duties are assigned to people according to their areas of specialization and competence. This encourages the worker and increases output. The administrators encourage unity of direction by grouping jobs which are similar in nature to enhance performance. Instructions are passed from the top to the subordinates. Good administrators give authorities and responsibilities to other members of staff. Orderliness is applied in administration. This is why planning is quite essential in educational administration. It lays a firm foundation for an entire administrative process. It brings to bare what obtains presently, what is expected in the future and how to actualize it. It further clarifies who is responsible for what (Chandra, 2014). Starting with short term objectives lead to long time goals as planning helps to determine those things that need to be done to achieve the organizational goals and implementation becomes easier. Enabling policies and

programmes come at the planning level and guiding rules and regulations are clarified. There are no interferences with functions. Discipline is used to maintain law and order. Staff and pupils behaviours are regulated with dos and don'ts. Disciplinary measures may sometimes be unpleasant but help to produce good results. Administrators of primary education should be up to date with current realities. Advanced technology, with particular reference to artificial intelligence (AI) is fast taking up the space and at the primary school level. Efforts should be geared towards repositioning of education for the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution

The story of primary school administration is incomplete without the communities. They are the homes of the primary school pupils. A community is a social unit (Ejeh, et al). These constitute the larger society within which the primary schools are built. They in most cases, contributed acres of land on which the schools were built. Above all, they are the sources of the school children. This implies that the school and the community do not exist in isolation. Both co-exist. They relate to one another (Okenwa & Igbo, 2013). Community involvement enhances performance and achievement of objectives through team work (Greenwood, 2008). Generally, schools need assistance from external sources for their growth (Chukwuma et al, 2014) and the community is one of such sources. The federal government (2014) calls on the local governments to use their communities to finance and manage their primary schools. The assertion by Udeozor (2014) is that communities' involvement does not only provide them the opportunities to be informed about their children/wards, the school programmes and pupils, but further provides them the opportunities to make their contributions to the schools development. The role of the community in Primary Education administration can simply be described as enormous. The community can be rightly said to be the first teacher of the child. Traditionally, the early education of the child is the responsibility of not only the mother but everyone in the neighbourhood. The community plays such noble roles as behaviour transmission. Parents and other adults pass on their social heritage. The child is taught general mode of life accepted in the society. This makes the child prepared for life even outside the immediate environment. This preparedness makes things easier for the school administrator when the child eventually starts schooling. Social training is an aspect of community training. The community is a great socializing agent. Through experiences, the child learns to receive, give, share, take decisions, practice control and gets ready to accept school situation. The community helps to fulfill the child's basic needs eg food, clothing, shelter, and protection. When all these situations prevail, the individual has a sense of belonging. Parents provide these for their children. Their provision of necessary school materials makes the work of the headmaster and teachers easier. Such a child performs better, having been adequately equipped.

The headmasters owe it a duty to establish and nurture good schools –communities' relationships. They can take advantages of some community organizations to reach them.

1. **Parents-Teachers Association (PTA).** This is an association of parents/guardians of the pupils in the schools and the teachers of the same schools. The parents are the representatives of the communities. They are interested in their children's well-being. During meetings, issues affecting their children's education are discussed and the ways forward mapped out. Parents feel fulfilled having the opportunities to make their honest contributions to their children's development. This explains why sometimes they take up projects such as raising structures, renovating dilapidated ones, equipping classrooms, making desks and a whole lot more. The chairmanship of the P.T.A usually goes to the parents while a teacher is the secretary. Both parties are signatories to their account. There is transparency. The association is a medium through which the activities of the schools

are made known to the communities. They protect their children's interests which are of benefits to the entire communities.

2. **Old Pupils Association:** This is an association which membership is made up of persons who had passed out of a given primary school at various times and have decided to come together to identify with their alma mater. Their impacts can be felt in forms of donation of books, chairs, scholarships, sponsoring of competitions, computer sets, projectors etc. All these gadgets help to lay a good foundation for basic ICT skills. Sometimes, they have their names written on their donations to make them memorable and to boost their morale. Customized note books for instance, last long in the memories of people. It motivates other similar bodies to also desire to do similar things to get recognitions. Motivation is an essential tool for success (Adebajo, 2000)

3. **Age grades:** The membership consists of people of a common age bracket who have come together to make their presence felt in the community. They render assistance in their various ways. The headmasters can always make moves to meet the leaders of such groups within their school communities to identify with them. Inviting them to social activities is not a bad idea as it provides the opportunities for both parties to interact.

4. **The church:** It is common knowledge that most primary schools share premises with churches. In most cases, the schools were originally owned by the churches. That means that they share a common bond that needs to be nurtured. Nothing stops the headmasters from interacting with the church leaders who are good sources of moral and spiritual development of the children.

5. **Philanthropists:** These are simply well to do members of the communities who have the passion to touch the lives of others positively. Such individuals may want to identify with the development of their communities through the primary schools. They sometimes donate redeemable trophies for brilliant children. They supply materials for school use and even take up projects to uplift the schools. They are simply benevolent.

6. **School Based Management Committee (SBMC):** This committee should not be mistaken from the parents teacher's association. It is made up of the representatives of people considered as stakeholders. They include the parents, the pupils, town union, the religious, traditional rulers and relevant others. Their duties are voluntary. The basic function is to assist the schools achieve the objectives of primary education, in the spirit of the children belonging to everyone. A member can decide to assist in mending the clothes of all the pupils with torn clothes. One can decide to watch out for teachers frequently late to school. Staff activities detrimental to the progress of the schools are reported to the headmasters for corrections. The pupils' representatives transmit their opinions and experiences that require attention.

It is worrisome that over the years, pupils pass out of primary schools, especially those owned by the government, unable to express themselves either verbally or in writing. They are not good readers either. To crown it all, most of them have not seen or operated a computer. Many parents have resorted to patronizing the private schools and this has continued to reduce the pupil's enrolment in government primary schools. This raises the question of whether the headmasters are involving the communities enough in the administration of the schools to have a strong foundation on which medium and higher levels of basic education are built in line with the repositioning of education for the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution. Ozoagu (2019) revealed that Secondary Schools in Enugu State have not had enough support from their host communities. This obviously affects education at this level and so its proper to seek to know what the situation is at the primary school level to avoid avoidable failures.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The main purpose of the study was to establish the practical administrative measures adopted by the headmasters in involving the communities in the administration of primary schools in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State. Specifically, the research sought to find out.

1. The practical administrative ways the headmasters involved the communities in the administration of primary school curricular programmes.
2. The practical administrative ways the headmasters involved the communities in financial and physical facilities management.

### ***Research Questions***

1. In what practical administrative ways do the headmasters involve the communities in the administration of Primary schools' curricular programmes?
2. In what practical administrative ways do the headmasters involve the communities in primary schools' financial and physical facilities management?

### ***Methodology***

The survey research design was used for the study in the Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State. The population was made up of the 92 headmasters of all the 92 primary schools spread over the 24 communities that make up the local government area. All the headmasters were also the respondents from whom the researchers got information about primary schools' administration. A questionnaire of practical administrative measures for involving the communities in primary schools' administration was created by the researchers and used for the data collection in accordance with the stated research questions.

A modified Likert's scale was used to the scales of Strongly Agree (SA, 4), Agree (A,3), Disagree (D,2) and Strongly Disagree (S, D1). The instrument was administered to eight headmasters in Ezeagu Local Government Area twice within an interval of two weeks. The first and second scores were correlated using the Spearman's Rank Order Co-efficient of Correlation. A correlation of 0.67 was obtained and this was used to confirm the reliability of the instrument. It was subjected to validation by three experts in the area of Educational Administration of the UNN, and one in Measurement and Evaluation from ESUT. The means ( $\bar{x}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions. Means scores of 2.50 were considered positive and accepted. Those below 2.50 were negative and rejected.

### ***Result***

The results of the research questions which emanated from the headmasters' responses are presented in tables accordingly.

#### ***Research Question I***

In what practical administrative ways to the headmasters involve the communities in the administration of primary schools curricular programmes?

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**Table 1**

Means ratings of headmasters on the practical administrative ways of involving the communities in the administration of primary schools' curricular programmes.

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Organize exhibitions to show parents of the community art works of their children	2.88	0.52	A
2.	Organize conferences to inform parents of the objectives and programmes of the schools	2.93	0.63	A
3.	Ensure that school programmes are in line with the needs of the community	2.57	0.45	A
4.	Get community members involved in restructuring the curricular programmes of the school	2.45	0.44	D
		<b>2.71</b>	<b>0.51</b>	

Table 1 above shows that the means scores of headmasters on the clusters which sought to find out the practical administrative ways the headmasters involve the communities in the administration of primary schools curricular programmes range between 2.45 and 2.93. Item 1 in the table has a mean score of 2.88 with a standard deviation of 0.52. Item 2 has a mean score of 2.93 and standard deviation of 0.63. Items 3 and 4 have mean scores of 2.57 and 2.45 respectively with standard deviations of 0.48 and 0.44 in that order. The cluster mean of 2.71 shows that the headmasters involve the communities in the administration of the primary schools curricular programmes. The headmasters involve them in exhibitions of their children's art works, organize conferences to inform parents of the objectives and programmes of the schools, ensure that school programmes are in line with the needs of the communities but do not involve them in the structuring of school curricular programmes.

### **Research Question 2**

In what practical administrative ways do the headmasters involve the communities in financial and physical facilities management?

**Table 2**

Mean ratings of headmasters on the practical administrative ways of involving the communities in primary schools financial and physical facilities management.

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
5.	Allow communities to use school buildings and equipment for village meetings	2.66	0.55	A
6.	Inform parents of major school projects to be undertaken by the schools	2.91	0.61	A



7.	Offer explanations for all levies	2.47	0.44	D
8.	Inform members of the community about how funds are spent	2.26	0.32	D
9.	Contribute funds to community projects	1.61	0.50	

In the table above which shows the practical administrative ways headmasters involve the communities in the financial and physical facilities management of the primary schools, the mean scores range between 1.61 and 2.91. Items 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 have means of 2.66, 2.91, 2.47, 2.26, and 1.61 respectively. This shows that the headmasters allow the communities to use the primary school buildings and equipment for village meetings and parents are informed of major school projects to be undertaken by the schools.

On the other hand, they do not offer them explanations for all levies, do not inform them about how funds are spent, or contribute funds to community projects. A cluster mean of 2.39 means that the headmasters did not involve the communities in primary schools' financial and physical facilities management. It shows a very low level of involvement. This is like the finding of Ozoagu and Ani (2019) which showed that community participation in secondary school administration of physical facilities in Enugu State was to the least extent.

### Discussion of the Findings

The result of research question one showed that the headmasters of primary schools in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State involved the communities in the administration of school curricular programmes. This was evidenced in the generally high means scores of the items. The mean score of the cluster (2.71) stands for a positive result. A mean rating of item 1 of table 1 (2.88) showed that the headmasters organized arts and crafts exhibitions to show parents/guardians the products of their children/wards. This idea helps to settle the problem of parents/guardians suspecting that teachers hide under arts and craft lessons to exploit them financially. It provides them the opportunity to see and admire their children's products. It is only natural for parents to see their children's success and this situation is not exceptional.

The result further revealed in table 1 item 2, that parents are exposed to conferences aimed at informing them of the objectives and programmes of the schools. This gives them the desired sense of belonging. It is a motivating factor that moves them to be willing to assist where and when necessary. They have their feeling of participation aroused, especially when the programmes are in line with the needs of the communities. They develop a high level of expectation that their children will come out of primary schools as useful members of their various communities. It implies that the general curricular should be adapted to suit the community. Ugwu (2000) agrees with this idea. It is expected that if they are involved in the development and implementation of school curricular programmes, the goings on of the various communities and activities of the school will make better meanings to them and they will understand the various roles expected of them.

From research question two as analysed, the headmasters do not involve the communities in issues of finance. Critically looking at the various items, they allow the communities to make use of their buildings, most of which as expected, would have been built by the communities and handed over to the state government. When they plan to embark on major projects, they inform the communities, perhaps because of the anticipated assistance.

However, when they make levies, they do not always make explanations to the people. They do not inform the community members who are even the parents and guardians of the school children who pay these monies how funds are spent. To crown it all, the headmasters do not reciprocate by contributing funds to projects by the communities.

If we stand by the opinion of Obiechina (2006) that schools exist for the communities which provide funds and facilities for the schools, one cannot but believe that the schools have the responsibility to make their financial dealings always open to the communities. When donations come from any of the community agencies or even individuals, simple courtesy demands that they know what the monies are used for. In fact, some people ask for evidence of proper utilization of initial remittance before they can make further releases. It is even in the headmasters' interest to have clean financial records to have reputable images. There is no need creating rooms for suspicions from the communities from whom Chukwuma et al (2014) maintains that the school needs assistance for projects. Any form of mistrust will negatively affect the giving attitude of the people, and the entire process of repositioning the primary school system for the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings aided the researchers to make these conclusions:

1. The headmasters of primary schools in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State involve the communities in the administration of school curricular programmes.
2. The headmasters allow the communities to make use of their physical facilities but do not involve them in financial management.

From the findings of the study, the researchers made the following recommendations:

1. The Local Government Education Authority should have operational guidelines as well as monitoring committees to ensure sustenance of the cordiality of the school-community relationship.
2. Primary school teachers who aspire for higher education should be encouraged to do so in the area of Primary Schools Administration.
3. The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) should be given the enabling environment to play the noble roles for which they are known, to enhance growth at the primary school level.

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