
HOW COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARENT/TEACHER
ASSOCIATIONS SUPPORT JUNIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN YENAGOA LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA, BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract

This study was carried out to ascertain how parent/teacher relationships contribute to the quality basic junior secondary education in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. It also examined the effect of such relationships on the standard of basic junior education in the area. The population was all teachers, parents and principals of basic junior secondary school in the local government. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of 135 which comprised nine principals, 72 teachers, 18 non teaching staff and 36 parents. Findings showed that the community through parents and teachers association meetings constitute a forum for parents to access the academic performance of student and ensures that learning difficulties by students are resolved and thereby improve their academic performance. It was recommended that students daily communication book should be introduced in schools to enable parents/teachers communicate the attitude and performance of studenta in schools. Parents should also be involved in discipline and

decision making so as to further ensure their involvement in school activities.

Key words: Parent/teachers Relationship, School Communities, Administration, Basic Education.

Introduction

A school community is both a place and a set of partnership between the school and other community recourses. It integrated focus on academics, wealth and social services, youth and community development and community engagement which leads to improve student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Bakwai, (2013) was of the view that school community relationship is a two-way symbiotic arrangement through which the school and community cooperate with each other for realization of goals of the community and vice versa. Therefore, a school is a mini society that needs a good relation with the community for it to function effectively. On the other hand, the community also needs school for its survival and progress. Madumere, (2007) was of the view that school as a social system means that the school is part and parcel of the society. He added that the sociologists see the school as belonging to the community that builds it. Cordial relationship between the school and community is a pre-requisite for achieving a meaningful educational objective in our community and nation at large (Gital, 2009).

The aim of the community towards maintaining and supporting its relationship with school and which ultimately lead to the development of education cannot be overemphasized. It is a known fact that there can never be a school where there is no community. The communities normally provide lands in which the schools are built as well as providing children enrolment. Oyewale, (2012) is of the opinion that school community relationship has significant impact on the provision and maintenance of school facilities, school discipline, teachers' job performance, academic achievement of students and overall success of the schools. This clearly shows that school community relationship exists and helps greatly in the development of education. Ogundele, Oparinde and

Oyewale, (2012) were categorical of the view that community members have significant impact on the provision and maintenance of school facilities through PTA and other community based organizations.

Relationship is the way in which two or more concepts, objects or people are connected. The concept of relationship is to create a mutual form of interaction and understanding between persons that accept each other. This concept is basically about human behaviour, self awareness e.t.c. It can also be known as interaction. This factor to the basic school behaviour represent in its context a social behaviour which is carried out through language, symbols and gesture which bring about exchange of meanings which have reciprocal effects upon each other behaviour, expectation and thoughts. Bittner (2011) supported that our background, belief and virtually everything about us make up our field of experience. Consequently an interaction or relationship that does not share common knowledge, value, beliefs will not have an intelligent and mutually result between them because each operate in a different knowledge base and awareness

Understanding parent and teacher relationship is an essential part of school administration for the growth and upbringing of a child or a student. It is important for parents and teachers to know and understand the need of a child academically, socially and morally, as these may build or break the child. The parent and teacher relationship refers to the interaction that occurs between both parties, with a desire of achieving specific objectives and goals to improve the academic work and school activity of a child as stated in the curriculum. The parent and teacher relationship is not far apart from the roles and responsibilities each shares as members of the community, with respect to up-bringing, parenting of a child. Oladele (2009) has shown that “a child who is brought up in an environment in which there is unity will do well in intelligence test item that require high degree”. This supports the view that availability of the community is an important precondition for a child’s success at school.

Generally, it was observed in some government schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area that parents and teachers

relationships create a belief of acceptance and trust on the part of the child. The child tends to be free and comfortable with the teacher or parent in telling them about what is troubling his/her mind, be it academics or social life. This will in turn provide solution for improving the child's social and academic performance. But on the other hand, there are also cases where students from some schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area are treated like animals. Nonchalant attitude from both parents and teachers towards the development of the child, has led to child exposition to some ill characters and behaviours. From conversations, it was observed that some of the parents engage in petty trades and have little or no time to child's academic welfare.

Parent/ Teacher relationship aids in the exchange of ideas and planned programme of activities to contribute to the educational achievement of the child. However, parents face the problem of choosing between making adequate living and caring for their children education which is, becoming common in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. This relationship can be improved through regular interaction and Parents Teachers' Association (PTA), regular session meetings. Issues limiting academic and social performance of the child will be discussed and decision taken to strengthen the child participation for improvement will be introduced.

In improving child ability, the relationship between the parent and teacher will help in the provision of a proper educational environment for learning, i.e., basic infrastructure such as better sitting chairs, desks and so on. The provision of basic infrastructure will enable the child to learn in a comfortable and stable environment. Atkin et al cited in Dean (2008) suggested that when parent understand what the teachers are trying to do with their interactions with them, parents would try to identify with its goals and support their efforts, understanding their roles as educators and take an interest in the support for their children's school work.

However, community relation can also negatively affect the educational performance of a child when its specific objectives, goals or aims are not properly defined or introduced to the child. The introduction should always be age appropriate and clearly described enough, otherwise the confusion of concept taught becomes the

result. When the academic activities are designed by the relationship between the parent and teacher lacks space or time, it becomes an overload, which at the end will result to a failure of the intended objective. When the interest of the parent and teacher relationship exceed their primary objectives of improving the child academic and social performance, it results to neglect of proper attention, that may have guided the child toward achieving a proper education, i.e. the quest for money or divided attention with respect to gender interest.

Generally, the nature of community relationship with school currently has improved in a great light compared with the olden days, as community now respect the effort made by teachers towards their child educational development and not just view them as bully to their children or cheap member of the society. The introduction of Parent and Teacher Association has improved school administration drastically, as it has helped to build a healthy relationship between the school, parent, teacher and the student. Understanding what parents need from the school towards child development, the needs of the school from the parents, which will help nurture and build the student positively with the teacher as the driving tool for an efficacious outcome is the main aim and purpose of parent/teacher relationship.

Quality of Parent/Teacher Association and School Community

The encyclopaedia American (1993) describes the parent/teacher association as an organization comprising of parents and teachers of a particular school whose major aim is geared towards effective school administration and dedicated to the academic achievement of its student. Okorie (2010) opined that (PTA) is the closest group in the community that relates with the school. It is essential that the school makes this form of relationship as closed as possible as it promotes a means a communication between the school and parent, in helping the school to seek and obtain financial aid/other support. Parents are awakening to their duties and responsibilities in respect of the educational need of their children. And as such, PTA helps in the effective administration process of the school towards the development of the child. This could be discussed during a PTA

meeting as regards discipline, how to build student academic performance, morals etc. Ituen (2008) suggested that through (PTA) meetings, parent with vital skill and knowledge could be identified and written to by the school to share their expertise with the students through lectures carried out in the school from time to time which is a basic need in Basic Secondary Schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Peterson (2012) has pointed out certain factors that are necessary for maintenance of a good relationship between the school and the society, and they can be related through:

- i. How the host community welcomes and appreciates the teacher, as well as how they are accommodated.
- ii. The cordial relationship exhibited in the parent teacher association, and how their common interests are related.

To maintain and ensure a good relationship parent and teacher must first of all be ready to tolerate and accept each other as productive members of the society as it relates to child up building. They are first of all to view themselves as role models that will help in creating an acceptable character for the children as leaders of tomorrow.

The benefits of positive relationships between parents and teachers are many. Parents who have had positive relationships with their children's school and teachers are more likely to initiate contact with the school. Conversely, parents who have had negative interactions with the school and teacher are likely to have ill feelings towards the school and are less likely to contact the school or be involved in school activities (Gutman & McLoyd, 2004). Another significant benefit of a positive parent-teacher relationship they mentioned is increased student achievement. "A high-quality parent-teacher relationship may strengthen the positive impact of a parent's home involvement on achievement". Teachers who feel they share beliefs with parents about parental involvement take the initiative to make contact with all parents, including those other teachers find difficult to reach.

The success of parent/school involvement program is tied to the importance placed on such programmes by the schools teachers

(Epstein & Dauber, 2010). Community maintains its relationship with school by providing resource mobilization. This is mostly done through the School Based Management Committees and Parent Teachers Associations. When there is any urgent need by the school, the community mobilizes resources from its members. It is through this kind of relationship that community members donate a lot of materials to their immediate school, like furniture, teaching materials including note and textbooks, chalk etc. Sa'ad and Nasiru, (2010) were of the view that community donates many resources to their immediate schools, particularly basic schools. It is this view that community members have significant impact on the provision and maintenance of school facilities through PTA and other community based organizations that has prompted this study to investigate the veracity of this claim in a local government in Bayelsa state.

In order to improve the academic and social performance of a child as a member of the society, the interaction or relationship between the parent and teacher should be cordial, the basic objective and goal should be well defined. Social activities i.e manner of self presentation, physical activities e.t.c. can be best guided when their parent and teacher have a regular understanding through interaction. It is understood that the parent and teacher association (PTA) is designed to help in creating an environment where problems can be identified and possible solution introduced to assist or improve the academic/social performance of the child. But is this objective being realized in Bayelsa State? Therefore, this study intends to examine the types of relationships between parents and teachers in secondary school and the effect of the relationship on the quality of basic junior secondary education.

Purpose of Study

The study is aimed at investigating community school relationship through PTA and its consequences on Basic Education (Junior Secondary School) in Yenagoa Local Area of Bayelsa State.

The specific objectives are to:

- i) find out the different types of relationship between teachers and parents.

- ii) find out how parents are involved in effective school administration
- iii) ascertain the effect of this relationship on the basic educational programme in the area.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the different types of relationship which exist between teachers and parents in Basic Junior Secondary Schools?
- 2) In what ways do parents get involved in school activities?
- 3) How do Parent/Teacher relationships affect Basic Education?

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This method was used because the study is based on parent/teacher relationship and the administration of Basic Junior Secondary Education. The sample consists of 135 respondents consisting of nine principals, 72 teachers, 18 non teaching staff and 36 parents. The sample size was determined by adapting the recommendations of Nwana in Nwagu (2013) that sample sizes for specific population could be at least 40% for a population of few hundreds, 20% for many hundreds, 10% for few thousands and at most 5% for several thousands. The research instrument used in gathering data for the study was a questionnaire constructed by the researcher titled How Parent/Teacher Association Support Basic Junior Secondary Education Questionnaire (HPTASBJSE). The items were formulated, from literature for example, reports on student attitude and performance, student daily communication book etc and were vetted by senior colleagues for validity. Inter-rater high reliability was obtained (0.821). The data collected were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages, and rank.

Results

Research question one

What are the different types of relationship which exist between teachers and parents in Basic Junior Secondary Schools?

Table 1: Responses on types of relationship that exist between parents and teachers

S/N	ITEMS	SA/A	%	D/SD	%	RANK
1	Student Daily Communication Book	30	22%	105	78%	4 th
2	Reports on Students Attitude and Performance	79	59%	56	41%	3 rd
3	Telephone Communication	15	11%	120	89%	5 th
4	Student take home Assignments	135	100%	0	-	1 st
5	Through Parents/Teachers Association Meetings	132	98%	3	2%	2 nd

From table 1, it was observed that the first in ranking on the table showing the relationship that exist between parents and teachers most is in the area of student take home assignment in which all the respondents agreed. This is closely followed by PTA meetings (98%). Reports on students' attitude and performance came third, but with a wide distance to the one in second position. Student daily communication book scarcely exists as a form of relationship. Telephone communication on the other hand, which came fifth in ranking with result on more of the negative than the positive shows that parents and teachers lacks effective relationship through telephone communication.

Research question two

In what ways do parents get involved in school activities?

Table 2: Responses on parent involvement in school activities

S/N	ITEMS	SA/A	%	D/SD	%	RANK
1	Parents involvement in discipline	75	56%	60	44%	2 nd
2	Parents report on Student Performance	49	36%	86	64%	4 th
3	Contribution on school development in areas of infrastructures and writing materials	55	41%	80	59%	3 rd
4	Parents involvement in decision making	35	26%	100	74%	5 th
5	Through Parents/Teachers Association Meetings	98	73%	37	27%	1 st

From table 2, it was observed that the first item representing the second ranking on the table shows that parents' involvement in school activities through their involvement in discipline and the positive responses are more, compared with the negative responses. Also, the second item representing the fourth ranking in respect to parents report on student performance shows that parents are slightly involved in school activities with more responses on the negative than the positive. Contribution to school development, in areas of infrastructure and writing materials, which is the third item on the table, came third in ranking. It shows more of the negative than the positive and that parents are not really involved in school activities. The fourth and fifth item on the table representing the fifth and first ranking with more responses on the negative than the positive for the fourth item, and more responses on the positive than the negative for the fifth item respectively shows parents involvement in decision making and PTA meetings.

Research question three: How does Parent/Teacher relationship affect Basic Education?

Table 3: Responses on parent/ teacher relationship and its effect on basic education.

S/N	ITEMS	SA/A	%	D/SD	%	RANK
1	PTA meeting gives an opportunity for parent to make input on ways to improve academic performance of student	135	100%	0	0%	1 st
2	Parent meeting provide a forum for parents to access the academic performance of student.	128	95%	17	13%	4 th
3	Parent offer moral and financial support to the school through PTA	102	76%	33	24%	5 th
4	Close relationship between teachers and parents assure that learning difficulties by students are resolved to improve their academic performance	133	99%	2	1%	3 rd
5	Maintenance of cordial relationship with parents foster discipline among student and promote academic performance.	135	100%	0	0%	1 st

From table 3, it was observed that the first and fifth items representing the first rankings on the table show parents/teachers relationship affects basic education positively because it creates an opportunity for parent to make input on ways to improve academic performance of student and also maintains cordial relationship with parents to foster discipline among student and promote academic performance. The second item representing the fourth ranking in respect to how parents/teachers relationship affect basic education shows that parents meetings provide a forum for parents to access the academic performance of student's as there are more positive responses than the negative in this regard. The third and the fourth items representing the fifth and third ranking with more positive response than negative response on the table show that parent/teacher relationship affect basic education positively as parent offer moral and financial support to the school through PTA and their relationship assures that learning difficulties by students are resolved to improve their academic performance.

Discussion

The results reveal that Parents and Teachers Association interactions take the form of students' take home assignment, PTA meetings and reports on student attitude and performance. This is possibly because these issues have immense benefits to school administration and classroom practices such as student participation in class activities, take home assignment and students attendance. This findings support Anderson and Dyke in Igwe (2010) that Parents and Teachers Association meetings is a forum through which parents are awakened to their responsibilities in respect of the educational needs of their children. It is also a medium that parents use to advice the school staff (teachers) and board of governors on the processing educational needs of the community as perceived by parents.

Findings also reveal that the different ways by which parents are involved in school activities in basic junior secondary schools in Yenagoa Bayelsa State are generally low. They take the following order of importance; association meetings; involvement in discipline; contribution on school development in areas of infrastructures and writing materials; report on student performance; and involvement in decision making. The involvement of parents in school activities cannot be over emphasized, as they have areas of high interest and involvement in school activities such as their interest in children education, upbringing and building a stronger bond between them (parent) and the children. They have little or no interest towards the development of the school in terms of infrastructure as they feel is the sole responsibility of the school and in most cases they fail to attend PTA meetings because they think its benefit is more on the growth and development of the school rather than the students. Matt Koble (2008) stated advantages of PTA in terms of self esteem, motivation and behaviour and on the other hand the disadvantage in terms of social growth of the child.

Finally, the parental intervention affects the academic performance of the student in Basic Junior Secondary School positively as parent and teachers share in upbringing of the child, assist in academic work and performance, help to instil standards and values, as well as moral attitude and behaviour. The negative aspect of parental intervention is, it hinders the student from social

growth, reducing their self esteem also parent tend to misunderstand their children, giving them false information on their studies as they might not be grounded on that field. This corroborates Ituen (2008) that through (PTA) meetings, parent with vital skill and knowledge could be indentified and written to by the school to share their expertise with the students through lectures carried out in the school from time to time.

Conclusion

The study indicates that the academic performance of the learner is the responsibility of both parents and teachers through homework and checking of note after and before school. Parents and Teachers Association meeting close the gap and breach in communication. The learners are usually properly guided by parents and teachers.

Arising from the findings of the study, in most of the public school used for this study, parents and teachers used more of the parents-teacher association meetings as the medium of interaction, than any other form of interaction. Parents and teachers therefore interact with each other. It was observed that the interaction was in most cases not directed towards the student academic performance, rather geared towards school infrastructures, levies, teaching and writing materials etc. Parents and teacher, relationship is but one of the many strategies that community must use to promote optimal students. Its purpose is to bring the teachers and the parents to understand their place in the life of the learner.

Parents have their role to play as it pertain to the provision of basic materials to the child for learning, ensures that the learners assignments are properly done and communicate with the teachers to know the attitude and performance of the child. On the other end, the teachers should be able to communicate the attitude and performance of the child to the parent, involve the parent in discipline and decision making and also discuss on how the performance of the learner can be improved.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is hereby recommendations that the school open day should be made compulsory for parents and teachers in all public schools to improve upon parent-teacher relationship. Schools should adopt parent and teacher day, to enable them interact with each other. Phone directory of both teachers and parents should be encouraged and made available for easy access and problem identification through regular communication via any means i.e. face-to-face, electronically etc. Should be introduced. Student daily communication book should be introduced in schools to enable parents/teachers communicate the attitude and performance of student. Parents should be involved in discipline and decision making so as to ensure their involvement in school activities. Finally, parents should be encouraged to offer moral and financial support to the growth of the schools.

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