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EXTENT OF CIVIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OWERRI EDUCATION ZONE I OF IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Owing to the advent of some horrible activities of cultists and the substantial financial needs of management, running of our secondary schools these days has become a burdensome task to the school principals and there is the need for some collaborative effort. This study is therefore prompted by the need to assist the secondary school principals in running the schools through civic involvement. The aim of the study is to investigate the extent of civic involvement in the development of secondary schools in Imo State. Three research questions were posed and two hypotheses formulated. Survey research design was adopted. The population was 1232 (67 principals and 1165 teachers) while the sample was 453 (20 principals and 433 teachers). Rating scale was used for data collection. Mean was used to answer research questions while z-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed among others that communities do not assist in monitoring the activities of cultists, some communities participate in the provision of fund for the running of secondary schools. Recommendations included among others that: communities should be involved in monitoring the activities of cultists in the schools. They should also be involved in ensuring proper utilization of funds provided.

Keywords*:* Community, Participation, Development, Secondary Schools

Introduction

Education is a vital tool, significant of which is indispensible in an individual's life due to the roles that it plays in human development. It is equally an important part of any society because it provides self-direction, social status, secular knowledge as well as the ability to explore. Sequel to these pivotal needs of education, the development of a society is closely tied to it's level of educational development. Hence, education has been adopted as an instrument for affecting national development as stated by Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). Civic involvement which in this context, entails community participation, is therefore urgently needed as a way of synergizing with the secondary school principals, in their efforts to manage and develop the secondary schools. Community is a part of the society and education is the counterpart of the above mentioned elements. School is a social

institution where the designed learning experiences are provided with the objective of achieving social aim at large, over a period of time. School is also defined as a system of the larger system of the society. It has to functionally interact with its immediate environment, the community in which it is situated. Its development is a very important aspect that needs to be looked into thereby examining the ways it is being funded and managed as well as trying to find out the extent to which some unmonitored indiscipline and disruptive activities of students hinder Principals' efforts for the smooth running of the schools in the various communities. Some of these disruptive activities of students can include cult activities and other undisciplined behaviours. In any case, the community is perceived as the people who live in a place that share things in common and have the same beliefs, norms, values and culture. It is the first environment where the child receives informal education through the family and interacts with its members. People that comprise the community are; the community leaders, parents of the students, age grades, town unions and so on.

As a matter of fact, developing the secondary school entails a process of indulging in actions that can yield development, which include: assisting in the moulding of characters of the students, bringing in facilities and equipment that will enhance effective teaching and learning. Such facilities and equipment include, building of classroom, hostels, libraries, science laboratories and equipment, sports equipment, ICT centers and so on. It is also the act of giving financial and other material support for a successful implementation of the educational programmes. Education at the Secondary school level is the stage of education which occupies a very unique position in the educational system in Nigeria because, it is the level that determines the academic and professional career of students. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2013) defines secondary education as the form of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage and its broad aims within the overall objectives include; preparation of students for useful living within the society and preparing them for higher education.

Moreover, both the secondary school and the community have tremendous influence on the funding and monitoring of fund utilization, provision of facilities, character and behaviour of the students which invariably affects the general development of the secondary schools either positively or negatively. For instance, they need to checkmate how money provided for the running of the school is being utilized and the involvement of the students in some nefarious activities such as cultism and other acts of gangsterism that can undermine the principals' efforts to develop the school. When the students indulge in such despicable acts, it seriously impedes the efforts of the school principals in the development of the schools. The school as well as the community should understand and appreciate the need for mutual co-existence. The need for their collaboration cannot be over-

emphasized. Therefore, there is every need for the creation of opportunities and forums where views on school policies, programmes, activities are discussed. Okwor, (2018), emphasized the need for co-operation between the school and community in the education of children because the school and the community are symbiotically related. It is apparent that the government and school administrators (principals) can no longer bear the burden of secondary schools alone. The community is expected to participate actively in the development of secondary schools with regards to facilitating the attainment of educational goals and objectives. This therefore, warranted a study by this researcher who was spurred to investigate the extent of civic involvement in the development of the secondary schools.

The Educational Management Theory was the theory used to back up this study. The theory propounded by Bush in the year 2006. It suggests that the process of deciding on the aims of the organization is at the heart of educational management. In some settings, aims are decided by the principal, often working in association with senior colleagues and perhaps a small group of school stakeholders. In many schools, however, goal setting is a corporate activity undertaken by formal bodies or informal groups. School aims are strongly influenced by pressures from the external environment. Many countries have a national curriculum and these often leave little scope for schools to decide their own educational aims. Institutions may be left with the residual task of interpreting external imperatives rather than determining aims on the basis of their own assessment of student need.

This theory relates to the present study because it seeks to find extent to which school managers collaborate with the community in order to find out the areas of developmental need of the school, be it funding, administration or students' restive activities so as to give a lasting solution to them.

Empirically, Okenwa and Igbo (2014) examined the extent of civic involvement in the provision of school plant in the administration of public secondary schools in Enugu State. They found that the extent of civic involvement in the provision of school plant in public secondary schools in Enugu State was low. In addition, significant differences did not exist in the mean perception scores of principals and teachers regarding the extent of civic involvement in provision of school plant in the public secondary schools in Enugu State. Emenalo and Ibekwe (2013). Also found out that communities in Okigwe Zone get involved in the development of their secondary schools through donation of lands, donation of money and payment of school fees for their children in the schools, they equally construct school buildings, provide facilities such as science and sports equipment, library, facilities etc. Omenuko (2016) carried out a study on the extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of the activities of the cultists in the secondary schools in Enugu State and found that communities do not assist in monitoring the activities of cultists in the schools.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study hinges on the fact that the researcher speculated that the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria is becoming very overwhelming for principals due to the spate of cult activities among students and other onerous financial needs such as: lack of teaching equipment for science and technical subjects, lack of facilities like classrooms, materials like textbooks in secondary schools. All these problems seem tedious as they make teaching and learning difficult. Consequently, quality education is sacrificed and standard fails Okenwa, (2014). It is expected that communities where schools are located ought to get involved in the development and affairs of the school by providing fund, checking the activities of the cultists, ensuring proper utilization of funds, providing facilities and supporting other academic activities of secondary schools especially at this point in time when economic condition of the country is unstable. The question therefore is: to what extent do the communities participate in the development of secondary schools in order to minimize the burden facing the principals of these schools. The need to answer this question prompted the researcher to embark on this study in order to access the extent of civic involvement in the development of secondary schools in Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to guide the study:

1. to what extent is the civic involvement in the provision of fund for secondary schools in Imo State?
2. to what extent do communities ensure proper utilization of funds provided for the running of secondary school?
3. to what extent do communities assist in monitoring the activities of cultists in the schools in Imo State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study;

H_{01}: the extent of the communities involvement in the provision of fund for secondary schools in Imo State is not significantly high $p>0.05$.

H_{02}: the extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of activities of cultists in the school is not significantly high $p>0.05$.

Research Method

The study is a Survey Research Design. The population is 1,232 comprising 67 principals and 1,165 teachers of some selected secondary schools in Owerri educational zones I of Imo State. The sample in this research work comprised 473 staff (20 principals and 433 teachers) of the selected schools of the educational zones. The researcher used stratified random proportionate sampling technique to select 30% of the principals and 20% from teachers in the selected schools of the Educational zones. That is 30% of 67 principals (20 principals) and 20% of 2165 teachers (433 teachers) were drawn and used for the study.

The instrument for data collection is a researcher self-constructed rating scale titled "Extent of Civic involvement in the Development of Secondary Schools (EC PDSS) with 20 items. The rating scale is categorized into sections A and B. Section "**A"** contained information on personal data of the respondents while section **"B"** contains questionnaire items on the "Extent of civic involvement in the development of Secondary Schools.

The respondents are to indicate their level of agreement on the extent of civic involvement in the development of secondary schools by ticking any of the 4-point rating scale namely; Very High Extent (VHE) 4 points, High Extent (HE) 3 points, Low Extent (LE) 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE) 1 point. The instrument was validated by two specialists from the Measurement and Evaluation Department as well as three specialists from Management and Planning Department. The reliability was also tested which yielded 0.84 reliability index to show that it is reliable. The researcher used mean-scores in answering the three research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One: to what extent is the civic involvement in the provision of fund for secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 1: Mean rating scores of principals and teachers on the extent of involvement of communities in provision of fund for secondary schools in Imo State.

S/N	Item Statement	Principals'			Teachers'		
		N	$\overline{X}$	Decision	N	$\overline{X}$	Decision
1.	Community donates money for security	20	3.30	High Extent	433	3.34	High Extent
2.	Communities buy secondary school farm produce to help them generate fund.	20	2.95	High Extent	433	3.59	High Extent
3.	Communities hire secondary school facilities to enable them raise fund.	20	3.05	High Extent	433	2.87	High Extent
4.	PTA hires and pays labourers to clean up school during holidays.	20	1.90	Low Extent	433	2.30	Low Extent
5.	PTA raises fund for students' excursion.	20	2.30	Low Extent	433	1.91	Low Extent

Analysis in table 1 shows the mean rating scores of principals and teachers on the extent of involvement of communities in provision of fund for secondary schools in Imo State. From the table, it was observed that item 1, 2, and 3 were seen as high extent by the respondents with mean scores of 3.30 and 3.34; 2.95 and 3.59; and 3.05 and 2.87 which indicated that they were above the criterion mean score of 2.50 for principals and teachers respectively. The table also shows that other items like 4 and 5 were seen as low extent by both respondents since their

mean scores of 1.90 and 2.30; and 2.30 and 1.91 were below the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question Two: To what extent do communities ensure proper utilization of funds provided for the running of secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean rating score of principals and teachers on the extent which communities ensure proper utilization of finds provided for the running of secondary schools.

S/N	Item Statement	Principals'			Teachers'		
		N	$\overline{X}$	Decision	N	$\overline{X}$	Decision
6.	Communities allow principals free hand in utilizing funds made available by them.	20	3.25	High Extent	433	3.58	High Extent
7.	Communities involve their members in monitoring projects in secondary schools.	20	2.10	Low Extent	433	2.02	Low Extent
8.	Influential community members determine how monies for projects are spent.	20	1.85	Low Extent	433	2.05	Low Extent
9.	Parents Teacher Association takes part in auditing secondary schools accounts.	20	2.35	Low Extent	433	2.06	Low Extent
10.	Communities participates in the security of the school properties.	20	3.20	High Extent	433	3.35	High Extent

Data in table 2 shows the mean rating scores of principal and teachers on the extent communities ensure proper utilization of funds provided for the running of secondary schools. The analysis shows that items 6 (3.25 and 3.58), and 10 (3.20 and 3.35) were answered by the respondents (principals and teachers) as high extent having scored above the criterion mean of 2.50. It was also discovered from the table, that items 7 (2.10 and 2.02), 8 (1.85 and 2.05) and 9 (2.35 and 2.06) were regarded as low extent because their mean scores were below the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question Three: To what extent do communities assist in the monitoring of cultist activities in the schools in Imo State?

Table 3: Mean rating score of principals and teachers on the extent to which communities assist in the monitoring of cultist activities in the schools in Imo State.

S/N	Item Statement	Principals'			Teachers'		
		N	$\overline{X}$	Decision	N	$\overline{X}$	Decision
11.	Communities report the cultists to the security agencies when they see them carrying out their dreadful activities in the community	20	2.35	Low Extent	433	2.49	Low Extent
12.	communities report the cultists to the school authorities when they see them carrying out their dreadful activities in the community.	20	1.90	Low Extent	433	2.45	Low Extent
13.	Parent Teachers Association provides information about cultist activities during their meetings.	20	1.75	Low Extent	433	2.33	Low Extent
14.	communities warn parents of the involved cultists in order to ask their children to refrain from such acts	20	2.35	Low Extent	433	1.94	Low Extent
15.	Town unions take actions against the involved children and their parents.	20	2.05	Low Extent	433	2.13	Low Extent

Analysis in table 3 shows the mean rating scores of principals and teachers on the extent which communities assist in monitoring of activities of the cultists in the schools in Imo State. The result in table 3 shows that all the items from 11-15 with mean scores of 2.35 and 2.49; 1.90 and 2.45; 1.75 and 2.33; 2.35 and 1.94; and 2.05 and 2.13 respectively were seen to be rated on low extent by both the principals and teachers because they scored below the criterion mean of 2.50.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho_1: The extent of civic involvement in the provision of fund for secondary school development is not significantly high. P>0.05.

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis Concerning the significance of the extent of civic involvement in the provision of fund for secondary school development

Respondents	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	Df	Z_{cal}	Z_{crti}	Decision
Teachers	433	2.79	0.71	451	0.22	1.96	Accept Ho
Principals	20	2.70	0.58				

Table 4 showed that the mean ratings and standard deviation scores of the 433 teachers are 2.79 and 0.71 respectively while 20 principals had a mean rating of 2.70 and standard deviation of 0.58. The z-calculated is 0.22 while the z-tabulated is 1.96. Since the z-cal is less than the z-tab, the nul hypothesis is accepted. That is to say that the extent of civic involvement in the provision of fund for secondary school development is not significantly high. P>0.05.

H_{02}: The extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of activities of cultists in the school is not significantly high p>0.05

Table 5: Summary of Z-test Analysis Concerning the significance of the extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of activities of cultists in the school

Respondents	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	Df	Z_{cal}	Z_{crti}	Decision
Teachers	433	2.27	0.23	451	1.19	1.96	Accept Ho
Principals	20	2.08	0.27				

Table 5 revealed that the mean ratings and standard deviation scores of the 433 teachers are 2.27 and 0.23 respectively while 20 principals had a mean rating of 2.08 and standard deviation of 0.27. The z-calculated is 1.19 while the z-tabulated is 1.96. Since the z-cal is less than the z-tab, the nul hypothesis is accepted. That is to say that the extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of activities of cultists in the school is not significantly high p>0.05

Summary of Findings

From the analyses, the findings made were summarized as follows:

1. The communities in Imo state participate in the provision of funds by donating money for security, buying of secondary school farm produce and hiring of secondary school facilities but they do not hire and pay labourers to clean up the schools during holidays, and do not raise money for students' excursion.
2. The communities participate in ensuring proper utilization of funds provided for the running of secondary schools in Imo State by allowing principals free hand in utilizing funds made available by them and community participates in the

security of the school properties but they do not involve their members in monitoring projects in secondary schools; determine how monies for projects are spent as well as take part in auditing secondary schools accounts.

3. The extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of activities of cultists in the secondary schools in Imo State is low.

4. The extent of civic involvement in the provision of fund for secondary school development is not significantly high. P>0.05.

.5. The extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of activities of cultists in the school is not significantly high p>0.05.

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Discussion of Findings

On the issue of the ways communities involve in provision of fund for secondary schools in Imo State, the finding revealed that the communities in Imo state participate in the provision of funds by donating money for security, buying of secondary school farm produce and hiring of secondary school facilities but they do not hire and pay labourers to clean up the schools during holidays, and do not raise money for students' excursion. The hypothesis tested on this issue also revealed that the extent of civic involvement in the provision of fund for secondary school development is not significantly high. A study conducted by Emenalo and Ibekwe (2013) on community involvement in secondary school development in Okigwe Education Zone of Imo State revealed that communities in Okigwe Zone get involved in the development of their schools through donation of lands, donation of money and payment of school fees for their children in the schools, they equally construct school buildings, provide facilities such as science and sports equipment, library facilities etc. This finding shows that the communities make effort in participating in the funding of the schools, but do not participate in all aspects of provision of fund for the secondary schools. However, based on the exigencies observed above, it should therefore be stated that communities' participation in the provision of funds to secondary schools is very necessary.

On the issue of the extent to which communities ensure proper utilization of funds provided for the running of secondary schools in Imo State, findings revealed that the communities participate in ensuring proper utilization of funds provided for the running of secondary schools in Imo State by allowing principals free hand in utilizing funds made available by them and community participates in the security of the school properties but they do not involve their members in monitoring projects in secondary schools; determine how monies for projects are spent as well as take part in auditing secondary schools accounts. The finding is in line with that of Leech, Don and Ray (2008) who observed that the communities do monitor to ensure proper utilization of funds made available to principals of the schools. It was also revealed

in their findings that launching and PTA levies are the major strategies communities use in raising funds for their schools etc. Based on this finding, it can be concluded that communities actually have interest in the development of the secondary schools, though, they may not meet up with all the needed aspects of development of the schools.

On the issue of the extent to which communities assist in the monitoring of the activities of cultists in the secondary schools in Imo State, it was revealed in the study that the extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of the activities of the cultists in the secondary schools in Imo State is low. This is so because they do not report the cultists to the security agencies when they see them carrying out their dreadful activities in the communities, they do not report the activities of the cultists to the school management when they see them carrying out their dreadful activities, PTA do not provide information about cultists activities to the school management during PTA meetings, communities do not warn parents of the involved cultists so as to ask their children to refrain from such acts, town unions do not take actions against the involved children and their parents. The hypothesis tested proved that the extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of activities of cultists in the school is not significantly high. This finding authenticates the finding of Omenuko, (2016) that communities do not participate in the monitoring of the activities of the cultists in the schools. It was also revealed in their study that significant differences did not exist in the mean perception scores of principals and teachers regarding the extent of civic involvement in the monitoring of activities of the cultists in Enugu State. This finding shows that the communities have care-free attitude on the issue of cultism at the secondary schools.

Recommendations

From the findings observed, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Communities should participate in raising funds to the secondary schools as this will be used to hire and pay labourers to clean up the schools during holidays, and raise money for students' excursion.
2. Community members should be involved in the monitoring projects in secondary schools by determining how monies for projects are spent as well as take part in auditing secondary schools accounts.
3. Communities should participate in the monitoring of the activities of the cultists in their various communities.

Conclusion

It was therefore concluded based on the findings of the study that the extent of participation in the funding and monitoring of financial/administrative activities of the schools, by the communities is low, also they do not monitor the activities of the cultists at all.

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