SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP AND PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH EAST STATES, NIGERIA.

By

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the principals' utilization of school-community relationship in achieving administrative effectiveness in private secondary schools in South East States, Nigeria. The study was a descriptive survey which adopted ex-post facto method. Five research questions were posed while four null hypotheses were formulated and duly tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data were collected from two thousand two hundred and twenty five (2,225) private secondary school teachers selected by a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique. A researcher developed instrument titled “Principal Effectiveness in Community
Relations Teacher Questionnaire (PECRTQ)” was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using means to answer the research questions, and the z-test statistic to test the null hypotheses. Results indicated that private secondary school principals were effective in utilizing school-community relationship for effective instructional program management, student personnel administration, staff personnel administration and in fiscal and physical resource management. The principals were moderately effective in communications with school-community. A significant relationship was established between the principals’ utilization of school-community relationship and instructional programmes management in Imo and Anambra States, between school-community relationship and student personnel administration in Abia and Enugu States, and between school-community relationship and staff personnel administration in Anambra and Ebonyi States. No significant relationship was established between school-community relationship and management of fiscal and physical resources in Imo and Enugu States. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended, among other things, that, private secondary school principals and proprietors should improve on their collaborative efforts with the communities in the education and socialization of the youth.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful, dynamic and veritable tool for every society to achieve economic development and social transformation. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) conceptualizes education as an instrument that makes for even and orderly development of a country. Education, therefore, is a social responsibility to be enjoyed by every citizen as members of a country and every member of a country has a right to education. The socio-economic development of any nation is hinged on the nation's level of educational development. Hence, any country that reneges on the education of her citizens is toying inadvertently with her development. Education is, therefore, an investment that must yield high dividends.

As a country, Nigeria is up against a lot of crises in her educational enterprise. Ogundele (2008:38) notes that “…these crises have been attributed to inadequate funding, poor and irregular salaries, students’ population explosion, poor teachers' job satisfaction, poor conducive learning environment, inadequate supply of educational facilities and needed equipment for effective teaching and learning process”. These result in low quality and fallen standard of education in our secondary school system. The government attempts to absolve itself with the excuse that it cannot shoulder all the responsibilities of providing education for its teeming population alone. The burden has to be shouldered by all stakeholders in the education industry. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) reiterates that education cannot be free at all levels and it has to be paid for by stakeholders at certain levels. Secondary education is described as “…the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage (FRN, 2013:18)”. The principal of a
secondary school is the chief executive of the school. It is his many different roles that form a synergy for the attainment of the stated goals and objectives. Nwosu (2007) delineates five major task areas that are the key to achieving educational goals and objectives in Nigeria. These areas include instructional programmes; staff personnel management; students' personnel management; financial and physical resources management and school-community Relationship management. It is in the effective harmonization of these various task areas that a synergy is formed for the actualization of educational objectives and achievement of educational goals. Moreover, it is worthy of note, that no one task area is more important than the other. This is why, the need for effective teaching and learning in the secondary schools and principals' administrative effectiveness calls for the attention of school-community relations.

School-community relations have become an important aspect of school administration because learning does not end when the students leave the school compound at the end of the school day. Learning continues for the child. Interactions with the community cogently affect the child's learning. There is the need therefore, for a deliberate and sustainable effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between the school and the community. School-community relationship entails the mutual dependence between the school and her host community. It is the positively useful interactions that the school maintains with the community where she is located. The essence of this relationship is to establish a good rapport between the school and host community in order to achieve educational goals. Schools are located in communities, but they are often 'islands' with no bridges to the 'mainland communities'. Communities often have little or no connections to the schools their children attend. Nevertheless, these entities affect each other for good or for ill. Seeing they share goals related to the education and socialization of the young, schools and communities must relate and liaise with each other. This will minimize problems and maximize results.

Ojedele (2000) describes school-community relations as ways by which the school relates with the immediate and larger communities where the schools are located. Ojedele positively notes that through the relationships that exist between the schools and the communities, school heads seek and learn where communities could be involved in the progress, development, problems, purposes, programmes and needs of the school. It is school-community relations that help in bridging the gap between the towns and the gowns. Suleiman (2001), notes that school-community relationships enhance effective goal attainment in the schools. Suleiman posits further that schools are established for the purpose of the immediate community. The community, on the other hand, needs to monitor and supervise the schools to see to their needs, problems and progress for the proper education of their children and wards. Bello (2011) believes also that open relationships between the school and community (ies) could bring about high opportunities that allow community resources to be optimally utilized for the improvement of the schools. Schools are more effective and caring places when
they are an integral and positive part of the community. This plays out as enhanced academic performance, fewer disciplinary problems, higher staff morale and improved use of resources. Reciprocally, families and other community entities can enhance parenting and socialization, address psychosocial problems and strengthen the fabrics of family and community life by working collaboratively with schools (Adelman and Taylor, 2008).

It is evident that schools alone cannot prepare the youths for productive adulthood. Schools and communities should work closely together to meet their mutual needs and goals. Violence, for instance, for children and adolescents, is a fact of life. The most common forms of violence among the secondary school students include physical, sexual and psychosocial abuses experienced at school, at home and in the community. There is need to change the old view that schools close when students leave. There should be a 'second shift' at school site, to respond to community needs. The school should be a hub for community-wide learning and activity. Concepts and practices should aim at promoting protective factors, assets building, wellness and empowerment. The school is a unifying force of the community, not merely, a social institution in the community.

Private schools are owned and governed by entities that are independent of any government, typically, religious bodies or independent boards of trustees (Alt and Peter, 2002). The non-public sources of funding for private schools include foundations, tuitions, religious bodies, alumni or other private donors. The number one goal of private schools is academic excellence. These have a two-way impact, on and from the school. The synergy from their mutual relationships forms the positive worldview and impact on the life of the communities' children. To build and improve school-community partnerships, schools can become involved in some suggested activities such as to encourage Community use of school facilities, senior citizens banquet, back to school week, career day, news releases, newsletters, honour roll, and, gold cards (Mitrofanova, 2011:2).

Private secondary school principals, therefore, cannot afford to be alienated, or to alienate their schools from the communities that feed them. School-community relationship management is an indispensable task areas for all principals, of public or private-owned secondary schools. The principal in his place is as the chief executive of the school, the chairman of staff meetings, the chief accounting officer, the chief security officer, and the chief public relations officer. Principals, who are school administrators or school leaders, should have administrative skills, these skills include human relationship skills, technical skills and conceptual skills. These skills can be learned and developed (Ike-inegbu, 2012). In a capacity building course for principals, superintendents, curriculum directors and supervisors, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2004) notes five broad shifts in knowledge and skills required of educational leaders today compared to the traditional base. These shifts are from technical skills to interpersonal skills; from director to consensus builder and motivator; from resource allocation to accountability for learning processes and results;
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campus administrator to integrator of school and community services and, from policy recipient to policy participant. These shifts require in the Principals “...an outward looking, environmentally influenced vision of school leadership, moving away from the traditional inward looking, content dominated format (NPBEA, 2004:7)”.

A driving force for this study derives from the fact that in galvanizing through their various tasks and roles as administrative heads, principals continue to decline in paying commensurate attention to the relationship of their schools with their host communities. Private secondary school principals even tend to privatize their schools away from the communities that house and populate the school with school-age adolescents. Studies, so far. (Ihekwumere, 2006; Okunnamiri and Obiodu, 2004 among others) buttress the fact that public secondary school principals do better than private secondary school principals in the area of school-community relationship management. Concerning Abia State public schools, Ihekwumere (2006) shows that in school-community relationship, the principals' level of effectiveness is rated high. Okunnamiri and Obiodu (2004), in a study on Imo state, show that depending on their managerial ability, communities co-operate with the principals.

In the area of private secondary school principals, studies show a different trend. Nkwo (2010) found that private secondary school principals in Aba education zone were not very effective in managing school-community relationships. Ike-Inegbu (2012), shows that private secondary school principals in Umuahia education zone were only moderately effective in school-community relationship management. Ogunde, Oparinde and Oyewale (2012) found a significant difference between school-community relationship management and principals' administrative effectiveness. Nakpodia (2013) points out that it is in a close relationship with communities that schools can be well developed.

**Statement of the Problem:**

Recently, there have been tremendous increases in private secondary schools enrolments. As a result, approvals are being sought for more private secondary schools springing up both in the urban and rural areas. The problem then is with the exigencies of the paradigm shift. In other to effectively carry out other roles and responsibilities, the principal needs to harness resources from the community and its agencies. How effective are most private secondary school principals in managing school-community relationship so as to collectively achieve the goals of secondary education as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). How are private secondary school principals engaging available resources in their host communities in tackling incidences of examination malpractice (Kithuka, 2002); increase in the rate of failure in general examinations (Igbe, 2004); increases in the rate of secondary school drop-outs, increased incidences of students' riots and indiscipline (ANCOPPS, 1998) and a general 'fall in the standard of education in secondary schools (Awandor, 2003).
Scope of the study:

This study focused on the intervention of school-community relationship on the administrative effectiveness of duty principals of private secondary schools in the South East States of Nigeria. The study was focused on such administrative effectiveness variables as instructional programmes management, student personnel management, staff personnel management, school plant provision and maintenance, and school finance provision and administration. Particularly, private secondary schools' teachers were chosen as respondents for the purposes of this study. The states covered in this study are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. These states are the states in the South East of Nigeria.

Research Questions:

Five research questions were posed to guide the study, among them are:

I. What extent does the principals' utilization of school-community relationship influence the management of instructional programmes in the private secondary schools in the South East States, Nigeria?

II. What extent does school-community relationship influence organizational management or the management of school plant and finance in the private secondary schools in the South East?

III. What extent do private secondary school principals in the South East States, Nigeria communicate with the school community.

Hypotheses:

Four null hypotheses that were tested at 0.05 level of significance were formulated, among them are:

$H_0_1$: There is no significant relationship between school-community relationship and principals' effectiveness in instructional programmes' management in private secondary schools in Imo and Anambra States in South East, Nigeria.

$H_0_2$: There is no significant relationship between school-community relationship and principals' effectiveness in fiscal and physical resources management in private secondary schools in the South East States of Imo and Enugu, Nigeria.

Methods:

The study was a survey carried out ex-post facto. The area covered in this study is the South-East States, Nigeria and the population of this study comprised of all the ten thousand (10,000) teachers in the one thousand one hundred and ninety (1,190) private secondary schools located in the states of the zone. The samples for this study were selected through a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique. By this technique, twenty-five percent (25%) of the entire population of private secondary school teachers in each state formed the sample population for
the study.

A questionnaire titled “principal effectiveness in community relationship teacher Questionnaire (PECRTQ) was used to elicit information from the respondents. The PECRTQ was structured along a four point modified Likert-type rating scale of very high effectiveness (VHE), high effectiveness (HE), moderate effectiveness (ME), low effectiveness (LE) and weighted 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. Mean ratings were used to answer the research questions while the z-test statistic was utilized to test the null hypotheses.

Findings:
The study found out that private secondary school principals in the South East States were only highly effective in utilizing school-community relationship in the management of instructional programs, student personnel administration, staff personnel administration and in fiscal and physical resources management. Private secondary school principals in the South East States were moderately effective in managing communication between the schools and the communities. Studies that agree with the findings here include Mleczko and Kington (2013) and Ogundele, Oparinde and Oyewale (2012) in the area of instructional programs management; Obasanmi and Obasanmi (2012) in the area of student personnel administration; Abdul Kareem, Fasasi and Akinnubi (2012) in the area of staff personnel administration; Nkwo (2010) in the area of fiscal and physical resources management; and in the area of communication with the communities, Abbas (2006) had warned that a breakdown of communication with the community agencies concerning education could cause a total breakdown of law and order. In the areas of instructional program management, student and staff personnel administration a significant relationship was established between utilizing school-community relationship and effectiveness in the states under study. No significant relationship was established between utilizing school-community relationship and fiscal and physical resources management in the states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/ No of Items</th>
<th>Effectiveness in Instructional Programme Management</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Pooled Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Your school gives parents information on required skills in all subjects at each level.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Your school has homework policies.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Your school provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss school work at home.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effectiveness in Fiscal and Physical Resources Management.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Pooled Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sufficient time is provided daily to allow for classroom instructions.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>There are sufficient times available for family and staff conferences.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Teachers are shielded from unnecessary distractions so they may attend to teaching.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Teachers make input into material needs in your school.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Materials used in your classes are up to date.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>All students have adequate school materials in your school.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Assistance is available to teachers for materials adaptation for students in special needs.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Materials in your school are aligned to government standards.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Technology use is part of your school culture.</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Assistance is available to teachers for utilizing technology.</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2:** Mean Effectiveness Ratings of Private Secondary School Principals by Private Secondary School Teachers in the South East States in Fiscal Physical Resources Administration
TABLE 3: Mean Effectiveness Ratings of Private Secondary School Principals by Private Secondary School Teachers in the South East States in Communication and Community Relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Effectiveness in Communication and Community Relations</th>
<th>Mean — X</th>
<th>Pooled Mean — X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Your school maintains a cordial and open relationship with the media.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Your school recognizes and promotes the benefits of diversity.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Your school communicates to local employers the need for parental involvement.</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Your school gains input from a variety of parents prior to making policy decisions.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Your school communicates to local businesses the need for and mutual benefit of community partnership.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Your school has a method for continuous community comments.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Your school publicly celebrates successes of the school community.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Your school opens its building for use by the community after school hours.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Your school utilizes community resources such as businesses, libraries, parks and museums to enhance the learning environment.</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Your school provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs and agencies.</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATES</th>
<th>NO OF TCRS</th>
<th>MEANS X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>STD ERR</th>
<th>Z-CAL</th>
<th>Z-CRIT</th>
<th>LEVEL OF SIG.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANAMBRA</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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TABLE 5: Computation of Z-test analysis for degree of Relationship in the Private Secondary School Principals' utilization of School-community Relationship in the Management of Fiscal and Physical Resources in Imo and Enugu States of South East, Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATES</th>
<th>NO OF TCRS</th>
<th>MEANS</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>STD ERR.</th>
<th>Z-CAL</th>
<th>Z-CRIT</th>
<th>LEVEL OF SIG.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>14.26</td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENUGU</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>14.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The finding that private secondary school principals in the South East States were not very highly effective in utilizing school-community relationship in any of the task areas presupposes that there is need for more effort in collaborating with communities for the education and socialization of the youth. Regulating bodies should emphasize more on improvement on parental involvement. Private secondary school principals should allot time and provide space for family and staff conferences and, there should be free flow of information among all the stakeholders in the education of the youth.

**Recommendations:** Based on the findings and educational implications of the study, the recommendations made include:

1. Private secondary schools should have a Communities' Liaison Officer. The job of this officer would include keeping the schools abreast of every opportunity to partner with community agencies for the improvement of schools.
2. Private secondary school principals should be in league with the local media as this would help them with getting information across to their target audience.

3. Again, private secondary school principals should devise means of mutually communicating with the parents of the students. In this way, both the school and the parents aid each other in curbing recalcitrant behaviours in the students.

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