

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN UDI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE**

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**Abstract:** The study investigated the headmasters' level of involvement of the communities in school-community relations and staff-personnel functions of the school administration. All the ninety two (92) primary schools in the Local Government Area under the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) made up the population of the study. They were also the respondents since the number was manageable. The research was guided by two research questions which addressed the specific areas concerned. A questionnaire of Community Involvement in Primary School Administration created by the researcher was used for information collection from the respondents relating to the research questions. Rating of the instrument was done using the modified likert's scale of four points. A mean score of 2.50 was accepted. The mean (X) and Standard Deviations (SD) aided the researcher's decisions. As shown by the result the headmaster involves the communities in school-community relations activities to an acceptance level. However, the situation is different with activities that have to do with management of staff personnel. Recommendations were made in line with these findings. The schools need to be supervised more regularly.

**Keywords:** Communities, Primary Schools, Administration

### **Introduction**

Communities are the places from where the pupils come to school and return to after school hours. The schools are built within their localities. They are the original owners of the land on which the schools are built. They can be called the children's general behaviour from the development stage. They teach them the socially accepted behaviours early in life. Foundation is laid for the children's future lives by the communities. In fact, before the children are of school age, they have acquired enough experiences to make the work of the teacher easy. They provide all the basic needs of the children needed for the primary school heads to take off.

Considering all that the communities can offer, school leaders simply need to establish an enabling ground to tap their potentials. They need to involve them in school administration. This entails creating and maintaining an enabling environment for both parties to work together. Igwe and Amirize (2022) on school-community relations as an effective stratify for school administration. They lend much support to the school heads working with organized community groups. Community involvement helps to actualize the objectives of primary education as stipulated by the Federal Government's National Policy on Education. It is obvious that the government cannot

do it alone. The schools should be part and parcel of the communities. The assistance and collaboration of the communities to which the children basically belong are needed to be able to implement some of the school programmes. Eventually, these children are trained to become useful members of their various communities. It's only naturally justified that the communities are involved in the administration.

A good and cordial relationship between both parties is required. Meetings can be held from time to time to discuss the issues affecting their children's education. Schools should show interest in community activities that promote learning. Inviting the communities to schools' social activities will also give them the motivation to participate. Communities are examples of the external sources that can assist the school to grow (Chukwuma et al 2024). Schools can involve parents in their children's disciplinary programs by appointing them into disciplinary committees. Discussing their children's problems with them assures them that the schools are working in their interest. Simply put, both schools and communities exist and work for themselves (Okenwa and Igbo, 2013). Considering the rationale for their involvement in achieving the goals and objectives of primary education, school headmasters should ensure a reciprocation of all the good contribution made by the communities. This brings about successes on the pupils' side and happiness and effectiveness on the parents and schools (Epstein, 2011).

Primary schools are those schools where children of the ages of 5 – 11 are provided for education services. This is the foundation level of education because the entire structure of education is built on it. They are called elementary schools. They constitute the lower basic education level which emphasizes the development of the basic skills for Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies and Basic Sciences. Children at this level of education who are still in their developmental stage have exploration tendencies. They learn by interacting and playing. The basic teaching qualification here is the National Certificate in Education (NCE). Many children in primary schools may be learning from their parents and siblings for the first time and so are emotionally attached to them, hence the need for a cordial school community relationship.

Administration is an indispensable component of the school system in general and primary. Schools in particular administrative practices influence school development (Agusiobo and Osuji, 2022). School administrator offers the headmasters the opportunity to coordinate and direct whatever the other personnels are doing. He ensures that they are working in accordance with the established guidelines. It helps the headmaster to ensure that teachers are making appropriate use of materials and methods in such a way that the goals of primary education are achieved. This implies that even with well-equipped school staffed with qualified teachers, school administration is still required to actualize the programme of the lower basic education. Good leadership styles in educational settings promote effectiveness (Jonathan and Olukayode, 2022).

The duties of the headmaster are centred around the child. The school environment is made child-friendly as it takes care of every aspect of child development. From the point of admission the interest of the child is protected so that he comes out fulfilled. Staff personnel administration also ensures that the working staff are managed well enough to get the best out of them. Staff orientation, development, welfare, motivation, etc. help to make them work harder. This is not a witch hunt but an administrative process of ensuring compliance. Supervision enhances effective administration (Oguejiofor, 2023). Record keeping is also a function of school administration. Records could be either statutory or non-statutory but they all have to contribute to the growth of the school. They serve as reference points for decision making and future use. They assist even higher educational authorities to plan for the system.

A very crucial task of school administration is the maintenance of a cordial relationship between the school and the community. This can be determined by the level of involvement of the communities in the activities of the schools. It is common, these days learning parents complain about underserved exploitation and intimidation, considering that basic education is meant to be free. The question that readily comes to mind is, “how much do the primary school headmasters involve the communities in school-community relations activities”. The answer to this question constitutes the concern for this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to establish the level of involvement of the communities in the administration of primary schools by the headmasters. Specifically, it sought to;

- i) Find out the ways the communities are involved in school-community relationships;
- ii) Establish how communities are involved in staff personnel functions in primary schools

### **Research Questions**

1. In what ways are the communities involved in school-community relations aspect of primary school administration?
2. In what ways are the communities involved in the staff-personnel functions of primary schools?

### **Methodology**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted. This design ensures equal opportunity for every group to be represented and gives reliable results (Nworgu, 2015). Headmasters of the ninety two (92) primary schools in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State were the respondents and the sources of information. A questionnaire of Community Involvement in Primary School Administration created by the researcher was used to collect data in relation to the research questions as stated. The researcher adopted a modified likert's scale of Strongly Agree (SA, 4), Agree (A,3), Disagree (D,2) and Strongly Agree (SA, 1). The instrument was tested for reliability by administering it to a group of headmasters in Oji River Local Government area twice within an interval of two weeks. Both scores were correlated using the Spearman's Rank Order Co-efficient of correlation. It was confirmed reliable at 0.66. three Educational Administration experts at University of Nsukka (UNN) and one from Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) in Measurement and Evaluation validated the instrument. The research questions were answered using the mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) to take a decisions. Means of 2.50 and above were considered positive and accepted, while those below were negative and rejected.

### **Results**

The following results presented in tables emerged from the headmasters' responses.

#### **Research Question 1**

In what ways are the communities involved in school-community relations aspects of primary school administration?

**Table 1: Mean ratings of headmasters on school-community relation.**

S/N	ITEM	X	SD	DEC
1	Invite communities during school sports competitions	3.25	0.07	SA
2	Give progress reports of pupils to parents	2.94	0.06	SA
3	Appoint members of the community into the disciplinary committee of the school	3.32	0.79	SA

4	Ensure that there is cordial relationship between the school and the community	3.39	0.66	A
5	Write reports of the problems and difficulties of the school to parents	2.99	0.78	SA

**CLUSTER MEAN**

**3.22**

The mean score in the table above centered on school-community relations range between 2.94 and 3.59. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 have mean scores of 3.25, 2.94, 3.32, 3.59 and 2.94 respectively with a cluster mean of 3.22. Their standard deviations are 0.07, 0.06, 0.79, 0.60 and 0.78 in the same order. These shows that in the opinion of the headmaster, the ways the communities are involved in school – community relations include inviting them during school sports competition, giving progress reports of pupils to parents, appointing members of the communities into disciplinary committees of the schools, ensuring that there is a cordial relationship between the schools and the communities and writing the reports of the problems and difficulties of the school to the parents. This result agrees with Epstein (2011) advocating for the need for involving parents and communities in their children's education.

**Research Question 2:**

In what ways are the communities involved in staff-personnel functions of the primary schools?

**Table 2: Mean ratings of headmasters on community involvement in staff-personnel functions of the primary schools**

S/N	ITEM	X	SD	DEC
6	Release pupils to participate in environmental sanitation in the community.	1.28	0.67	SD
7	Request influential members of the community to recommend staff for employment.	1.00	0.07	SD
8	Allow influential members of the community to recommend staff for promotion.	1.00	0.07	SD
9	Get some community members to serve as advisory committee for the school.	2.86	0.06	A
10	Invite community members to witness the recognition of the best performing teachers.	11.25	10.65	SD

**CLUSTER MEAN**

**1.48**

Table two above shows that the level of community involvement in staff-personnel administration of primary schools with the mean scores ranging between 1.00 and 1.28. Items 6 to 10 have mean scores of 1.28, 1.00, 1.00, 2.86 and 1.25 in that order 1.48. Their standard deviations are 0.07, 0.06, 0.79, 0.06 and 0.78 respectively. This result shows that in the headmasters' opinion, community members are allowed membership of school advisory committee but not involved in either the recruitment or promotion of teachers. Pupils are not allowed to participate in community environmental sanitation. Parents are not invited to witness teachers' recognition ceremonies.

**Discussion of the Findings**

It was found out from research question one that the headmasters strongly agree with the idea of involving the communities in school – community relations aspect of school administration. They indicated that these would be done by inviting the communities during the school's sports competitions giving the parents/their children's

progress reports, coopting communities members in the schools., disciplinary committees and intimating them with the reports of school problems and difficulties.

As indicated in table one, item 1 with a mean rating of 3.25, community members are highly involved in school sports. Imagine parents coming to watch their children perform and perhaps win prizes. This is no doubt and source of joy and fulfillment. Some members of the community even donate the trophies to be competed for. Others contribute to entertainment and some offer areas of encouragement to the schools. Item two of the table with a mean score of 2.29 agrees that parents are given their children's reports. This is really good. Most parents are educated and knowing how their children are performing provides them even the opportunity to assist them further, thereby making the school works easier.

Appointing them into the disciplinary committees of schools is to maintain fairness. These could be members of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) or School Based Management Committees (SBMC). They also have the opportunity of working in the interest of both the schools and the communities. Their children and wards stand to gain from those services. Having a cordial relationship between the school and the community as indicated in item three (3) is a very essential factor of school growth. Effective partnership between schools and communities are highly recommended to make schools move forward (Chukwuma et al, 2014). For Bryk et al (2010) it's a source of systematic improvement. The result further shows that school headmasters report problems and challenges/difficulties affecting the schools to the communities. We must remember that the communities are the original owners of the land and the pupils as well. Whatever affects the schools affects the communities. Even when they do not have financial supports to offer, they may have good ideas that will lead to solutions. Epstein (2011) is of the opinion that partnership be maintained for better results. With a cluster mean of table one at 3.22, the result is positive. There is a high level of school-community relationship. This is a high level of school-community relationship. This is in line with the idea of Onyia et al (2023) that a good relation in a learning environment enhances productivity. Examining the role of the community in school administration Olowo et al (2019) emphasized partnership for school improvement as revealed in this result.

From table two, item 1, pupils are not released to join the community members in general clean ups. This may be due to the fact that such cleanups are done usually during weekends when such children are already at home with their parents. The result further shows that community members are not involved in recommending those to be recruited or promoted. They are not part of teachers' recognition ceremonies. The only aspect of this cluster the headmasters agreed with is to have members in the committee that provides advice to the school authority. This particular item has a mean rating of 2.86 which is positive and accepted. However, it is not enough to raise the mean score to an acceptance level. At a cluster mean of 1.48, this result is negative and accepted. This means that the headmasters do not relate well enough with the communities in issues that have to do with administration of staff. This negative response is not far from what Ozoagu (2019) found out in his study in secondary schools in Enugu State. He revealed that communities were not participative enough regarding secondary school administration.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of the findings of this study, these conclusions are made;

1. The primary school headmasters involve the communities in school-community aspects of their school administration to a high level.
2. The level to which the primary school headmasters involve the communities in the management of staff is very low.

## Recommendations

The findings of the study necessitate these recommendations:

1. The local government education authority should supervise the schools regularly to ensure that the right actions are being taken.
2. The state universal basic education board should motivate the headmasters to boost their administrative skills.

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