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Achieving Quality Assurance through the Support of Parent-Teachers Association in Secondary School Administration in Ogoja Educational Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate Granting Quality Assurance through the involvement of Parent-Teachers Association in Secondary School Administration in Ogoja educational zone of Cross River state. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Eight Hundred and Seventeen (817) Secondary School teachers 1543 parents giving a total of 2360 respondents constituted the population. The study used 944 respondents who were sampled through Simple Radom sampling. The researchers structured questionnaire of 18 items was used to collect data from the 817 teachers. Data collected were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) for research questions. Findings from the study revealed that the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) involvement enhance quality assurance in the following areas, provision of instructional materials and provision of physical facilities. and school-community relationship and student's discipline. The study recommends that Government and other concerned bodies should organize forum whereby parents are sensitized and given orientation on the benefits of getting actively involved in school administration.

Key words: Quality Assurance, Parent-Teachers Association, and Secondary School Administration, Cross River State, Nigeria

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By

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Introduction

Education is key to national development and a worthwhile venture. It is the foundation for the development of not only individuals but a nation. Article 26 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) underscores the importance of Education. Similarly, the right of all Nigerians to education was provided for in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The Millennium Development Goals (2000), goal 2 as domesticated in Nigeria addresses the issue of quality and equitable education. It is important to note that the ability of a nation to grow and develop depends on the quality of her educational system (Ocho, 2005).

In realization of the efforts for national development, the National Policy on Education graduated the nation's education system into primary, secondary and tertiary education in order to achieve national goals. These goals include: 'a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society; a great and dynamic economy and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013:1). In an attempt to pursue this course, the document provides for active private sector participation in the provision of education together with government interventions. Article 26 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed education as a human right; a key to building up individual capacities as well as increasing their skills that are necessary for techno-economic development and a means for hopefully addressing some of the pressing societal issues.

In Nigeria education is viewed as an instrument for transforming individuals, community and the nation and a mechanism for knowledge and skills acquisition required for societal survival and growth (Kazeem and Ige, 2010). Education is thus an important tool for achieving socio-economic as well as political development (Adebayo 2013) and an instrument par excellence for national development (FRN 2013).

The cardinal goal of Nigerian educational system is to equip every citizen with relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values capable of enabling the citizens to derive maximum benefits of being members of the society and live a fulfilling and promising life that will enable them contribute to the development and welfare of their communities. Being a medium for promoting societal security, education enables people to understand their immediate environment and the world in general. This invariably enables them to improve the quality of their lives. Through mutually shared with different characteristics and by belonging to the same group to share common result from schooling that incorporates studies of verities of subjects.

The purpose on the other hand, is to teach a student how to live his life by developing his mind and equipping him to deal with reality. It is worthy to mention here that in Nigeria education is being used as an instrument for empowering the youth by increasing their welfare,

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as well as developing their potentials towards stability and sustainability of the nation (Okendu 2013). These youth are mostly of secondary school age. Similarly, Quality assurance and the main motive of secondary education in Nigeria is to prepare and ensure that students become useful and valuable members in the society by putting efforts to strengthen and improve their skills and well-being so as to stand on their own and become self-employed (FRN, 2007). But this motive set forth in the Nigerian educational system is unlikely to be achieved as most of the secondary school graduates are not fully armed with the requisite communication and numeracy skills that will empower them to be useful members in the society as such they cannot raise their socio-economic status and thus cannot contribute to societal development (Dorothy, 2009). This is why there is the need for relevant stakeholders to come in so as to tackle the challenge.

The United Nation Children Fund (UNICEF, 2000) defines and analyses quality assurance in education from the viewpoints of learners, content, processes, environments and outcomes. According to UNICEF (2000), quality assurance in education could be attained when the:

Learners are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities:

1. Environments are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
2. Content is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;
3. Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching
4. approaches in well-managed classrooms, schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;
5. Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitude are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

The role of education stakeholders in policy decision-making as well as in policy implementation cannot be over stressed. This is due to the fact that governments the world over do not function any longer as entities separate from the larger population making unilateral decisions, rather they involve numerous other actors from the public in order to participate in power sharing and influence (Geurtz and Ted, 2010). Kamba (2010) opined that “involving relevant stakeholders in managing the affairs of education improves educational quality as well as its development. Citizen participation is essential in facilitating and transforming the workings of government and education is not an exception in this trend as education is no longer the responsibility of any government alone. This in essence indicates that the goals of education are best achieved when stakeholders join hands and share responsibilities. This necessitates the engagement of relevant stakeholders especially in school administration the need to develop students’ potentials for quality education (Olatunji, 2012 and Ayeni and Adelabu 2012). Stakeholders in education are a

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group of People who have vested interest in the education sector (Adebanyo, 2013). In other words, they are a group of people who are interested in the welfare, success and progress of a school and its students. Stakeholders are interested in the school in delivering intended results and maintaining the viability of the school's services. They influence programme of activities and services offered by a school. The Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) world over including Nigeria has been identified as an education stakeholder.

Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) is a voluntary organization made up of parents and teachers in a particular school that is specifically established to ensure school development. Thus, trend eventually facilitates good school-community relationship (Ugwualesni, 2010). In this perspective, obeying the principles of good school-community, parents are put in a better position to understand what exist in the school that their wards attend as well as the difficulties the school is experiencing in the process of carrying out the administrative and instructional functions. In Nigeria, PTA is backed up by law in some states it is compulsory for parents and teachers; while in some state it is voluntary.

In Cross River state the establishment of the PTA is mandatory to all schools in the school system. Section 13 of the State Education law 1981 provides that “every public primary and post primary institution in the state shall have an association of parents of all the pupils and all the teachers in the institution. The basis for the introduction of PTA into the education system concerns itself with how to improve school administration since the government alone cannot bear the burden of running schools. This is why the parent body in the name of PTA is required and formed to help in the discharge of some of the administrative functions of the school. Just as Duru (1999.7) put it:

The smooth running of schools depends on keeping the parents informed about the problems confronting the school. such as vandalism, drug abuse, gross indiscipline, prostitution by students, dilapidated building, lack of furniture and laboratory equipment, on providing, a forum for the teachers and in encouraging the parents to participate in decision-making process and get involved.

From this highlight, the importance attached to PTA include; participation in decision-making process, assisting school morally and financially to develop the school. School is a social invention designed to serve the needs of the society and no school has ever operated in a social vacuum apart from the society. The school derives its existence from the society where it is located. Since the school operates in the society, a cordial relationship is required in order to administer the school well and achieve the set objectives of the school. This cordial relationship could be improved upon by applying the good concept of the school-community relations.

Good community relationship encourages communication between the community and yield good results when the intent is honest. The dependence of the school on the community makes it difficult for the school or its professional staff to function or operate effectively without the support of the community. It is therefore important to keep the community informed and win its support for the school programmes (Okumbe, 2001).

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The school teachers are important factors in the school-community relations. They sometimes have greater opportunities to influence the community's attitudes towards the school than the principal. Their relationship with colleagues, parents and other members of the community and especially the students affect public relations. The attitude of parents to the school will depend largely on their understanding. The teachers have a wide range of duties within and outside the school, which, if properly carried out, stimulate community involvement in school activities (Adeogun, 2002).

PTA also aims to improve school enrollment motivating parents to send their children to school at the right age. It is their responsibility to device appropriate strategies to reduce students' dropout ratio and teacher absenteeism in schools. They can achieve all these by creating conducive atmosphere for parents and teachers void of administrative rigidity on their side (Iqbal et al 2011). The researcher sought to find out the extent of Parent-Teachers Association involvement on secondary school administration in Cross River state.

Thus, Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) involvement in school administration offers wide range benefits to collaboratively work with the school for the welfare of the children. This, to a large extent improves school performance. However, the extent to which PTA take part in school administration is a matter of concern. The situation in Cross River state now raises doubt as to the real contribution of PTA to school administration in the state. In Ogoja educational zone for instance, it is common to see students go to school very late. This indicates ineffective school-home partnership. Cases of poor learning environment abound. Teaching and learning take place in dilapidated building. In some schools, there are no libraries and in others laboratories are poorly equipped and essential instructional facilities for teaching and learning are lacking. In some cases, school authorities present poor invitational environmental for PTA involvement in school activities.

In view of the above observations, the problem of the study is put in question form. Thus: what is the extent of PTA involvement in secondary school administration in Ogoja educational zone Cross River state?

Research Questions

1. To what extent does PTAs involvement in the provision of instructional materials to secondary schools Granting's Quality Assurance in Ogoja educational zone Cross River state?
2. To what extent does Parent-Teachers Associations involvement in the provision of physical facilities granting's Quality Assurance in secondary schools in Ogoja educational zone Cross River state?
3. To what extent does Parent-Teachers Associations involvement in students' discipline Granting's Quality Assurance in secondary schools in Ogoja educational zone Cross River state?

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Methodology

The design of the study is a descriptive survey. According to Nworgu (2006) “a descriptive survey design is a type of research design in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of entire group”. The study was carried out in Cross River state which consists of five (5) Local Government Areas:

The population of the study consisted of 2360 respondents 817 teachers in all the eighty (80) public secondary schools in Ogoja educational zone. The breakdown as 331 female teachers and 486 male teachers. And 1543 Parents. A sample 944 respondent were sampled representing 40% of the entire populations. The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire titled “Granting Quality Assurance through the involvement of Parent-Teachers Association questionnaire” (GQAPTAQ). The instrument was made of two parts (1 and 2). Part one (1) of the instrument sought information relating to the respondents’ personal data while part two (2) addressed the research questions of the study. It consists of 25 structured items on the extent of Parent-Teacher Association’s involvement in secondary school administration in Ogoja educational zone of Cross River state. It has five (5) Clusters. The instrument is a four (4) point scale questionnaire. The scale was weighted: Very High Extent (VHE) has four (4) points, High Extent (HE) has three (3) points, and Low Extent (LE) has two (2) points while Very Low Extent (VLE) has one (1) point.

The instrument was face validated by three experts, two from the Department of Education Foundations, and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation of Science Education Department all of Ebonyi state University Abakaliki. This procedure ensured that the items strictly addressed the research questions and hypotheses for the study. In addition, experts ascertained whether the items in the instrument adequately catered for all the variables in the study. The corrections were incorporated in final draft of the instrument.

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to thirty (30) teachers in secondary schools in Ikom Zone outside the study area. The internal consistency of the instrument was computed using the Cronbach alpha. The result of the analysis yielded Cronbach’s coefficient of 0.85, a high positive relationship among the options of the respondents implying that the instrument could be used to obtain reliable information.

The instrument was administered to 817 respondents in 80 public secondary schools in Ogoja educational zone. The researcher engaged the services of five research assistants who travelled to the various locations to administer the questionnaire to the respondents Data collected from the respondents were analyzed descriptively using mean scores and standard deviation in answering research questions

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Finding and Discussion

Research question one: To what extent does PTAs involvement in the provision of instructional materials to secondary schools in Ogoja educational zone Cross River state Granting Quality Assurance?

Table 1: Mean rating on the extent of PTA involvement in the provision of instructional materials

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	DECISION
1	PTAs provide instructional materials to enhance teaching and learning	3.39	0.80	High Extent
2	PTAs help schools to improvise instructional materials.	1.23	0.59	Low Extent
3.	PTAs provide textbooks, atlas, Dictionary etc.	1.41	0.60	Low Extent
4	PTAs provide useful items that can serve as instructional materials	1.37	1.07	Low Extent
5	PTAs help to guide teachers on how to operate instructional materials.	1.19	1.24	Law Extent
	Average mean = 1.52			

Source: Researchers field work 2019

Table 1 shows the response of teachers on extent of PTA involvement in secondary school in the area of provision of instructional materials. Granting Quality Assurance. The table indicates that most of the teachers agreed that PTA involvement in provision of instructional materials was low in the following: provide instructional materials to enhance teaching and learning. ($x = 1.39$), help schools to improvise instructional materials ($x = 1.23$), provide textbooks, atlas, dictionary etc. ($x = 1.81$), provide other useful items that can serve as instructional materials ($x = 1.97$), and help to guide teachers on how to operate instructional materials ($x = 1.19$). based on the value of the average mean (1.52) which is less than 2.50 that is accepted in this study as the value that indicate high extent of involvement, it can be inferred that the extent of PTAs' involvement in secondary schools in the area of provision of instructional materials is low.

Research Question 2

To what extent does PTAs involvement in the provision of physical facilities to secondary schools Granting's Quality Assurance in Ogoja educational zone Cross River state?

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Table 2: Mean rating on the extent of PTA involvement in the provision of physical facilities

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	DECISION
6	PTAs undertake construction of classrooms, staffrooms, laboratory and other important buildings.	1.86	0.95	Low Extent
7	PTAs undertake to maintain and repair school facilities.	2.24	0.88	Low Extent
8	PTAs are involved in supervision of building projects.	2.24	0.59	Low Extent
9	PTAs can construct feeder roads leading to schools.	1.24	0.60	Low Extent
10	PTAs provide electricity and pipe borne water to schools.	1.32	0.69	Low Extent
	Average mean = 1.82			

Source: Researchers field work 2019

Table 2 shows the response of teachers on extent of PTA involvement in secondary schools in provision of physical facilities granting's Quality Assurance. The table indicates that most of the teachers agree that PTA involvement in provision of physical facilities was low in the following: PTA undertake construction of classrooms, staffrooms, laboratories and other important building (x = 1.86), undertake to maintain and repair school facilities (x = 2.46), are involved in supervision of building projects (x = 2.4), can construct feeder roads leading to school (x = 1.24), and provide electricity and pipe borne water to schools (x = 1.32). based on the value of the average mean (1.82) which is less than 2.50 that is accepted in this study as the value that indicate high extent of involvement, it can be inferred that the extent of PTA involvement in secondary school in provision of physical facilities is low.

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Research Question 3

To what extent does PTA involve in students' discipline of secondary school's granting's Quality Assurance in Ogoja educational zone of Cross River state?

Table 3: Mean rating on the extent of PTA involvement in students' discipline in Granting Quality Assurance

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	DECISION
11	Principals involve PTAs in school students' disciplinary matters.	3.77	0.60	High Extent
12	PTAs are involved in setting school rules and regulations.	3.73	0.72	High Extent
13	PTA and school authority meet with students and parents annually.	3.29	0.08	High Extent
14	PTAs help to control students' truancy behavior	2.15	0.89	Low Extent
15	PTAs meet every term to deliberate on matters affecting the school.	2.25	0.86	Low Extent

Source: Researchers field work 2019

Table 3 indicates the teachers' response on the extent of PTA involvement in students' discipline.

The table indicates that most of the teachers agree that PTA involvement in students discipline was high in the following: principals involve PTAs in student's disciplinary matters ($x = 3.77$), PTA is involved in setting school = rules and regulations = ($x = 3.73$), PTA and school authority meet with students and parents annually ($x = 3.29$).

However, some of the teachers agreed that PTA involvement was low in the following: PTA help to control students' truancy. ($x = 2.15$), PTAs meet every term to deliberate on matters affecting the school ($x = 2.25$). Based on the value of the average mean (3.04) which is greater than 2.50 that is accepted in this study as the value that indicate high extent of involvement, it can be inferred that the extent of PTA involvement in students' discipline is high.

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The finding of this study showed that the extent of PTA involvement in the provision of instructional material is low. This finding could be as a result of the fact that majority of the schools worry less about acquisition of instructional resources and rely solely on teaching given by the teachers to make the children learn. Not only this, these schools fail to partner with the parents in order to provide these instructional materials. This substantiates the submission of Decker et al (2000) that most schools do not have comprehensive parent school partnership scheme. The finding further corroborates the finding of white-Clark and Decker (1996) that there is very low parents school partnership on the school activities for development of eight-graders.

Furthermore, the finding of this study as a result of this study as a result of low partnership between parents and the school where the school hardly solicit for resources and ideas from parents and the parents also hardly bother to share such with the school. Parents may just be contented with whatever learning resources the school can afford. This might not be unconnected with the socio- economic standards of most of the parents in Ogoja Education Zone. This is in line with the research finding of Halton and Mclean (2002) that says majority of young children are being reared in families where both parents work, where income and earning potentials are less than what is needed. This finding is in consonance with the work of Butler, Henderson, Gilford and McWilliams (1992) that identified time and socio-economic status of parents as significant barriers to parents' involvement in school administration.

The finding of this study revealed that the extent of PTA involvement in the provision of physical facilities is low. This finding corroborates the observation of Afolabi (1998) that classrooms in most schools are without doors, shutter or louvers in their windows, and the floors are either peeled or dusty. Also, the finding of this study is in line with Awokoya (1981) who commenting on the problem of dilapidated school buildings said:

The worst of our woes is the maintenance of school building, millions of affairs can waste away of the schools are not maintained. The health of the students can be in constant period when the toilets are not hygienic and life itself is in danger when the walls are likely to fall.

The finding is a consonance with the finding of Mallmann (1977) that in most rural schools, pipe borne water is virtually non-existent and in some urban schools' supply of treated water is irregular. According to him as students have no tanks for storing treated water for students' use, the students drink untreated water from streams and brooks, which expose them to water borne diseases.

These findings fail to uphold the submission of Thenekenne (1990) that PTAs in many schools have completed or embarked on many projects such as construction of classroom blocks, erection and equipment of school libraries etc. Also, the findings fail to uphold the view Elui (2007) that PTA finances capital projects like construction of new administrative or classroom blocks, financing of the school, provision of staff quarters, staff room laboratories etc. Furthermore, this finding of this contradictory to Okaba (1999) who maintained that many

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communities in the state are taking the initiative by contributing to the success of school programmes by building some classrooms through communal effort and assisting the government in providing other infrastructure for the children.

The finding of this study revealed that the extent of PTA involvement in students' discipline is high. The finding corroborates the finding of Christenson and Sheridan (2010) who state that, when parents are fully involved in their children education, the children earn high grades; they are well behaved and stay in school till they finish form four. This finding is also in consonance with the finding of Fan and William (2010) who state that allowing the participation of parents in school activities through PTA is one way of revealing the parents' educational aspiration of their children.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions are made: The extent PTA involvement in secondary school provision of instructional materials is low. The extent of PTA involvement in secondary school provision of physical facilities is low. And the extent to which PTA involvement in students' discipline is high.

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study: Government and other concerned organizations and bodies should sensitize and organize trainings, seminars or conferences for principals and teachers in public secondary schools on the importance of involving parents through PTA in school administration. Such training should also emphasize the effective ways by which the principals and teachers can involve parents in secondary school administration in the area of curriculum implementation, provision of instructional materials and provision of physical facilities.

School should organize parent school workshop to create an open channel of communication between parents and the school. These workshops would create a forum for parents to partake in the decision-making of the school and render valuable services to the school. School principals and teachers should maintain good rapport with parents encourage them to attend PTA meetings where issues affecting the school are discussed. This will enable parents to participate freely in school affairs and work with the school authorities as partners in progress. Quality assurance directorate should be created in every school to perform supervisory roles to achieve quality in service delivery. Parents and school stakeholders should involve in synergy participation in major key contribution

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