
**An Assessment of Teachers' Participation in School Governance and their Morale in
Secondary Schools in Imo State**

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between teachers' participation in school governance and their morale in secondary schools in Imo State. The population of this study consisted of all 5047 teachers in the 275 public secondary schools in Imo State under the six (6) Education Zones. The study adopted Correlational Survey Design while simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Data was obtained using a research questionnaire titled: "Participation in School Governance Questionnaire (PSGQ) and Teachers Morale Questionnaire (TMQ). Data obtained from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. It was concluded that participation in curriculum planning and staff development have no significant relationship with morale of teachers. One of the recommendations was that workshops, seminars and conferences for teachers on curriculum planning and other educational administrations should be regular and made compulsory so as to update their knowledge as this will boost their morale.

KEYWORDS: Teachers' Participation in School Governance, Curriculum Planning, Teachers' Morale, Staff development

Introduction

Schools are important institutions in society and a large number of varied groups have considerable interest in them. In practice, present-day governance of the school system involves a highly complex and broadest of interrelationships between interdependent groups and individuals. This broad range of interest and involvement complicates school governance and the pattern of rule. According to Ade, Ekleson, Yahaya and Ekere (2005), in Nigeria those involved in school governance include teachers, politicians, government agencies, head teachers, local authorities, public companies, voluntary organisations, members of the wider

community and school administrators. They work to bring about positive change and improvement in the educational system and to do this, the educational service was opened to new and different modes of delivery. Governance can be changed from time to time and the involvement of the implementers makes it proper, faster, easier, safer, less expensive and successful. Participation in school governance is a means of satisfying both the organisation and employee needs. Involvement in school governance leads to lightened feeling of competence, increase in productivity and high morale. Teacher's participation in governance is accompanied with an expectation of accountability by the professional staff, so as to make teachers accountable to their students. They should be given the opportunity to be involved in the governance process of the schools, for they are major implementers of the decisions. Participation in school governance is a factor in building teachers' morale. Accordingly, involvement of teachers in developing policies, rules and procedures, and curriculum for the school helps them to identify themselves with the school's aims and objectives thereby increasing performance and morale.

This implies that educational goals and objectives can only be achieved when the teaching staffs of the schools are made to be involved in the administrative and academic decisions of the school. Moreover, the level of teachers' involvement in governance, determines the level of their morale (Oglesby, 2004). It is pertinent that cooperation and team work are needed from the academic staff and school administrators for the smooth running of the school. In addition, it is assumed that there is a problem relating to school governance and teachers morale which must be addressed in order to make teachers to become happier in the classroom and more productive. Therefore, there is need for teachers to be involved in school governance in this present era, to equip schools in their bid to meet up with the pressing expectations of teachers, parents and stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

In most schools, if not in all, teachers are not given opportunities to express competence in the areas of the school governance. In some cases, the school principals would believe that teachers' involvement means interference and their exclusion would prevent conflict in the administrative process. When the teachers are made to be alien in the system, they would start to display anti-productive tendencies towards school functions like staff development and curriculum issues. It is therefore assumed that teachers' participation in school governance would boost teachers' morale and bring about high performance and effective school administration. In the other way round, teachers' deprivation or lack of involvement in school governance may have negative effect on the teachers' morale and performance. Based on this assumption, the researcher undertook this study to determine the relationship between participation in school governance (curriculum planning and staff development) and morale of teachers in Imo State Secondary Schools.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between teachers' participation in school governance and their morale in secondary schools in Imo State. Specifically, the objectives were:

1. To determine the relationship between teachers' participation in curriculum planning and their morale.
2. To determine the relationship between teachers' participation in staff development and their morale.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. How does teachers' participation in curriculum planning relate to their morale?
2. How does teachers' participation in staff development relate to their morale?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in curriculum planning and their morale.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in staff development and their morale.

Literature Review

The Concept of Teachers' Morale and its Relevance in School Systems

The Nigerian secondary school system is in dire need of excellent teachers to inspire confidence in our youths (students) for a better future. The motivation and support that students need to succeed academically are provided by the teachers. Teachers are thirsty for motivation and support in order to be productive (Copland, 2001). Morale could suffer due to the constant stress of trying to meet educational goals, or due to a change in policies. Morale cannot be desolate in any way, it is undoubtedly a very natural and comprehensive key to unlock the way toward acquiring knowledge in a real and healthy manner and this uplifts education. Teachers' morale is a major issue in public schools. Low morale decreases engagement with colleagues and students, diminishes productivity, reduces students learning and breeds cynicism. On the other hand, when morale is high and the school culture is healthy, students excel socially and academically, teachers are productive and collaborative, and the school environment is dynamic and engaging administrators must work continuously to improve teachers' morale.

According to Ewton (2007), to improve teachers' morale has importance which can help teachers to maintain a positive attitude and be happier while on duty. A conducive environment can make a teacher to be more productive and his/her morale will be increased. Teachers are vital and indispensable tools in the educational system and high level of morale has a positive influence on students' achievement, because when students are making excellent academic progress, teachers feel the rewards of their teaching and it boosts their morale. Eric (2001) and Haddock (2010) said that it can be summed up as a state of mind or mental attitude that is based on how valued and appreciated within a school a teacher feels. Teachers responsibilities increase on daily basis so there is need to highlight those factors that can positively or negatively affect their morale. Morale is crucial in creating a healthy school environment (Khoza, 2003).

Teachers' Participation in Curriculum Planning and their Morale

Curriculum is a vehicle through which the school strives towards the achievement of educational goals. Curriculum could be developed as a result of noticeable inadequacies in the system or what is obtainable in the global community. It could also be based on the yearning and aspirations of a given society since the society looks on education to take it to its promised land or destination. It is understandable that no society is static and so

knowledge is also dynamic, as a result, educational reformation is put in place to take account of change in the social order.

Curriculum that is worthwhile should have objectives, content, learning activities, organisation and evaluation. Enueme and Atokolo (2008) defined curriculum as a deliberately and systematically planned attempt to change the behaviours of the young and inexperienced and also to enable youths to gain the insight that will enable them a better society. Razik (2006) saw curriculum as the series of things which youths must do and experience by way of developing abilities to do things well. Agina-Obu (2003) opined that a curriculum is the ground students and teachers must cover in order to achieve the objectives or goals of education. The researcher is of the view that curriculum is a vital part in education that must be fully implemented by the appropriate people before it can yield results.

Teachers should play a vital role in all that concerns curriculum and its planning. Improved or enhanced student performance should be the ultimate goal of any reform effort. In addition to the clear findings on what facilitates curriculum implementation, there is evidence that involving teachers in curricular decisions has a positive effect on students' performances. Aggrawal (2008) contended that when outside influences are perceived and used as attempts to provide teachers with tools to collaboratively develop their skills, knowledge and attitudes in context-specific environments, they have positive effects for teacher development, enriched curricular experiences, and student outcomes.

Nwankwo (2014) contend that the curriculum for a given school or school system should be the joint product of all the school staff. Teachers should participate in any revision of a curriculum to such a degree that they feel a large share of authorship in its changes and of responsibility for carrying out the changes. Similarly, the 14th Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence (2005) concluded that many teachers did not relate to most courses of study because they had been written by people who were far from classroom practice. Additionally, these authors noted that many courses of study sat on shelves unused because teachers had not been involved in their development. Hopkins (2003), in his description of cooperative democratic interaction, asserted that teachers and students, along with other significant adults, should be responsible for designing the curriculum used in the classroom. Participation in curriculum work would not only serve to improve curriculum and instruction but could ultimately serve to make for better teachers and administrators, since they are implementers, this will make them more responsible, accountable, and productive and above all increase their morale.

Teachers' Participation in Staff Development and their Morale

Staff development according to Ogundele (2001) is a process which includes all developmental functions which are geared at the maintenance, updating and enhancement of professional competence Anukam, Okunamiri and Ogbonna (2008) connote that staff development in the education sector and in particular school context, is all the programmes designed for the continuous improvement of skills and job performance of staff.

Mathivanan (2011) accentuated that staff development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal course work, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. To Mathivanan, it is intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating and evaluative stage, it is an enrichment of skills, knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement, continuing that, lifelong learning is a process of development either professional or personal. In fact, ongoing

education is a requirement for staff of every level, usually in variety of forms. Nwagwu, Ijeoma and Nwagwu (2004) stated that staff development is a “process of raising staff performance capacity by equipping them with new skills knowledge, attitude and values”. He further opined that staff development is also aimed at exposing staff to innovation and modern methods and approaches to the teaching and learning of a subject matter.

Staff development from the foregoing is therefore an educative programme geared towards ensuring that employees are at their best in skill acquisition, knowledge base, abilities and aptitudes in order to bring an organisation such as the school to a desirable end. This is of the general view that any investment in human being is not a waste, and that it is a right step in the right direction as it accrues better returns to the individual and nation collectively. Staff development is a major problem solving device in any organisation as it chooses to clear clog in the wheel of progress to bring about an organisation’s productivity.

In school, teachers are valuable assets and also they detect the tone of the school. Unless there are competent teachers, teaching and learning will not be promoted in schools. How often teachers are exposed to staff development or training programmes is very important in order to be abreast of modern technologies and educational innovations. Nwagwu et al (2004) found out that teachers do not participate regularly in development (in-service) programmes, rather they participate once in five years. The study showed that there were significant differences in attendance to in-service education programme among teachers with regard to experience, school location and qualification.

Some of the Nigerian teachers were employed, not based on professional qualification and competence, but rather, on academic certification and God fatherism. This reason necessitates a timely intervention of staff development programmes for all categories of teachers so as to bring quality in the educational system. The importance of staff development has been recognised by different cadres of teachers as: Teachers Grade II and I (TC II and I), Yaba Diploma, Associate certificate in Education (A C E), Teachers certificate Zaria Secondary, Supervisory and Approved three-year physical education course. Professional certificate in any institute of education, Froebel Teachers Certificate, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), NCE Technical, Bachelor Degrees in Education, Science, Arts etc, Post-graduate Diploma in Education of recognized University, National Diploma in Education of recognized University, National Diploma and Higher National Diploma Plus Certificate in Education etc. Apart from the above, a second degree in education and doctorate degree in education will be an added advantage to a teacher at all levels of education.

Methods

Design of the study

The research for this study is a Correlational Survey Design. This design is found fit for the study as it attempts to find out the relationship between teachers' participation in school governance and their morale.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Imo State.

Population of the study

The study population comprised all 5047 teachers in the 275 public secondary schools in Imo State under the six (6) Education Zones (Imo State Education Board and Statistics Department, 2015).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The six education zones constituted the clusters from which 20% of schools in each zone were selected through Simple Random Sampling by balloting technique. At the second stage 62% of teachers in each of the selected schools from the zones were selected using Simple Random Sampling, giving a total (teachers) sample of 1012. Three of these were discarded after collection due to improper completion (see Table I for the sample frame).

Table 1: Sample frame of the respondent

S/N	Education Zones	No. of Schools per Zone	No. of Schools visited (20%)	Teachers population in the sampled schools	Sample of Teachers for Schools (62%)
1.	Okigwe Zone I	30	6	117	73
2.	Okigwe Zone II	34	8	167	103
3.	Orlu Zone I	62	12	191	118
4.	Orlu Zone II	36	7	117	73
5.	Owerri Zone I	66	13	778	482
6.	Owerri Zone II	47	9	263	163
	Total	275	55	1633	1012

Source: Field Survey

Instrumentation

Two researcher developed instruments were used for data collection tagged Participation in School Governance Questionnaire (PSGQ) and Teachers Morale Questionnaire (TMQ).

Validation of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instruments, (PSGQ) and (TMQ), the face validity was used. The research instruments were scrutinized by the researcher's supervisors and two experts from Measurement and Evaluation. Their inputs helped to check for the appropriateness of the items, clarity of language, relevance of items to the research questions and hypotheses.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was pre-tested randomly with 30 secondary school teachers, respondents who were not part of the sample for the study. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Technique was used to ascertain the reliability of instrument tagged: “Participation in School Governance Questionnaire (PSGQ). The reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained for participation in school governance while the reliability for Teachers Morale Questionnaire was 0.78.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Each research question was answered with descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis were used in testing the null hypotheses at .05 alpha level of significant.

Results and Discussion

The result of the analysis based on each research questions and hypotheses are shown as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the Nature of the Relationship between Teachers Participation in Curriculum Planning and their Morale?

Table 2: Nature of Relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Curriculum Planning and their Morale (N = 1009)

Variable	Mean	SD	r-Cal	Decision
Teachers Participation in Curriculum Planning	13.72	2.41	.004	Very low positive relationship
Teachers’ Morale	29.64	2.95		

Table 2 shows the strength of the relationship between the independent variable, curriculum planning and the dependent variable, teachers’ morale. The correlation coefficient r (.004) shows that there is a positive relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Curriculum planning as it rises in the school, gives a reciprocal response to teachers’ morale.

Research Question 2: What is the Nature of the Relationship between Teachers Participation in Staff Development and their Morale?

Table 3: Nature of Relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Staff Development and their Morale (N = 1009)

Variable	Mean	SD	r-Cal	Decision
Teachers Participation in Staff Development	13.51	2.57	.026	Very low positive relationship
Teachers’ Morale	29.64	2.95		

Table 3 reports the strength of the relationship between the independent variable, staff development and the dependent variable teachers’ morale. The correlation coefficient r (.026) shows that there is a positive relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Staff Development as it rises in the school, gives a reciprocal response to teachers’ morale.

Testing the Research Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in curriculum planning and their morale.

Table 4: Result of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis of the Relationship between Teachers' Participation in Curriculum Planning and their Morale (N = 1009).

Variable		Teachers participation in Curriculum Planning	Teachers Morale
Teachers participation in Curriculum Planning	Pearson correlation	1	.004
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.894
	N	1009	1009
Teachers Morale	Pearson correlation	.004	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.894	
	N	1009	1009

Table 4 reports the relationship between teachers' participation in curriculum planning and teachers' morale. The calculated correlation coefficient r (.004) is smaller than the critical r of .062 at .05 alpha levels with 1008 degree of freedom. The result is not significant, therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in curriculum planning and teachers' morale is retained. The result means that there is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in curriculum planning and morale of teachers in Imo State Secondary Schools. The finding of this study could be due to the fact that teachers and classroom are widely distanced from curriculum planners, and as such their morale levels of implementation of the curriculum are not adversely affected. This may also be linked to the fact that curriculum planning in Nigeria is done at the National level without any input from their teachers who would be involved in the interpretation and implementation process. Since this has been the tradition, it therefore has little or no effect on the morale of teachers. The insignificance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be upheld while the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in staff development and their morale.

Table 5: Result of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation analysis of the Relationship between Teachers’ Participation in Staff Development and their Morale (N = 1009).

Variable		Teachers’ participation in Staff Development	Teachers Morale
Teachers participation in Staff Development	Pearson correlation	1	.026
	sig. (2 tailed)		.415
	N	1009	1009
Teachers Morale	Pearson correlation	.026	1
	sig. (2 tailed)	.415	
	N	1009	1009

Table 5 reports the relationship between teachers’ participation in staff development and teachers’ morale. The calculated correlation coefficient ($r = .026$) is smaller than the critical r of .062 at .05 alpha level with 1008 degree of freedom. The result is not significant, therefore the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in staff development and teachers’ morale is retained. The result means that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ participation in staff development and morale of teachers in Imo State Secondary Schools. This result could also be attributed to the fact that teachers in Imo State Secondary schools do not have greater desire for personal growth and development; and do not respond enthusiastically to the opportunities for personal accomplishment, learning and developing on the job. They were not equally eager to exploit opportunities for self-esteem as well as self-actualization. The result of this study is in agreement with the finding of Nwagwu, Ijeoma and Nwagwu (2004) who established that teachers do not participate regularly in development (in-service) programmes, rather they participate once in five years.

Conclusion

On the basis of the data analysis and findings, the following conclusion is drawn. That participation in curriculum planning and staff development had no significant relationship with morale of teachers. This is because teachers were not allowed to participate in the above. Teachers should be allowed to participate in curriculum planning, project development, staff development programmes as it will affect morale positively. Teachers should be allowed to take part in project development as it will showcase their area of specialization.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Workshops, seminars and conferences for teachers on curriculum planning and other educational administrations should be regular and made compulsory so as to update their knowledge as this will boost their morale.
2. Teachers are the major implementers so they should be allowed to participate in the curriculum planning process
3. Teachers should be allowed to participate in project development as this will reduce cost of construction in schools and will bring out the best in them and as well boost morale.

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