



Parents' Involvement in Secondary School Administration as a Correlate of School Effectiveness in the South-East Zone of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between parents' involvement in secondary school administration and school effectiveness in Nigeria adopting a descriptive survey research. The population was all the teachers, principals and parents of students in all public and private secondary schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria. The sample size of 3,198 comprised 2,460 teachers, 615 parents and 123 principals from 123 secondary schools selected through multi-stage, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques. Two sets of questionnaire were used for data collection, which were analyzed along with students' performance records using percentage, mean, t-test, and Pearson's *r*. Two research questions and three hypotheses were formulated. Results revealed that parents were moderately involved in school administration, with private schools indicating greater involvement than public schools and there was a significant relationship between involvement in school administration and school effectiveness. Also revealed was that secondary schools in the South-East Zone were moderately effective with the private schools being more effective, but not significantly, than the public schools. Recommendations required school administrators to endeavour to sustain parents' involvement in school administration in order to enhance school effectiveness and maintain the necessary cordial relationship between the home and the school tapping the accrued benefits.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate parents' involvement in secondary school administration as a correlate of school effectiveness. Secondary level education occupies a very unique position in the educational system worldwide because it is the level that determines the academic and professional career of recipients. Different countries of the world have their

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own specific objectives for secondary education but they all zero in to the goal of preparing students for quality academic and professional attainments in higher institutions to enable them live responsibly and contribute to the wealth and health of the society. The quality of education that learners receive bears a direct relevance to the overall atmosphere in which this learning takes place. In the secondary school, it is the responsibility of the school administrators (principals) to ensure conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning to prosper. As succinctly put by Ogbodo (2002), the school principal is several things at once in his school – he is the school administrator, the instructional leader, the personnel manager for students, teachers, and supportive staff, and the school finance and the physical facilities manager. Thus, the extent to which the secondary school system is able to accomplish its objectives at students' learning with proper integration and management of the various tasks determines its effectiveness.

The function of the school plant for instance is to help provide the most suitable environment for effective teaching and learning. The Accountability Review Report (2004) notes that principals in Australia acknowledged their obligation to a major task of maintenance of school plant, besides instructional leadership, as their abilities to provide a high quality physical environment too is a sine qua non for teachers' work performance which are correlates of students' learning. Also, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2001) stress that principals must develop an understanding of the effective and efficient management of fiscal resources and business services because schools need to be managed in cost-effective and appropriate ways that can enhance learning. It maintains that the management of the school budget and the school facilities has assumed a growing importance in contemporary schools since scarce resources, decreasing public support and increasing economic constraints now demand increased attention to the careful use of resources and a full understanding of school budget and plant management.

Over the years, the cognitive approach has been the only criterion used to measure the effectiveness of a school system, therefore scholars like Townsend (1994), Sammons et al. (1995), Duze (2003, 2005), Arubayi (2005), Ogbodo and Ekpo (2005), Omoregie (2006), Ajayi et al. (2009), Okoro (2009) argue that the criteria for measuring the effectiveness of a school should incorporate more than just cognitive achievement by including measures of affective and psychomotor such as self-concept, personal development, employment skills, school plant, organizational inputs, and even citizenship. This study therefore incorporated the three domains of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) in measuring school effectiveness. School effectiveness in this study refers to the extent to which secondary schools achieve set goals of learning by producing students who have gained appropriate knowledge and skills for higher education, and who are morally disciplined to function as responsible members of the society that will contribute to sustainable development. Though ineffectiveness in

secondary schools could be attributed to several factors (Duze, 1988, 2003, 2005; Sammons et al., 1995; Ogbodo, 2002; Arubayi, 2005) this study has focused on parents' involvement in school administration as a potential factor in school effectiveness. A similar study carried out by Ajayi et al. (2009) was in the South-West of Nigeria and the authors found it challenging to carry out this present study in the South-East.

It has however been observed that, one major obstacle bedeviling the secondary education in Nigeria today is the persistent poor performance of students in public examinations. For example, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) Report (2007) indicates that the percentage failure rate for English Language in the past consecutive five years surpasses that of the percentage of credit level in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by it between 2001 and 2005, with an equally poor but fluctuating trend recorded in Mathematics by the candidates. The continued mass failure in SSCE for a long time now has led to public outcries and demand for more educational accountability in public schools in Nigeria and has also led to the demand for private schools by parents and guardians for their children and wards despite high costs (Duze, 1988; Ajayi et al., 2009; Okoro, 2009). Furthermore, studies and observations (WAEC, 2002; NUC, 2004; Omoregie, 2006; Ajayi et al., 2009; Okoro, 2009) have shown that some of the products of today's secondary schools in Nigeria can neither move into higher institutions nor live usefully in the society because of poor academic performance. Some of them cannot think for themselves or respect the views and feelings of others. They have become a nuisance to the society belonging to secret cults, involving in all sorts of crimes such as armed robbery, assassination, kidnapping, drug abuse, assaults, burglaries, pocket-picking, etc, some have become motor-pack and political/election touts. Some of the products of the secondary school do not have respect for the dignity for labour but have become engulfed with the get-rich-quick syndrome at any and all costs. For instance, the National Universities Commission's (NUC) study (2004), found that Nigerian university graduates are failing to meet the needs of the labour market largely because of the poor intakes from the secondary school level. In the same vein, Omoregie (2006) lamented that secondary education which is the pivot of the entire educational system anywhere in the world, is fast losing relevance in Nigeria as it has apparently failed in accomplishing most of its objectives as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE).

The NPE has specific goals and objectives for each level and type of education in Nigeria. In Section 5 of the NPE (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2004), secondary education is required in its broad goals to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and for higher education. These are further broken down into eight specific objectives of providing a higher level of education for all primary school leavers; offer diversified curricular to cater for all; provide sub-professional manpower in science, technology, and commerce; develop and promote Nigeria languages, art, and

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culture; inspire desire for self improvement and achievement; foster national unity in our diversity; raise citizens who can think and respect the views of others; and provide technical knowledge and vocational skills. The big question is the extent to which they are being achieved. It is therefore a task of this study to examine the extent to which parents, a major stakeholder in education, had been involved in school administration towards the realization of our secondary education aspirations. Nwangwu (2007) notes that the fact that we have fallen short of expectations inspired educationists and critics like Animba et al. (1995), Nwana (2000), and Nduka (2006) to talk respectively about "The Nigerian education system in crises", "Aberrations in the Nigerian education system", and "The roots of African underdevelopment". Such concerns according to her informed the on-going reform initiative of the education industry in Nigeria. Therefore the findings of a study of this nature would be a useful tool in the reform strategies.

However, it has been sadly observed that in some schools, especially in the urban areas, school principals do not involve parents in school administration for fear of being criticized. It appears in some cases, that parents are not allowed adequate participation in school activities and programmes and visits to schools to see how their children are faring are no longer regular. Ajayi et al. (2009), Okoro (2009) report that there are instances where some principals no longer make use of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) in school administration and these tend to make the parents handicapped in assisting the school in the provision of qualitative education to its students. This is worrisome as studies like those of Henderson (1987), Duze (1988), Hillman and Mortimore (1995), Sammons et al. (1995), Cotton and Wikelund (2001), Adewuyi (2002), Ajayi (2007), Ajayi et al. (2009), Okoro (2009) revealed the many benefits that are accrued for the school and for parents themselves when parents become involved in their children's school activities. They all maintain that school personnel benefit from the improved rapport that generally accompanies increased involvement of parents in school work. This enhances their willingness to support the school with their labour and resources during fund-raising activities or in carrying out special projects like sinking bore-holes in schools for constant water supply, providing giant generators for electricity, building extra classroom blocks to ease over-crowding, or equipping the library with current and relevant books. The studies have showed that such active presence of parents in the school activities and participation in committees' events and other activities all had positive effects on effective schooling and students' achievement. It can be inferred from the foregoing that, parents' involvement in secondary school administration creates a strong positive link between the school and the home which influences and enhances school effectiveness. It is in this light that this study sought the relationship between parents' involvement in school administration and school effectiveness in the South-East Zone of Nigeria. Thus the study first investigated the extent of parents' involvement in secondary school administration in public and

private schools and in urban and rural schools, and second the relationship between the involvement of parents in secondary school administration and school effectiveness. To guide the investigation five research questions were raised. Research questions one and two were answered while three null hypotheses were formulated from research questions three to five and tested in the study at the 0.05 level of significance.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of parents' involvement in secondary school administration in the South-East Zone of Nigeria?
2. What is the level of effectiveness in secondary schools in South-East Zone of Nigeria?
3. Is there any difference in the extent of involvement of parents in secondary school administration in public and private schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria?
4. Is there any difference in the level of effectiveness in secondary school administration in public and private schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria?
5. Is there any relationship between parents' involvement in secondary school administration and school effectiveness in schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the extent of involvement of parents in secondary school administration in public and private schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness in secondary school administration in public and private schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between parents' involvement in secondary school administration and school effectiveness in the South-East Zone of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The research design was the ex post facto of the descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers, principals, and parents of the students in public and private secondary schools in South-East Zone of Nigeria. The study sample was a total of 3,198 respondents comprising 2,460 teachers and 615 parents randomly selected from 123 secondary schools, plus all the 123 principals of the selected schools. Multi-stage, simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the sample. At the

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first stage, a simple random sampling technique was used to select three States (Anambra, Enugu, and Imo) out of the five States in the South-East Zone of Nigeria. The second stage involved the use of stratified random sampling technique to admit the number of schools per state, making a total of 123 while the last stage was a simple random sampling technique used to select twenty teachers and five parents per school.

Two sets of Questionnaire were used for data collection. The first, designated Secondary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SSEQ) has two sections, A and B. Section A sought the background information of the school as well as bio-data information of the respondents while section B contains twenty-one items which elicited information on school effectiveness. The second, designated Parents Involvement in School Administration Questionnaire (PISAQ) also has Sections A and B eliciting information on the bio-data of the respondents and parents' involvement in school administration respectively. Section B of PISAQ contains fifteen items. Information on students' performance in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) for three consecutive years (2007-2009) was also obtained from the schools' records by the investigator. The instruments were validated by experts in Educational Administration. The reliabilities of the instruments were ascertained through the test-retest method using respondents in each category that were not involved in the study. The calculated Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficients of 0.89 for SSEQ and 0.85 for PISAQ were found satisfactory. The SSEQ was administered on the teachers and principals and the PISAQ on the parents by the investigator with the help of well-briefed third parties.

The data collected through these instruments were analyzed using frequency, percentage and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the t-test for independent means. The region of rejection was established using the Z-critical value for very large samples.

RESULTS

Results of data analyses were presented as they related to the two research questions answered and the three null hypotheses formulated and tested.

Research Question One

What is the extent of parents' involvement in secondary school administration in the South-East Zone of Nigeria?

To determine the extent of parents' involvement in school administration, frequency counts and percentage scores were used to analyze the responses on items 1-15 of PISAQ. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Extent of Parents’ Involvement in Secondary School Administration and School Effectiveness

	Item	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
1	The school works in collaboration with the parents to ensure that students are well catered for.	599(97.4)	16(2.6)
2	The school works in collaboration with the parents to ensure that teachers are well catered for.	451(73.3)	164(26.7)
3	Parents are allowed to visit the school anytime to see how their children are coping with academic work.	573(93.2)	42(6.8)
4	Parents are allowed to visit the school on fixed visiting days to interact with the teachers.	597(97.1)	18(2.9)
5	Parents are involved in maintenance of school facilities.	494(80.3)	121(19.7)
6	Parents are involved in the provision of perishable or replaceable materials, furniture, and equipment in the school.	455(74.0)	160(26.0)
7	Parents are allowed to participate in most school programmes.	601(97.7)	14(2.3)
8			
9	The PTA is involved in supervision of building projects in schools.	567(92.2)	48(7.8)
10	Parents are involved in the building of new classrooms, laboratories, workshops, etc for the school.	477(77.6)	138(22.4)
11	Parents are sometimes appointed members of committees in the school.	481(78.2)	134(21.8)
12	Decisions directly affecting the school are taken in PTA meetings.	595(96.5)	38(3.5)
13	Parents are regularly informed of the progress of their children in school.	600(97.6)	15(2.4)
14	Parents are usually included as members of the school’s disciplinary committee.	374(60.8)	241(39.1)
15	Parents contribute well during fund raising activities in the school.	586(95.3)	29(4.7)
16	Parents are usually willing to participate in any school activity whenever called upon by the school to do so.	588(95.6)	27(4.4)
	Mean	87.1	12.9

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The result in Table 1 is quite vivid and self-explanatory. For example, it shows that 97.4 percent of parents indicated that the school works in collaboration with the parents to ensure that the students are well catered for while 73.3 percent indicated same for teachers. 97.6 percent of parents agreed that they are regularly informed of the progress of their children in school as they interact with teachers on fixed visiting days (97.1%) while 93.2 percent of them also agreed that parents are allowed to visit the school anytime to see how their children are coping with academic work. Furthermore, Table 1 shows that 92.2 percent indicated that the PTA is involved in supervision of building projects in the school, while 95.3 indicated that parents contribute well during fund raising activities in the school. While 96.5 percent of the parents agreed that far-reaching decisions directly linked to the school are taken in the PTA meetings, 78.2 of them also agreed that parents are sometimes appointed members of committee in the school. Also, the twin scores of 97.7 percent and 95.6 percent show that the parents do participate in most school activities and are usually willing to serve in any capacity they are called upon to do so, etc. On the average, 87.1 percent of the parents agreed that they participate in the administration of the school. This means that, parents are to a large extent involved in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria.

Research Question Two

What is the level of effectiveness of secondary schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria?

To determine the level of school effectiveness, the responses to the twenty-one items of section B of SSEQ and the students' overall performance incorporating SSCE scores, teachers' and principals' ratings on affective and psychomotor behaviours were analyzed and presented in Table 2. In order to determine the level of school effectiveness rated in this study as low, moderate and high, the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses were computed. The low level of school effectiveness was determined by subtracting the standard deviation score from the mean score ($54.18 - 4.23 = 49.95$), moderate level was determined by the mean score of the responses (54.18), while high level of school effectiveness was determined by adding the mean score and the standard deviation of the responses on the instruments ($54.18 + 4.23 = 58.41$). Therefore, the low level of school effectiveness in this study ranges between 0 and 49.95; moderate level between 49.96 and 58.41; and high level between 58.42 and 100.

The result in Table 2 showed that out of the 123 schools sampled, 23 schools representing 18.70 percent had low level of effectiveness, 86 schools representing 69.92 percent showed moderate level of school effectiveness and 14 schools representing 11.38 percent indicated high level of

effectiveness. These values showed that the level of effectiveness in secondary schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria was moderate.

Table 2: Level of Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in South-East Zone of Nigeria.

Extent of school effectiveness	Frequency	%
Low (0 – 49.95)	23	18.70
Moderate (49.96 – 58.41)	86	69.92
High (58.42 - 100)	14	11.38
Total	123	100

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the extent of involvement of parents in secondary school administration in public and private schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria.

To test this hypothesis, the extent of parents’ involvement in school administration in public and private schools were determined using frequencies and mean scores for each category. Their respective mean scores from analyses of their responses to PISAQ were found to be 3.09 and 3.96 for public and private schools respectively. The two means appeared to be equal and to examine this empirically the t test for difference between two independent means was applied to the data and the result presented in Table 3. Since the calculated t value of 0.183 was less than the critical value of 1.960, the null hypothesis was retained implying that there is no significant difference between the two.

Table 3: Public and Private Schools and Parents’ Involvement in School Administration.

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	Z _{cal}	Z _{critical}	Decision ($p \geq 0.05$)
Public Schools	82	3.09	0.22	121	0.183	1.960	Not Significant
Private Schools	41	3.96	0.07				

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness in secondary school administration in public and private schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria.

In the same vein, this hypothesis was tested by subjecting the calculated mean scores of responses to the IPSAQ in public (3.02) and private (3.98) schools to the t test statistic. The result is presented in Table 4. The calculated t value of 0.187 was less than the critical value of 1.960, therefore,

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the null hypothesis was retained. This means that there is no significant difference between the two.

Table 4: Public and Private Schools and School Effectiveness.

Variables	n	Mean	SD	df	Z_{cal}	$Z_{critical}$	Decision ($p \geq 0.05$)
Public Schools	82	3.02	0.17	121	0.187	1.960	Not Significant
Private Schools	41	3.98	0.09				

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between parents' involvement in secondary school administration and school effectiveness in the South-East Zone of Nigeria.

To test hypothesis three, the responses to items 1 - 21 of section B of SSAQ and items 1 - 15 of section B of PISAQ in addition to scores on students' performance in SSCE were used for analysis. The result is presented in Table 5.

The result obtained from the analysis showed that, the value of the calculated r of 0.258 is greater than the value of the critical r of 0.250. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between parents' involvement in school administration and secondary school effectiveness.

Table 5: Parents' Involvement in Secondary School Administration and School Effectiveness.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r_{cal}	$r_{critical}$	Decision ($p \geq 0.05$)
Parents' involvement in school	123	46.64	3.07	0.258	0.250	Significant
administration School Effectiveness	123	57.96	3.69			

DISCUSSION

Results indicate that, to a very large extent (87.1%), parents were involved in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. Results also show that parents were adequately informed about the welfare and the progress of their children in the school. They were appointed members of some relevant committees in the schools like the disciplinary committee, the food committee, the sick-bay/hospital committee, the accommodation committee, etc; they were allowed to be involved in the maintenance of school plant, provision and purchase of perishable and non-perishable school items, supervision of on-going projects in the school where for example, engineers and architects among them are called upon to help monitor building projects by contractors of the Local, State and Federal Governments. Artisans among

them are sometimes involved in the repair of school doors and windows, leaking roofs, broken tables, desks, and chairs, some are engaged as day and night watchmen (i.e. security guards), and some 'motor-mechanics' help in routine serving of the school bus and other staff vehicles at no or at very reduced costs. Some of them are engaged in the school farms either as labourers or as consultants where some schools do fish-farming, poultry-farming, pig-farming, grass-cutter-rearing, and snail ranch. These imply that the parents and the schools worked hand-in-hand to ensure that the students are well catered for academically and morally and in maintaining high discipline in the schools. The involvement of parents in school activities would create strong and cordial home-school relationship required for the growth and development of the secondary schools.

Results also reveal that secondary schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria were moderately effective. The implication is that all hope is not lost after-all for this level of education in Nigeria. This submission agrees with that of Ajayi et al. (2009) who carried out a similar study in the South-West of Nigeria. They submitted that the future is bright for the society and the students alike as far as secondary school education in Nigeria is concerned. These submissions are indeed contrary to that of Omoregie (2006) who submitted that the secondary schools are no longer effective in Nigeria arguing that the secondary schools are haven of criminals where future thugs are bred. However, this stand by Omoregie (2006) may have been correct at the time of his study when parents may perhaps not have been seriously involved or not involved at all in the administration of secondary schools. It therefore lends credence to the usefulness of parents' greater involvement in secondary school administration for school effectiveness as was found by Henderson (1987) and Sammons et al. (1995).

Results also show a significant relationship between parents' involvement in secondary school administration and school effectiveness. This implies that parents' involvement in secondary school administration is a correlate of school effectiveness. This finding agrees with those of Henderson (1987) and Sammons et al. (1995) but contradicts that of Ajayi et al. (2009). However, Ajayi et al. (2009) who found no significant relationship between parents' involvement in secondary school administration and school effectiveness despite high level of their involvement in school administration attributed the contradiction to other factors like differences in the environment of study such as the countries involved. They posit that considering the high level of participation of parents in school activities, it could be expected that this involvement would enhance the tone of the school and contribute to its effectiveness, but that was not so in their study. They therefore conclude that parents' involvement in school administration may not guarantee effectiveness in the schools positing that the contradictory finding to those of Henderson (1987), Hicks (1992) and Sammons et al. (1995) may have been caused by some other factors not considered in their study and may not be divorced from the

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environment where the research was carried out. They explain that while the studies of Henderson (1987), Hicks (1992), and Sammons et al. (1995) were carried out in advanced countries, their own study was carried out in Nigeria, a developing country where principals are still skeptical about the activities of parents in school administration. However, this present study, carried out in the same Nigeria found otherwise and tallied with those of advanced countries. We argue that it is in developing countries of Africa that cultures that intricately tie the parent to the child would bring out the best in anything that pertains to that relationship including their involvement in school administration and school effectiveness. Besides, principals and teachers are themselves parents and they all interact effectively in Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) which is currently flourishing in Nigeria.

Results of the study also revealed disparities in both the extent of involvement of parents in secondary school administration and the level of school effectiveness in public and private schools with the private schools getting parents more involved in school administration and also experiencing a higher degree of school effectiveness than the public schools. Although these differences were not significant, and there were no other studies found on this very issue to compare with, we must add here that public schools should emulate private schools in this area to also begin to reap better the huge benefits thereof.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that parents were adequately involved in the administration of secondary schools in the South-East Zone of Nigeria to the extent that it enhanced school effectiveness. Therefore, parents' involvement in the secondary school administration has a positive correlation with school effectiveness in the South-East Zone of Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was recommended that the school administrators should sustain the high level of parents' involvement in school administration in order to maintain cordial relationship between the home and the school. Furthermore, since parents' involvement in school administration was significantly related to school effectiveness, government and other stakeholders in education should continue to encourage parents and other adults as well as private bodies (e.g. NGOs) in helping to make the teaching-learning environment of schools

more conducive and attractive for increased improvement in school effectiveness.

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