CREATING AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY BASED RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract
The paper examines the recent trend in school management. it takes into account the concept of participating, cooperative and collaborative management. The informal types of education (home and apprenticeship) were initially sufficient for youth. Today however, modern diversification in technology and education, appear to have exerted some form of complex influence on the culture of the community. Given the nature of this perceived complexity, the informal education seems to be inadequate to cope with modern challenges. This calls for an urgent need to position the formal education system to facilitate effective cultural transmission in the modern age.

Keywords: School-Community, Cultural transmission, social organisation, Effective learning,

Introduction

In the world at large, education is said to be an instrument for attaining socio-economic growth and national development. It is in recognition of the vital role of education in socio-economic and national development that Mgbodile (2004) observed that it is

through well planned and implemented educational system that advanced nations of the world have attained a high level of social, economic, scientific and technological advancement. This view point is equally in agreement with the views of Sergiovani and Starrat (1996), Okeke (2008), and Chukwu (2011) that any nation that wants to be developed must have a worthwhile system of education for her citizens.

The school as an educational institution is a social organization designed to serve the needs of the society. It goes to say that no school was ever operated in a social vacuum (Mgbodile, 1986). According to him, schools more than any other public institutions, derive their existence and "life blood" from the communities which supply the human and material resources used in them. This makes it difficult for the schools and their staff structure to function effectively.

The community needs education to ensure that its new generations are equipped with the existing knowledge of its physical environment, community organization; relevant skills for performing daily jobs, and acquires the skills of culturally heritage for being morally sound. This kind of education does not only enable its beneficiaries to benefit from the community but empowers them to contribute maximally to the development of the community. The informal types of education (home and apprenticeship) were initially sufficient for youth, but today due to the modern diversification in technology and education, the culture of the community is becoming complex and diversified that the informal education can no longer be adequate, and this calls for the urgent need of formal education (school), which will act as a cultural transmission, the school built in the community is used as a tool for educating, transforming and improving members of the community at large. So, whatever education the school is charged to promote must reflect the philosophy of the community. It is one this background that the chapter examines the topic of school and community.

The School
A school is an administrative unit designed to impart skills and knowledge to students, it is an organized setting that delivers sequential instruction from one or more teachers. School usually is

situated in the community environment and can be defined as formalized and organized institutions where people are trained to acquire knowledge and skills to become productive members of the society. In this way one can say that the school is a community property because they are responsible for the building. This close partnership with the school and community help to bring active involvement between the both. Ogbonna (2003) puts it that parents should take a greater interest in the school and get a better understanding of what is going on in the classroom, he remarked that no satisfaction can be derived from the experiences of the past in which children at school were culturally separated from their families leaving them apart and unfit in their communities. The school is a formal institution and an agent of socialization. It is established by the society to inculcate relevant ideas, norms and knowledge for the students to adapt to the complex society, in summarizing the functions of the school Okorosaye-Orubite (2009) states:

a. the school provides training in basic skills as reading, writing and counting (arithmetic).
b. the school also plays a conservative role. this conservative role refers to preservation of the community's socio-cultural practices.
c. the school is also an agent of cultural change. progressive education accepts that nothing is static. the school must be aware of this and anticipate change, since these changes might occur, it would be better if the schools were prepared for them when the changes then occur, the school serves as institution for fostering and disseminating the idea.
d. the school provides children with the opportunity for participation in health games and exercise; it also affords them the opportunity to develop virtue and discourages all evil tendencies.
e. it attempts to provide the young ones with social and civil competencies to make them useful adults in the society.
f. the school teaches the young learners scientific method which sharpens their intellect, they are curious and enable to satisfy their curiosity.

This shows that the school cannot function on its own alone to achieve its aims. Ability of the school to meet with the aspirations of the students and the community requires that the head teachers must have a clear knowledge of what the needs are.

The Community
Community refers to a small localized, political, economic and social unit whose members share values in common. Trust hamlet, villages, towns, cities, are often considered as communities. Horn by (2000) defines community as a group of people living together in one place or having a common religion, race or culture. Members of the community are likely to possess similarity of attitude and interests' community does not exist in isolation from the broader social landscape, instead is situated within a particular geographical location. Each community has a particular density of inhabitants.

Ogunu (2000), however, distinguished between two types of community the primary community and secondary community. A primary community is one in which individuals relate, co-operate or associate in person. In this type of community everybody knows everyone else while this may not be completely true; it is true that everybody can see in person, anyone with whom he is likely to have significant dealings. In this kind of community people usually feel that they have common interest and they tend to trust one another. The secondary community on the other hand is one in which people are related indirectly by trade and business connections or by belonging to the same religious, professional or economic group. People in secondary communities are interdependent, but they seldom or never meet each other in person. For example, the big cities, a state, a region or nation can be called secondary communities. It is important to note that the world is becoming a global community at the secondary level through technological advancement. It is within these varying types of communities that schools are established.

School-Community Relations
School-community relations may be considered to be a two way interdependent process between the society and its instrument, the public institution (Ogbonna, 2003). It is the process by which the school and community enter into genuine, mutual co-operation in

planning and working for the good of the schools. This is to say that school-community relation is a two-way flow of ideas between the school and community. This provides the basis for mutual understanding and effective teamwork as Ogunu (2000) pointed out: "School-community relations are a series of planned activities and media through which the school seeks to learn about their 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.

This is an attempt towards creating an education-centred community; this joint effort will help unite community and school in the provision of a conducive learning environment. The aim is to create a positive change among the members of the community towards issues and problems of the school by enhancing consciousness of common concerns. There should be cordial communication link between the community and the school, this will help foster unity and protect the lives and property of the school.

Community Agencies

In actualizing the goal between the school and the community, there is the need to involve stakeholders in the provision of education. This is because over the years, most communities have been actively involved is school community sponsored organizations or bodies. These organizations include: Parents-Teachers' Association (PTA), Old Students Association, Board of Governors and other voluntary agencies. Two of the organizations will be discussed below:

Old Students Association

This normally comprised of past students of the school interested in the continued growth of their alma mater. A well-organized old student association is usually useful to the school and the community at large. The old student association, help in donation of educational facilities, school building renovation, fundraising to support the school and host community this turns out to bring development in the community and school.

Parents-Teachers' Association

The parents-teachers' association is an organization which is made up of parents and teachers. This is the oldest way of communication between the parents and the school. Although it is usually been criticized by parents and educators, but it is an avenue through which problems are solved. According to Ojelabi (1981) a well-coordinated PTA will serve the following purposes:

a) promote the welfare of children and youths in home, schools, church and community.

b) serves as a forum in which parents and teachers exchange useful ideas for improvement of leaving ability of the children.

c) it can be used to strengthen the authority of the school in the event of discipline problems.

d) schools can enlist the cooperation of parents in the organization of some school events such as open days, boys brigade, inter-house sports competitions, etc.

e) through the pta parents get to know about the goals, ideals and objectives of the school.

f) the pta can seek for financial assistance on behalf of the school from members of the community. the parents themselves can also lend support to the school.

g) parents serve as resource person to the school.

h) the pta should have written constitution and should keep proper records of actions and decisions. they should be flexible in membership terms and should not exclude active parents who have no children in the school. in fact, any parent should be free to join these associations if he so desires.

The Areas of Relationship between Community and School

Apart from socio-political climate and economic state of affairs in the society, education is one of the factors that determine the future of the community and society at large. If there is not smooth interaction between the community and the school it will be difficult for the both to benefit from each other. However, it is difficult to share school resources with the whole community; due to limited of resources allocated to the school, they are either readily available or not sufficient for the use of the children. Yet the goal must be towards making learning resources, the game facilities and educational

personnel available to the youth and adult members to community (Farrant, 2004). Some of the areas where the school community interacts as identified by Agabi and Oluwuo (2004) are summarized thus:

1. **The Use of Physical Facilities**

   The opening of the school in the community will create a cordial relationship between the school and the host community. The school after the normal school day leaves the faculty in the hand of the community to use for services like extra-mural classes. The use of the playground to play football matches and the school hall can also be used for wedding halls or for church activities. Ground for electoral practice (voting ad campaign) while in turn the community provides teachers with accommodation, land for building.

2. **Management**

   The involvement of community in the management of school has the potential of generating favorable development and brings about new life to the community; members of the school, board of governors, school committees, PTA, and old students' association are all from the community. The school also provides staff and students who serve in the local affairs such as committees for church development and cultural organization.

Research, Knowledge and Cultural Records

The school provides records, preserves local traditions, historical events into local history, cultural songs and they provide the personnel for research. The community provides the information for school museum, contributes artifacts to it, and provides opportunities for the study of local activities and customs.

Economic Contribution

The Parents-Teachers' Association in the school works with the school administrator and teachers to build effective cooperation between the community and school. The parents-teachers' association supports the schools in so many ways like fundraising to carryout building renovations, the funds raised must be used for the purpose for which the money was collected. In turn, the school opens its doors

for the community for employment opportunity and the purchase of farm proceeds.

Factors Affecting Effective School-Community Relationship
There are so many factors affecting the community school relationship amongst them are:

1) **Community Politics**
   The school heads should not be engage into politics that will ruin the smooth running of the host community where the school is situated. Trespassing of school premises by community member is another source of conflict between the school and community especially in the present era of scarcity of land. There is need for boundary demarcation to avoid disputes from the community.

2) **Parents**
   Parents who have had negative experience at school during their education and those who have little or no education are always feeling intimidated about the teacher, the school should employ strategies to address this issue. However, in trying to integrate the community in school activities, in doing this the school heads should try to carry the parents along to change their perception about school teachers.

3) **Teachers**
   Teachers' atimes feel uncomfortable about parents' attitude about their wards it brings about as an unpleasant pressure. There is need for school administrators to create a conducive atmosphere between the teachers and parents to interact freely; this will help reduce tension in the classroom when parents show up.

Communication
The ability to community is at the roof of all human relationship and it is an essential ingredient of social life and interaction. The network of communication within a group is an important basis for determining the pattern of role relationship Ukeje (1986) opines that to be able to educate the child for life in his community, the schools like all business enterprise, depend on efficient network of communication between administration and the people who make up the school

community the major areas of communication that are of importance here are:

a. Communication between the ministry, the school and the community.
b. Communication between the head teachers, the staff and the pupils.

For these reasons, the head teacher needs to examine how effective these various aspects of communication are Farrant (2004) suggests the following as rules for good communication.

a) Choose a code that is known by everyone to whom the message is to be sent.
b) Avoid using a medium that any of the receivers might find unpleasant.
c) Choose a medium that is well suited to the conditions under which the message is to be sent and try to reduce noise as much as possible.

Coordinating and observing these various rules remain a principal role of the school administration in ensuring good school-community relationship.

Roles of the School Administrator in Promoting Good Community Relations

Good Relationship is built on adequate understanding and communication to the people. There is no general principles are stated in dealing with individuals because different variables are at work in different places. However, the different school of thought on school community relationship ought to take in order to promote good school-community relationship:

a. The school head should invite community members to air their view on school curriculum.
b. The school head can promote good school-community relationship by allowing community members to have access to school facilities.
c. By organizing a very active Parents-Teachers' Association (PTA), he can bring the school close to home and vice versa.

    d. He must understand the expectation of the economy as well as the potential of the school to achieve these expectations.

    e. The head teacher must take responsibility of security and interpreting education and information to the community. He must get accurate explanation of government intention.

    f. The school head has to encourage joint school community discussion on problems facing the school, on policies formulated, etc. In doing so is indirectly encouraging community support to education.

Conclusion

The recent trend in school management takes into account the concept of participating, cooperative and collaborative management. This demands the involvement of community in the running of schools. No one executive can supervise the staff and student. No one principal/head teacher can take all decision that need to be taken in the daily affairs of the school. Therefore, the areas of cooperation must be harnessed and good communication link must be built into the executive actions to ensure proper dissemination of school activities.

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