
SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND SCHOOL FACILITIES MOBILISATION AS CHANNELS TO JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This article examined School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) involvement in school facilities mobilization with the view of enhancing Junior Secondary School (JSS) students' academic performance in Nigeria. The Junior Secondary School (JSS) is the third stage or level of the basic education as far as Nigeria education system is concerned. This stage is a level in the basic education at which learners are expected to spend three good academic sessions and at the end (that is at the completion of the sessions) external examinations are conducted by the various state ministries of education across the country at the appropriate time. This depends on the academic session time-table of the various state ministries of education in the country. Thus, National Examinations Council (NECO) usually conducts similar examinations for the Junior Secondary Schools in the country. This is mostly done by Federal Unity Colleges and some private schools do also registered with NECO for this examinations. SBMC is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. It is an in-thing presently in the global education system. This is a policy which empowers the community members where schools are located to be involved in the administration of the school instead of leaving such to government and the school administrators to manage spontaneously. It is a system of administration whereby some decision-making of the school are shared among the stakeholders in education industry. However, schools facilities refer to all basic required resources that will promote teaching-learning and also

brings about friendly school environment to the learners and their teachers. A good, friendly school environment promotes better academic performance because the learners and their teachers will always be willing to be in the school environment. This study defined SBM/SBMC, described JSS and its objectives, in addition it also described academic performance and identified the channel of SBMC in school facilities mobilization. Conclusion and recommendations were given.

Keywords: Academic performance, SBMC, Junior Secondary School, and School Facilities Mobilization.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of academic performance had always been a thing of concern to all the stakeholders in Nigerian education sector. These include government at the various levels of governance, parents, teachers, learners and even the employers of labour among others. Basically, performance is attributed to ability to perform a task within a specific period of time. To measure performance, demands conducting a performance test and it can be inform of written test and/or practical exercises in the case of sciences. Academic performance therefore, can be described as the ability of a particular student to perform a given task within a period of time, mostly a written test rather than the spoken one. Yusuf (2016) opined that student academic performance in a particular school subject would include observable and measurable behaviour of the student at a point in time, during a school subject test. It is a set of scores obtained from a teacher-made test in the space of a particular time and this may be first term examination, second term examination and/or promotional examinations.

Oreḍein (2016) asserted that poor academic performance of Nigerian students, especially at junior secondary schools level, has been of much concern to the government, parents, teachers and even the students themselves. The quality of education not only depends on the teachers as reflected in the performance of their duties, but also in

the effective coordination of the school variables. It is believed that the school physical features have a form of relationship with the student academic performance in terms of the school size, structure, ownership, location and type. Aremu cited in Igberadja (2016), stressed that academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and the parents, its effects are equally grave on the society in terms of the dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and political life. Poor academic performance has been linked to several factors which include high teacher-students ratio, shortage of good teaching staff, poor quality of educational leadership, political instability and politicization of educational programmes, automatic promotion, age of the learners, and inadequate essential physical facilities and equipment (Ewetan, 2010; Akinwunmi&Odunsi, 2008 cited in Ewetan&Ewetan, 2015). Going through the scholars' assertions on academic performance of the junior secondary school students, what will come to mind is how can academic performance at this level of education be improved and strengthened. Against this background, this paper is positioned to investigate the puzzle by examining SBM/SBMC and school facilities mobilization as channels to academic performance of the junior secondary school students in Nigeria.

Junior Secondary School Education

Junior secondary school is the last stage of the basic education. It is an educational institution designed for the Nigeria children that have completed their primary school education and transited to JSS either by examination or through the placement exercise as the case may be. At this stage of education, learners are expected to spend three good academic sessions and at the end of the last session, external examinations are conducted by the external examination bodies. The state ministries of education in the states of the federation and National Examination Council (NECO) do coordinate or conduct the examinations. The purpose of the external examinations is to ascertain the level of the learners' academic performance and to also issue Basic Education Certificate (BECE).

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), in the National Policy on Education, 6th edition Section 2, Sub-Section D, paragraph 21 described JSS as the education which a child receives immediately after primary education. In furtherance of describing JSS, education the policy document went ahead to identify the objectives of JSS education. These include to: a). provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and educational advancement; b). develop patriotic young people to contribute to social development and the performance of their civic responsibilities; c). inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour; and d). inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, ethnic and socio-economic background. In a bid to meet with and to achieve the objectives of JSS in Nigeria education system as stated above, there is need for SBM/SBMC to embark on school facilities mobilization that serves as channels of a better academic performance of the JSS students.

School Facilities Mobilization

Mobilization is referred to as a process of winning the heart and support of other stakeholders and/or donors in achieving a set of goals. While school facilities are attributed to physical infrastructures that enhance the teaching and learning activities in a school, such as the school buildings, teaching aids, chairs and tables for the teachers and their learners among others. School facilities mobilization can therefore be described as seeking the support of stakeholders and/or donors in education in ensuring the availability of the schools needed facilities as and when due. School facilities, constitute the major components of both direct and indirect action elements in the environment of learning (Asiabaka, 2017).

Nwagwu and Ogunsaju cited in Asiabaka (2017), maintained that the quality of education that children receive bears direct relevance to the availability or lack thereof of physical facilities and overall atmosphere

in which learning takes place. The school facilities consist of all types of buildings for academic and non-academic activities, equipment for academic and non-academic activities, areas for sports and games, landscape, farms and gardens, including trees, roads and paths. Others include furniture and toilet facilities, lighting, acoustics, storage facilities and parking lot, security, transportation, ICT, cleaning materials, food services, and special facilities for the physically challenged persons.

Knezevich cited in Asiabaka (2017) emphasized that the physical needs of the learners are met through provision of safe structure, adequate sanitary facilities, a balanced visual environment, appropriate thermal environment, and sufficient shelter space for his work and play. His emotional needs are met by creating pleasant surroundings, a friendly atmosphere, and an inspiring environment. Asiabaka (2017) went further to say that school facilities are the material resources provided for staff and students to optimize their productivity in the teaching and learning process. The realization that the transfer of knowledge does not only take place in the four walls of the classroom from the teacher to the students but rather that learning takes place through discovery, exploration, interaction with the internal and external environment has necessitated the creative and innovative development of teaching and learning facilities that reflect these changes.

According to Lackney and Picus (no date), an effective school facility is responsive to the changing programmes of educational delivery and at a minimum, should provide a physical environment that is comfortable, safe, secure, accessible, well illuminated, well ventilated, and aesthetically pleasing. The school facility consists of not only the physical structure and the variety of building systems, such as mechanical, plumbing, electrical and power, telecommunications, security, and fire suppression systems but it also includes furnishings, materials and supplies, equipment and information technology, as well as various aspects of the building grounds, namely, athletic fields,

playgrounds, areas for outdoor learning, and vehicular access and parking. They went further to say that the school facility is much more than a passive container of the educational process: it is, rather, an integral component of the conditions of learning. The layout and design of a facility contributes to the experience of students, educators, and community members.

It is obvious that school facilities play prominent roles in enhancing teaching and learning in the classroom and school environment leads to better students' academic performance in the junior secondary school. These school facilities do not just make themselves available in the school system. Someone provide them: either government at the various tiers of governance, individual or group of individuals as donations among others. Hence, government alone cannot provide all the school facilities and cannot even run the schools administration single handedly. This is what brought about of establishment the policy of School-Based Management (SBM) system through the establishment of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in the public schools throughout the country.

School-Based Management System Policy and School-Based Management Committee (SBMC)

The emergent of school-based management committees in Nigerian public schools especially at the junior secondary schools seems, not to be new in the country. The reason being that rights from inception of Western education in Nigerian territory, communities and the missionaries have always been at the forefront in managing and providing the basic needs of the schools. The missionaries and various communities established schools and also ensured the adequate funding and maintenance of the resources provided for the school use. It was later that the Nigerian government developed interest of being responsible for the management and administration of schools in the country. For the Nigerian government to fully have control of schools in the country, a policy of taking over of schools from former owners (that is Missionaries and communities) was initiated.

As a result, schools that were owned by the various missionaries and communities were taken over by the Nigerian government in order to meet up the policy of free Universal Primary Education (UPE) goals in the 80s. In the recent time, there was a paradigm shift in the global education system that ushered in the era of Education for All (EFA). Against this background, the issue of SBM/SBMC regenerated in the management and administration of public schools in the country. SBM system is a policy crafted that empowers stakeholders to partake in the decision-making, management and administration of the public schools instead of leaving the management and administration of schools in the hands of the government and the school administrators alone. This policy stated out the roles, duties and responsibilities of the stakeholders and the school administrators, process of their selections and/or elections into the various offices to be occupied by the SBMC officers. Strategies for sourcing funds and other related resources that the schools may be in need of are also stated in the policy among others. Thus, SBMC is the ad-hoc committee put in place to observe and execute the terms and conditions stated in the SBM policy document. School-based management, school based governance, school self-management and school site management: different terms with somewhat different meanings, but all referring to a similar and increasingly popular trend, which consists of allowing schools more autonomy in decisions about their management; that is, in the use of their human, material and financial resources (De-Grauwe, 2006).

According to Ayeni and Ibukun (2013), School-Based Management (SBM) is the process of devolution of power and authority to significant stakeholders to perform statutory responsibilities in the administration, monitoring, evaluation and review of education policy issues for sustainable goal-oriented governance and effective teaching and learning activities to achieve set standards and quality students' learning outcomes in schools. The decentralization of decision-making process in educational policy issues entrenches democratic principles, community participation, equity, as well as

integration of diverse local interests and needs in school management.

Jiradate (2010) stated that School-Based Management (SBM) has the potential to hold school-level decision makers accountable for their actions. However, it may be necessary to build the capacity of community members, teachers, and principals to create a culture of accountability. To build up capacity of the community members, teachers and principals on accountability, requires the organization of training workshop on the School-Based Management (SBM), since these sets of people constitute the schools' School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs).

Brain (2005) saw School-Based Management (SBM) as the systematic decentralization to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standard and accountability. He further stated that, it seems the governments of every nation want to see the transformation of schools. Transformation will only be achieved when significant, systematic, and sustained change has occurred, resulting in improved outcomes for all students in all settings, thus making a contribution to the social and economic well-being of a nation. School-Based Management (SBM) approach is expected to lead to school improvement through; (i) effective and efficient use of school resources as local needs would be prioritized, (ii) involvement of parents and community members (including women and children) in monitoring and evaluating school activities, (iii) empowerment of principals/head-teachers and teachers, (iv) building up local capacity and (v) focusing on inclusiveness and improved educational quality (Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2015) in the National School-Based Management Policy).

It may be of interest to note that SBMC and the Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) are likened to be the same thing by the populace;

even those that are educationists find it difficult to differentiate one from the other. In the real sense they are not the same. SBMC is a statutory organization put in place to see to the day to day administration and management of government schools by the government policy and regulations while PTA is an association and it is voluntary, it charges levy. SBMC does not charge any levy and more so, it is a conglomerate of stakeholders of a school and community where the school is located. PTA representatives are members of the SBMC.

According to Ekwesili cited in Akinsolu (2010), institutionalizing the Private Public Partnership (PPP) and SBMC to manage secondary education and to promote school effectiveness is critical since students' success depends on the amount of learning that takes place in the classroom and other related facilities and also on how effective and efficient the teacher performs in schools'. NIEPA (2007) stated that SBMC is a statutory management structure created through policy on SBM at the 52nd plenary session of the National Council on Education (NEC) in 2005, to empower the committee members to partake in the decision making on the day-to-day affairs as well as overseeing the management of the schools in their respective communities. It also entails the decentralization of aspects of decision-making to the school level and it involves the management of human, financial and other resources, depending on governmental preference.

Carr-Hall, Rolleston, Pherali, and Schendel (2014) reported that School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) is a key component of education reform across the World, and it is a particular focus of education activities sponsored by many of the core development agencies, including the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Department for International Development Project (DFID).

Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2015) in the National School-Based Management System Policy, Section 4, and Sub-section 4.2 emphasized that School-Based Management Committees should have a strong role to play in resource mobilization for schools' improvement and that resource mobilization capacity will vary from community to community and communities are not expected to provide all necessary resources for a school. SBMC can render assistance in the area of mobilization of funds using a variety of strategies including but not limited to:

- i. organizing fund-raising activities;
- ii. launching appeals for funds;
- iii. partnering with philanthropic/charitable organizations and religious bodies; and
- iv. engaging in advocacy visit etc Pp. 16.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To have an improved, strengthened and better academic performance at the junior secondary schools in the Nigerian education system, the place of school facilities mobilization cannot be over-emphasized. Government as an entity happens to be the major financier of education and provider of school facilities in Nigeria but schools felt government doing it alone seemed to be burdensome. Therefore, SBM/SBMC had to be established and saddled with the responsibility of ensuring school facilities were mobilized by the stakeholders where the schools were located. Against this background, this article examined the variables that constituted the scope of the paper and came up with the following recommendations. These include:

1. The SBMC members should be sensitized on how to identify the actual needs of school facilities and not just providing the facilities for school use without having an idea of what are needed by the schools.
2. There should be strong synergy between PTA executive and SBMC members. This will let each of them to know their dos and don'ts and also let each of them to know their limit. This will avert undue rivalry among the two bodies.

3. The SBMC members should be trained and re-trained from time to time on resource and school facilities mobilizations. This training and re-training will make them to be more proactive in their duties and responsibilities of resource and school facilities mobilizations.
4. The SBMC members should have in-depth knowledge of planning strategies, techniques and methods because this will assist them when planning the annual school development plans.
5. The SBMC members should be exposed to strategies, techniques and methods required in mobilization of school facilities. This will be of help to them while approaching other stakeholders in education to assist in supporting the school for the provision of needed school facilities.

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