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PRINCIPALS' SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PLANT MAINTENANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA EDUCATION ZONE OF ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated principals' school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools. One research question and two null hypotheses guided the study. This study was carried out in public secondary schools in Awka Education zone. The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey. The population comprised 18 principals in the 18 public secondary schools in the zone. The whole population was studied using purposive sampling technique. A researcher-developed instrument titled "Principals' School-Community Relationship Management Strategies for School Plant Maintenance Questionnaire" (PSRMSSPMQ) duly validated by experts was the instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was 0.85 using the Cronbach Alpha method. The researcher collected the data from the respondents. The research question was answered using mean ratings while t-test and ANOVA were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that the respondents disagreed on principals' school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. Accordingly, it was among others recommended that school administrators in the education zone should acquaint themselves with educational resources available in the community in order that they can be utilized to enrich and enhance the school programmes.

Keywords: Principal; School-Community Relationship; Management Strategies; School Plant Maintenance.

The whole essence of school-community relationship is to enhance teaching and learning activities. The activities of the school in relation to significant others such as the host community, PTA, public, the ministry of education or the professional staff, refer to this relationship which is expected to ultimately contribute to educational growth. Through effective management of school-community relationship, the school comes into factual contact with the community in order to promote teaching and learning. Philosophically, schools are established to serve societal needs. In this regard, it is expected that there should be a good relationship between the school and the host community. The school trains the children of the community and the community in turn provide, protect and maintain the facilities of the school.

Theoretically, school-community relationship is based on system theory in which the school is viewed as an open system. Schools belong to the formal system of education for teaching - learning purposes and offer an institutionalized form of education, which comprises of hierarchically organized set of activities carried out in specifically designated teaching and learning environment. School as an open system and a social organization thrives on the effective interrelationship within it and with its relevant communities. What happens in a school affects the community, and what happens

in the community affects school (Nwankwo, Nwokafor, Ogunsanwo and Ighalo, 2015). This means that community builds its schools and the schools build their communities (Sidhu, 2014). Therefore, school community interdependence is unbreakable. There is a reciprocal relationship which, in the case of secondary schools, needs to be properly managed by the school principals. Both parties work for one another and the two have direct impact on one another. If schools are expected to be successful in their primary mission of educating the community's children, they need to know a great deal about the community and the families from which the children come. This means that a school cannot exist in isolation but in co-operation with the community in which it finds itself (Ihebereme, 2016). Thus, the reciprocal relationship is for mutual benefits of the school and the host community.

School-community relationship is the process by which the school and community enter into mutual co-operation and team up to carry out some reciprocal services to each other. According to Ogbonna (2013), school-community relationship is a series of planned activities and medium through which the school seeks to learn about its community, to inform the community about, and interpret when necessary the purpose, programmes, problems and needs of the school, and to involve the community in planning and evaluating school policies and progress. To Akpakwu (2016), school community relationship can be described as the degree of understanding and goodwill achieved between the school and the community. It therefore means that school community relationship is that mutual understanding which binds the school and people, materials and other resources together and creates a favorable school environment for effective and efficient achievement of educational goals. Obi (2014) noted that, school-community relationship can take place between the school and the school parents' teachers' association, old students association, school committees, school board of governors and school proprietors' association among others. The relationship will help them know better the challenges of the school and may provide assistance that may bring effectiveness and efficiency in the educational system.

In describing community, Adeogun (2014), stated that community is everybody, adults, children, social and non-social persons, social institutions, structures living in a certain territory where all share a mode of life but not all are conscious of its organizations or groups. Community, in this study, is the environment of the school where formal education takes place including bodies like the Parent Teacher Association, Board of Governors, and specific groups that have some interest in what goes on in the school which all gear towards school progression, growth and development. School community relationship is a term that is used to describe the nature of association between schools and communities. Cibulka cited in Uzoechina (2015) defined school community relationship as the presence of interactive relationship between teachers, principals, and the community where the school is located. To Ajaniyi (2014), school community relationship is the co-ordination of the efforts of people in the community and those in the school towards the achievement of the broad and specific goals of education. It involves the inter-linkage association and cooperation between a school and the host community (Okam and Bozimo, 2014). It is also concerned with bringing human resources in the community and school for effective and functional school administration.

School community relationship is a two-way symbiotic arrangement through which the school and the community co-operate with each other for the realization of goals of the community and vice versa. It is the degree of understanding and goodwill, which exists between the school and the community (Okorie, Ememe and Egu 2009). School as a training centre helps develop pupils into efficient social beings and to train them to further

educate and uplift members of the society. The students are prepared to launch a vigorous and systematic crusade against social evils, anti – social habits and unhygienic habit. School interacts with people of the community and is linked with the larger society. The school is a special environment where a certain quality of life types of activities and occupations are provided with the object of securing child's development along desirable lines (Bakwai, 2013).

The function of the traditional school was to transmit the social heritage of the community. Its role was too academic in nature. The modern sociological view of education lay down that the school constantly draws upon social life and activities for its subject matter, its methods of teaching and its methods of work. There must be a conscious and continuous intercourse, a free give and take between the little world of the school and bigger one outside. The school has to arrange for the students opportunities to participate in social services, health campaigns, development plans, and other public activities. Any divorce between school and community is likely to make teaching artificial. School is a place where both children and adult are educated for progress of the whole community. School buildings, furniture, equipment, human resources, etc. are public property. They should be unhesitatingly placed at the disposal of the community after school hours. School teachers should also come forward and place their knowledge and experience at the disposal of community and assume the role of guides and leaders of the social group. The school library and play grounds can especially be of significant service to the community (Bakwai, 2013).

The school also helps arrange public lectures, exhibitions, fairs, tournaments, symposia, discussions, recreational programmes and other social functions that involve the community as a whole. The programme of adult education can also be co-ordinate with the school. The school grounds may be thrown open to the other children of the locality who have no other place for playing. The school will serve as a society in miniature-a small but ideal community. It will be a model for the society around. It will be the peoples` school, but at the same time it will give new direction to the people and community. It will act as a watch dog against social degeneration. By enhancing its own status and contribution it will enhance the status of the community as a whole (Sidhu, 2014).

Fiore (2012) identified the following as the importance of school community relationship:

1. Schools enjoy the informed support of families and community members.
2. Communities can provide schools with a context and environment that can either complement and reinforce the values, culture, and learning the school provide for their students or negates everything the school strive to accomplish.
3. Communities can furnish schools with crucial financial support system as well as the social and cultural values necessary for success and survival in contemporary society.
4. Communities have the potential to extend a variety of opportunities to students and to their families-social, cultural and vocational.
5. Schools, in turn, offer communities a focal point of educational services for children. By working together, schools, families, and communities can prepare for a more promising future.

Harmonious school-community relationship is very important for effective school plant maintenance. Plant maintenance involves integrating plant maintenance as part and parcel of the entire school programme of activities. Plant maintenance culture ensures that standard rules and regulations regarding school plant are observed voluntarily without promptings. Mbon (2014) describes maintenance culture as involving the ability to constantly and consistently carry out repairs of physical structure of values and making it a

collective responsibility of the group to maintain and preserve the structure. Sywaibalul, Abdul, Fatin and Mariah (2011) defined plant maintenance culture as the way of thinking and behaving that can be drawn based on the actions taken by each individual in preserving and protecting a system, equipment and structure. However, it is often said that plant maintenance culture is lacking in the Nigerian school system. As often witnessed by school administrators who abandon old projects in pursuance of new projects to boost their achievements, this situation does not augur well for the school system

In the school plant management and maintenance programme, there are certain principles, which should be used as guidelines in the development and operation of the programme. They include the following:

a. The primary aims of the school plant management programme should be to provide
b. favourable environment for learning and adequate care for school facilities
c. Responsibilities of various personnel should be clearly defined and job description should be developed for all personnel
d. Supervisory responsibility should be clearly defined and communicated. The relationship of the different personnel in plant maintenance programme should be clearly delineated
e. Sufficient manpower should be provided to ensure that every sector is well catered for
f. Orientation and in-service programmes should emphasize the essential service and support role, which is performed by personnel involved in the plant maintenance programme
g. The different facets of the maintenance programme should be reviewed periodically to identify ways in which overall economic efficiency may be improved
h. The various aspects of maintenance activities should be carefully planned and scheduled to assure maximum utilization of available manpower.
i. All school personnel should recognize that the physical condition of the school facilities is the symbol of the total school programme

In this study, two factors are considered as very effective in influencing principals' school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in the secondary schools. They include gender and principals' years of experience. According to Obasi (2018), gender is a varied socially and culturally constructed roles, qualities, and behaviours that are ascribed to women and men in different societies. It is important to note that the opinion of male principals may differ from their female counterpart regarding administrative strategies. For instance, Obaseki (2018) and Nwafukwa and Odey (2018) revealed in their studies that male teachers responded that principals perform better in administrative strategies such as supervision and planning. Another important factor to be considered is year of experience. Studies by Amirize and Ololube (2018) and Nwankwo, Nwokafor, Ogunsanwo, and Ighalo (2015) noted that the more experienced principals do well in internal supervision strategies, financial management strategies, and conflict management strategies than the less experienced school principals.

Nakpodia (2013) submitted that, a community through a healthy working relationship with the school manager and the entire school community would get to know the school strength and weaknesses and find ways of improving the areas the school is lacking for the achievement of educational goals. It is also pertinent to note that although the cordial relationship between the school and community can be seen as a pre-requisite for achieving a meaningful educational objective in our community and Nigeria at large,

most schools in Anambra State and Awka education zone operate without the school PTA and old students' associations are not working, the school heads are always working alone without the assistance of school committees.

There are speculations that, in Awka education zone, most schools' board of governors which would have been up and doing especially in the area of formulation of rules and regulations and governing of the schools are there in name but not functioning. The schools' host communities do not care much about what the schools are doing and how they do it. The management of these schools becomes difficult hence the values of the host communities do not always seem to be same with those of the schools. In most cases, schools are remembered only when there is flood disaster when the schools become IDP (Internally Displaced People) camps and turning schools into IDPs has contributed immensely in the destruction of school facilities due to improper handling. With the type of relationship between schools and their host communities on ground, discipline of students, provision of school facilities, and quality and quantity of teachers among other issues affect the management of secondary schools. This seemingly hostile relationship has been the source of concern to the people of the area and the researcher is prompted to investigate the school-community relationship strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka Education zone of Anambra State.

Research Question: What are principals' school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on different years of experience.

Research Method

This study was carried out in public secondary schools in Awka Education zone. The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey. The population comprised 18 principals in the 18 public secondary schools in the zone. The whole population was studied using purposive sampling technique. A researcher-developed instrument titled "Principals' School-Community Relationship Management Strategies for School Plant Maintenance Questionnaire" (PSRMSSPMQ) was the instrument for data collection. PSRMSSPMQ was made up of two parts- "A" and "B". Part A was on the bio-data of the respondents while part B contained items on principals' school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance. The instrument is a rating scale structured thus: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4points; Agree (A) = 3points; Disagree (D) = 2points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The face and content validity of the instrument was established by three experts; two in Educational Administration and one in Measurement and Evaluation. All the experts are lecturers in the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) Anambra State. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha method was used. Ten copies of the instrument were administered on 10 respondents who are principals in public secondary schools in Onitsha education zone. The co-efficient of 0.85 was obtained for POSSPMQ. This high reliability index indicated that the instrument is reliable and therefore considered adequate for the study. The

researcher collected the data from the respondents. The research question was answered using mean. Similarly, t-test and ANOVA were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. As a general rule, the null hypothesis was not accepted where the calculated value was equal or greater than the critical or table value, while the null hypothesis was accepted where the calculated value is less than the critical value.

Presentation of Results

Research Question: What are principals' school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of School-community Relationship Strategies for School Plant Maintenance

S/N	As the Principal of my School, I:	X	SD	Remarks
1	establish cordial relationship with the members of the local community of the school	2.17	0.69	Disagree
2	make sure that members of the local community are recruited during event of vacancies and recruitment processes	2.11	0.71	Disagree
3	establish a functional PTA meeting which strengthens the relationship between the school and local community	3.15	0.63	Agree
4	allow members of the community to share facilities of the school such as football fields and water	2.53	0.72	Disagree
5	make use of the members of the community to provide security to the school	2.46	0.66	Disagree
6	make use of resource persons from the community to educate the students and staff on maintenance of school facilities	2.59	0.67	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**2.49**		**Disagree**

Data presented in Table 1 show the item by item analysis on school-community relationship strategies for school plant maintenance in Awka education zone of Anambra State. The analysis revealed that items 1, 2, 4, and 5 with mean scores 2.17, 2.11, 2.53 and 2.46 were rated disagreed while the remaining were rated agreed. The cluster mean of 2.49 summarized that respondents disagreed on school-community relationship strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.63 – 0.72 show that teachers do not vary too much in their ratings on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Table 2: t-Test Significance in the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Principals on School-community Strategies for School Plant Maintenance in Secondary Schools

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal	p-value	α-value	Remark
Male	10	19.64	3.03					
				16	1.05	0.29	0.05	Not significant
Female	8	19.90	2.61					

Data presented in Table 2 revealed that at 0.05 level of significance, the t-cal value is 1.05 with 16 df and p-value of 0.29. The result shows that the p-value of 0.29 is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) at 0.05, this means that the null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on different years of experience.

Table 3: ANOVA Test of Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of Principals on School-Community Relationship Strategies for School Plant Maintenance

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.837	2	11.418	.771	.30
Within Groups	12002.932	16	14.800		
Total	**12025.769**	**18**			

The data presented in Table 3 revealed 0.05 alpha level, the F-value is 0.771 with 16df and *p*-value of 0.30. Since the *p*-value (0.30) is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, p (0.447) > 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on years of experience.

Summary of Findings

From the analysis, the following findings were made:

1. The respondents disagreed on principals' school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on years of experience.

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that teachers disagreed on principals' school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. This means that most principals in Awka education zone may fail to

establish cordial relationship with the members of the local communities, may not guarantee members of the community recruitment during events of recruitment amongst others. This finding opposed the finding of Abraham and Ememe (2012) that communities employed teachers in core subjects, build library and donate land for building school facilities and concluded that effective school-community relation is a key performance indicator for the administrator.

The finding also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. This finding is in tandem with the finding of Abraham and Ememe (2012) that male and female do not differ in their responses as regards effective school-community relations as a key performance indicator for the secondary school administrators.

The finding also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone based on years of experience. This finding agreed with the finding of Bakwai (2013) that years of experience of principal does not significantly differ on their school community relationship in the development of secondary education.

Conclusion

From the findings, it was concluded that teachers disagreed on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. The finding also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on school-community relationship management strategies for school plant maintenance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Anambra State government and Awka education zone in particular should provide periodic in-service training on school-community relationship for principals and principals should practice good communication skills in order to relate well with the host communities.
2. The Awka education zone of Anambra State should provide opportunity for principals to attend conferences and workshops on school-community relationship management techniques at least once a year for more acquisition of skills and knowledge for effective school-community relationship.
3. School administrators in the education zone should acquaint themselves with educational resources available in the community in order that they can be utilized to enrich and enhance the school programmes.

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