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Evaluating The Level of Community Participation among Primary Schools in Kaura Namoda Educational Zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to assess the views of head teachers, teachers and community leaders on community level of community participation in primary schools in Kaura Namoda educational zone, Zamfara state. In all, the target population of the study was 4,486 which comprises of 360 head teachers, 3,676 teachers and 1,800 community leaders in Kaura Namoda educational zone. A sample of 72 head teachers, 368 teachers and 180 community stakeholders were sampled from Kaura Namoda educational zone of Zamfara State, totaling 620 respondents used in the study. The sample size for Head teachers represented 20% while that of teachers and community stakeholders represented 10% of the entire population and was drawn using simple random sampling technique. Instrument named “Community Participation Questionnaire (CPQ)” was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts, in measurement and evaluation and educational management. The instrument was used to obtain responses from head teachers, teachers and community stakeholders in the sampled schools in Kaura Namoda educational zone. A reliability index of 0.89 for CPQ was obtained after pilot study and was assumed to reflect the internal reliability of the instrument. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions using mean and standard deviation. The study revealed that, the level of community participation in primary schools in Zamfara State is high with Grand Mean 3.20. The paper therefore recommends that, state government should build on existing high level of community participation by providing training and support to community members and schools. Also, regular monitoring and evaluation of community participation initiatives should be conducted to ensure their effectiveness and identify areas of improvement.

Keywords: Community Participation, Communication, Decision Making, Resource Mobilization, Advocacy

Introduction

Education is fundamental for individual and societal progress, fostering abilities, attitudes, and behaviors beneficial to the community and nation. It is widely recognized as the most effective instrument for social and economic transformation and national development (wunti 2006, cited in Musa 2023). It is a multifaceted endeavor, extending beyond simple knowledge transmission to encompass the development of critical thinking, skills, and values essential for holistic individual and societal growth (Chukwurah 2013). Primary education serves as the foundational level of education in Nigeria, widely regarded as the most effective instrument for social, economic transformation, and national development. Despite its acknowledged importance, the Nigerian education sector faces significant and persistent challenges, often described as "deplorable". A major impediment is chronic inadequate funding; for instance, the 7.04% of the national budget allocated to education in 2018 was grossly insufficient when compared to UNESCO's recommended 15-25%. Community participation in education is widely recognised as crucial factor in enhancing educational outcome and promoting sustainable development (Epstein, 2011). Bakwai (2017) community involvement in education isn't a new concept of a sudden solution to educational challenges. Historically, community have often been central to their children schooling. He noted that until mid-20th century, community held primary responsibility for educating children. While some communities independently run schools today, the broader practice of community participation in education hasn't been fully acknowledged or widely implemented. Community participation helps to fulfil the right to access an education in schools in which attainment and achievement are similar to or higher than others in the context. It also increases the accountability of schools by reducing absenteeism increasing teacher effort and generally seem to contribute to improve student outcomes (Aref and Redzuan, 2009). However, despite these benefits northern Nigeria struggle with low

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community participation likely due to the scarcity of community schools, and SBM policy lack clear guidelines on how to implement such engagement there (United Nation, 2005).

Despite the widely acknowledged importance of community participation in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education, primary schools in Zamfara State grapple with a significant deficit in active and meaningful community involvement. This limited engagement is not merely an oversight but is profoundly exacerbated by a complex interplay of pervasive insecurity, entrenched socio-cultural norms, and severe economic constraints specific to the region (UNICEF, 2021; World Bank, 2022). Consequently, the potential benefits of local knowledge resources, and oversight for school improvement remain largely untapped, hindering the provision of quality education by weakening school accountability and oversight, impeding effective resource mobilization (UNICEF, 2017; UBEC, 2021), and ultimately contributing to poor student enrollment, low retention rates, and unsatisfactory educational outcomes. This multifaceted challenge, further complicated by a breakdown in communication and trust between schools and communities, necessitates a comprehensive assessment to develop effective, context-specific interventions.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of Community Participation in Primary Schools in Zamfara State and specifically the study is set to achieve the following objectives.

1. To determine the level of community participation in communication among primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state.
2. To determine the level of community participation in resource mobilization among primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state.
3. To determine the level of community participation in decision making among primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state.
4. To determine the level of community participation in advocacy among primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the level of community participation in communication among primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state?
2. What is the level of community participation in resource mobilization among primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state?
3. What is the level of community participation in decision making among primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state?
4. What is the level of community participation in advocacy among primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state?

Theoretical Framework

This study was pivoted on System theory. This theory was first proposed under the name of “General System Theory” by biologist Bertalanffy (1968). This theory provides a robust framework for understanding the complex and dynamic interactions between primary schools and their surrounding communities. System Theory posits that an organization or entity, such as a school, is not an isolated unit but rather a complex system comprising interconnected parts that work together to achieve common goals. It emphasizes the interdependencies among these components and their continuous interaction with the external environment. A core tenet of this theory is that changes in one part of the system can affect other parts, and the system itself is constantly influenced by its external context. This theory views the school and its community not as isolated entities, but as an integrated system where interconnected parts work together to achieve common goals, with changes in one component affecting others and the entire system influenced by its environment. Applying this, the primary school functions as a sub-system interacting with the community as a vital external environment that provides crucial inputs: such as financial contributions for construction and instructional materials, material and infrastructural support through labor and local resources, human resources like volunteer services and specialized teachers, local knowledge for curriculum relevance, and the students themselves, whose enrollment, retention, and attendance are



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influenced by community engagement. The processes within this system involve the dynamic interactions between the school and community, encompassing communication channels, decision-making mechanisms (like SBMCs), and collaborative activities. These interactions lead to various outputs and outcomes, including improved infrastructure, enhanced student performance, increased accountability, strengthened relationships, and local capacity building.

Literature Review

The concept of community participation refers to the active involvement of community members in the decision-making processes and activities of schools, which can include contributions such as volunteering, resource mobilization, and monitoring (Sanders, 2006). Community participation in education is widely recognized as a crucial factor in enhancing educational outcomes and promoting sustainable development (Epstein, 2011). Community participation in education occurs when a community takes charge of managing its own educational issues. Theron (2005) highlights varying perspectives on citizen or public participation, generally defining it as providing people with more opportunities to effectively engage in development activities. This involves empowering them to utilize their creativity, manage resources, make decisions, and control activities that impact their lives. Similarly, the United Nations (2005) views it as creating opportunities for all community members to actively contribute to and influence their school's development, and to share fairly in its benefits. However, Effective community participation goes beyond mere involvement in a school project. Adefila and Yusuf (2013) emphasize that it's crucial for establishing economic and political relationships within the wider society. It encompasses rural communities organizing their schools, identifying their own educational needs, and sharing in the design, implementation, and evaluation of their school programs.

Community involvement in education isn't a new concept or a sudden solution to educational challenges. Historically, communities have often been central to their children's schooling. For example, Tshabalala in Kwashabawa, (2017) notes that until the mid-20th century, communities held primary responsibility for educating children. While some communities still independently run schools today, the broader practice of community participation in education hasn't been fully acknowledged or widely implemented. Community participation helps to fulfill the right to access an education in schools in which attainment and achievement are similar to or higher than others in the context. It also increases the accountability of schools by reducing teacher absenteeism, increasing teacher effort and these generally seem to contribute to improved student outcomes (Aref & Redzuan, 2009). As such, participation contributes to communities fulfilling their responsibilities for the education of children and the accountability of schools. Kwashabawa (2017) conducted a study in north-west zone, Nigeria to assess the level of community participation in decision making in north-west zone basic schools. Data collected using questionnaire and analyzed using mean score and percentages. From the study, he found that the level of community participation in decision making in North-west zone basic schools, Nigeria was high. The study further recommended that the SBMC policy should be frequently evaluated to identify areas of improvement and how community should participate in decision making in basic schools.

Research Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to assess the views of head teachers, teachers and community leaders on community participation in primary schools in Zamfara state. In all, the target population of the study is four thousands four hundred and eighty-six (4,486) which comprises of three hundred and sixty head teachers (360) three thousand six hundred and seventy-six teachers (3,676) and five thousand four hundred community leaders (1,800) in Kaura Namoda educational zone. A sample of seventy-two head teachers (72) three hundred and sixty-eight teachers (368) and one hundred and eighty community stakeholders (180) were sampled from Kaura Namoda educational zone of Zamfara State, making six hundred and twenty (620) respondents used in the study. The sample size for Head teachers represented 20% while that of teachers and community stakeholders represented 10% of the entire population and was drawn using random sampling technique. This is in line with the suggestion of Kothari (2004) that 10% and 20% can be used in a descriptive survey research. Instrument named "Community Participation Questionnaire (CPQ)" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts, in measurement and evaluation and the other from educational management. The instrument was used to obtain responses from head teachers, teachers and community stakeholders in the sampled schools in Kaura Namoda educational zone. Cronbach alpha reliability index of 0.89 for CPQ was obtained after pilot study and was assumed to reflect the internal reliability of the instrument. Descriptive statistics were used to answer research questions using mean and standard deviation, while the null hypothesis was tested using correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

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Presentation of Result

Research Question One: What is the level of community participation in communication primary schools in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state?

The research question was analyzed using mean and standard deviation as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviation on the Level of Community Participation in Communication in primary schools in Zamfara State

S/No	Item	Response					Means	SD	Decision
		1	2	3	4	5			
1.	School newsletter writing.	149	69	132	124	105	2.29	1.446	Moderate
2.	Designing school websites.	180	97	92	130	81	2.72	1.454	Moderate
3.	Managing social media handle.	164	99	133	116	68	2.70	1.372	Moderate
4.	Preparing reports card of students.	152	85	116	91	136	2.96	1.514	Moderate
5.	Short message services of the school.	138	90	165	90	97	2.86	1.384	Moderate
6.	Sending emails to school authority.	186	76	143	104	71	2.65	1.402	Moderate
7.	Taking minute of meeting during events.	85	82	154	136	123	3.23	1.328	High
8.	Oral interviews during recruitment exercises.	124	100	119	136	101	2.98	1.401	Moderate
9.	Telephone communication.	68	94	148	129	141	3.31	1.316	High
	Grand Average	138	88	134	117	103	2.86	1.40	Moderate

Source: The researcher's field survey, 2025

The result in Table 1 indicates the level of community participation in communication in primary schools in Zamfara State. The findings revealed that the respondents were of the view that; community participation in communication in primary schools in Zamfara State is moderate with grand mean and standard deviation 2.86 and 1.40 respectively. This result is in line with the findings of Amponsah et al (2022) who conducted a study in Ghana on correspondence between parental participation and educational achievement of students, the finding revealed that there was a high involvement of the community in promoting quality education and fantastic achievement was realized. This also conform with the suggestion of Vera et al (2012) that school should implement communicating activities by creating a positive forum of two way communication between teachers and parents.

Research question two: What is the level of community participation in resource mobilization in primary schools in Zamfara state?

The research question was analyzed using mean and standard deviation as presented in table 2

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviation on the Level of Community Participation in Resource Mobilization in primary schools in Zamfara state

S/No	Item	Response					Means	SD	Decision
		1	2	3	4	5			
1.	Fundraising of their schools.	48	77	233	124	98	3.25	1.136	High
2.	Provision of furniture to the schools.	50	94	210	139	87	3.21	1.142	High
3.	Construction of access road in the schools	116	155	123	119	87	2.77	1.288	High
4.	Volunteer teaching activities.	47	148	162	111	112	3.16	1.233	High
5.	In-kind contribution to the schools.	38	90	200	170	81	3.28	1.095	High

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6.	Providing scholarship for students in the schools.	111	140	164	88	72	2.78	1.268	High
7.	Construction/renovation in the school.	47	115	152	181	85	3.24	1.168	High
8.	Purchasing of books to the school.	47	105	215	135	78	3.16	1.119	High
9.	Provision of improvised materials for teaching and learning activities.	36	82	174	202	88	3.38	1.091	Moderate
Grand Average		60	112	181	141	88	3.14	1.17	High

The result in Table 2 indicates the level of community participation in communication in primary schools in Zamfara State. The findings revealed that, the respondents were of the view that; community participation in decision making in primary schools in Zamfara State is high with grand mean and standard deviation 3.14 and 1.17 respectively. This is in line with the finding of Iqbal, Lukman, Ahmad and Zainudin (2013) whose finding indicated a positive correlation between community participation abs school community relation in their three(3) variables: parenting, communicating and volunteering. These findings are consistent with Epstains theory and previous researchers conducted by Nguon (2012) and to (2016), indicating that the community members (parents, or no- parents) of the students, local authorities and other stakeholders have received updated information from meeting, letters, and telephone communication. In terms of communication, I was cleared that parent, community members and schools shared school information's by different means of communication including meetings writing and oral communication tools.

Research Question three: What is the Level of Community Participation in Decision making in primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state?

The research question was analyzed using mean and standard deviation as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviation on the Level of Community Participation in Decision making in primary schools in Zamfara state

S/N	Item	Response					Means	SD	Decision
		1	2	3	4	5			
1.	Curriculum design for schools.	39	93	173	150	125	3.39	1.192	High
2.	Project implementation in schools.	24	88	160	227	81	3.44	1.039	High
3.	Project monitoring/evaluation exercise.	32	114	155	197	82	3.32	1.107	Moderate
4.	School budgeting of the schools.	60	129	189	133	69	3.04	1.159	High
5.	Staff posting/redeployment exercise.	61	139	159	121	101	3.11	1.248	High
6.	Discipline and other misconduct in the schools.	39	81	234	123	103	3.29	1.117	Moderate
7.	Student enrolment to the schools.	30	77	192	141	140	3.49	1.145	High
8.	Dress code and code of conduct of the schools.	48	73	224	146	88	3.27	1.119	High
9.	Examination malpractice	105	145	156	84	89	3.84	1.310	High
Grand Average		48	104	184	147	98	3.35	1.16	High

Source: The researcher's field survey, 2025

The result in Table 3 indicates the level of community participation in decision making in primary schools in Zamfara State. The findings revealed that, the respondents were of the view that; community participation in decision making in primary schools in Zamfara State is high with grand mean and standard deviation 3.14 and 1.17 respectively. This goes in contrary with the study of Kambuga whose finding revealed that participation of community members was generally low. But in favor of Kwashabawa, (2020) who found that community participation in decision making in Northwest, zone basic schools was high, the author also found that community members were involved in designing the school programme, planning the school budget, appointing and posting of school heads, transferring and posting of teachers, supervision of

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school facilities and taking active part in the school disciplinary measures. These results conforms to the study of Saravanamuthu (2018) who found that stakeholders' collaborative strategies promote cooperating and increasing the chance of reducing risk information among stakeholders. The study suggests that collaborative decision making engender trust and confidence among stakeholders.

Research question four: what is the Level of Community Participation in Advocacy in primary school in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state?

The research question was analyzed using mean and standard deviation as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviation on the Level of Community Participation in Advocacy in primary schools in Zamfara state.

S/N	Item	Response					Means	SD	Decision
		1	2	3	4	5			
1.	Awareness campaign exercise of the schools.	19	89	203	176	93	3.41	1.033	High
2.	Building partnership with the schools.	35	88	222	157	68	3.22	1.051	High
3.	Engaging policy makers on programme of the schools.	48	87	188	163	94	3.28	1.153	High
4.	Promoting equity among students.	19	83	181	199	98	3.47	1.035	High
5.	Influencing education policy in schools.	24	75	171	209	101	3.50	1.052	High
6.	Lobbying for the school.	28	129	214	137	72	3.17	1.060	High
7.	Empowering underrepresented group in school.	50	184	157	123	66	2.95	1.153	Moderate
8.	Organized seminar for teacher and community members.	54	97	198	159	72	3.17	1.133	High
9.	Inviting stakeholders to school programmes.	38	109	213	144	76	3.19	1.090	High
Grand Average		35	105	194	163	82	3.26	1.08	High

Source: The researcher's field survey, 2025

The result in Table 4 indicates the level of community participation in advocacy in primary schools in Zamfara State. The findings revealed that, the respondents were of the view that; community participation in decision making in primary schools in Zamfara State is high with grand mean and standard deviation 3.14 and 1.17 respectively. This result is in contrast with the findings of Kwashabawa (2020), whose study found there was no significant relationship between advocacy strategy and community participation in basic schools. The findings recommend that administrators should improve on their advocacy strategy utilizing their SBMC's.

Table 5: Summary of Mean Ratings on the Level of Community Participation in primary schools in Zamfara state

S/No	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	Community Participation in Communication	2.86	1.40	Moderate
2.	Community Participation in Resource Mobilization	3.14	1.17	High
3.	Community Participation in Decision Making	3.35	1.16	High
4.	Community Participation in Advocacy	3.26	1.08	High
Grand Mean		3.15	1.20	High

Source: The researcher's field survey, 2025

The summary of mean rating on the level of community participation in primary schools in Zamfara State was adjudged high. This is because the level of community participation in communication was 2.86. Table 2 shows the level of community participation in resource mobilization at 3.14, while Table 3 indicates that that the level of community participation in decision making is 3.35, and Table 4 shows the level of community participation in advocacy to be 3.26.

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Overall the level community participation in decision making and advocacy was higher. In summary the level of community participation in primary schools in Zamfara State is high with a grand mean of 3.15 and grand standard deviation of 1.20.

Summary of the Findings

The following were the findings of the study:

1. The result revealed that community participation in communication among primary schools in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state was moderate.
2. The result shows that community participation in resource mobilization among primary schools in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state was high.
3. The result indicated that community participation in decision making among primary schools in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state was high.
4. The result disclosed that community participation in advocacy among primary schools in Kaura Namoda Educational zone, Zamfara state was high.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made

1. State government should build on existing high level of community participation by providing training and support to community members and schools.
2. School administrators should initiate regular monitoring and evaluation of community participation initiatives should be conducted to ensure their effectiveness and identify areas of improvement.

Conclusion

The study thus concluded that, community participation in primary schools in Zamfara state is high, indicating a strong sense of ownership and commitment among community members. This finding suggests that leveraging community participation can be a viable strategy for improving educational outcomes in the state.

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