Reframing Administrative Strategies on Community Participation in Primary Education towards Sustainable Child Development

K. Bashir[1], G. T. Wakkala[2]

[1]Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, P. M. B. 1144, Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State, Nigeria, Faculty of Education

[2]Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, , P. M. B. 1144, Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State, Nigeria, Faculty of Education

Abstract: *The paper explained how administrative strategies on community participation can be reframed and used to ensure sustainable child development in primary schools. A conceptual definition of reframe, strategies, community participation, primary education and development has been elucidated and situational theory was used and identified that administrative action depends on the circumstances within a given situation. Strategies for community participation include: encourage community use of school facilities, development of physical projects, identify the areas where community needs the school help, newsletters, career day etc. But administrative strategies that ensure child development include: teamwork and trust between the schools and families they serve, employ effective organisation and teacher training, link community participation to learning etc. It is suggested among others that teachers should be properly trained and provided with necessary materials and proper planning for community participation should be done with all commitment and seriousness. The paper concludes that for active and total community participation in primary education in Nigeria there is the need to reframe, rethink and revitalise the administrative strategies on community participation keeping in mind sustainable child development.*

Keywords: Administrative strategies, Community Participation, Primary education, Child development

1. Introduction

Across the United States and some parts of the world, one key strategy for making school turnaround is building effective community involvement. In every society, education plays significant role in the development of the individual in particular and the community in general. The School is an organisation that is managed and controlled by educational administrator. The success of any organisation depends to a great extent on the leadership within the organisation. A school can be referred to a mini society that needs a good relationship and participation with the community for it to function effectively. On the other hand, the community also needs school for its survival and progress. And child training is a social and collective responsibility and as such the need for the community to provide necessary supportive role towards achievement of the organisations objectives. Parents and other members of the community have common interest in the school hosted by the community. In this connection, therefore, the forging of effective links between the school and its local community is very important in all education systems, and the major mechanism for this linkage is the administrative strategies used by school heads.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Reframe

This means to change the plans, to look at, present, or think of (beliefs, ideas, relationship) in a new or different way (Collins Dictionary Online, 2011). Reframing is a way of viewing and experiencing events, ideas, concepts and emotions to find more positive alternatives (Wikipedia Online, 2017).

2.2 Strategies

A plan of action intended to accomplish a specific goal.

2.3 Community Participation

Kanau & Haruna (2013) defined the term 'community participation' in education may be perceived in terms of the various complementary roles that members of the immediate locality in which a school is located should play as contribution to educational development of their wards. Community participation has been defined as "an active process by which beneficiary influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or the values they cherish" (Oden, Bisong & Bisong, 2013).

2.4 Primary Education

The concept of primary education was defined as education for children between the ages of 5 to 11 years by the Hadow report (Tukur, 2000). Oxford Dictionary (2001) defines primary education as first in time, order or importance, for children below the age of 11. Primary education was designed for the purpose of building a total individual from the grassroots level so as to make him function as a result of exposure to the school curriculum (Okam, 2002).

2.5 Development

This concept is defined by the Oxford dictionary (2001) as to make or become larger or more matured or organized. It can also refer to bring something or to come into existence. Development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and instructional capacities to

mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements to the quality of life consistent with their own aspirations.

3. Theoretical Framework

Koontz's Situational Theory: The situation theory cited in Manga (2015) is also known as the contingency theory. The theory maintains that administrative action depends on circumstances within a given situation. The theory believes that there is no one best approach to issues but that the circumstances of a specific situation, determines the best choice or decision.

Manga (2015) further explained that applying the situational approach requires that the school administrators diagnose a given situation and adapt to meet the conditions present. It follows therefore that persons who are competent school administrators are likely to be those who are skilled in conflict management, adapt at accomplishment of goals in times of uncertainty and trained in balancing of competing interests. The school administrator should be conversant with all the theories of administration so as to enable him have a wide range of actions and re-actions in the day to day running of school affairs.

The level of community participation depends on different circumstances and strategies used. There is no one best approach or strategy for community participation in schools. Different situations determine the best choice or decision. But the gap between this theory and practice shows that the school administrators are not conversant in the choice of effective strategies in the different circumstances surrounding the education system nowadays. School administrators limit the use of all the theories of administration to ensure adequate community participation. Most community participation in schools is passive and done by few community members and school administrators stick to old strategies of practice in all circumstances of community participation. This study, realize the need for a rethinking of different available strategies that can be used by school administrators to improve and ensure active participation of the community in primary education for sustainable child development.

3.1 Strategies for Community Participation

According to the US Department of Health and Human Service in Mitrofanova (2015) researches have shown that there is a variety of strategies which schools can employ to build and improve community participation; these include:
1) *Encourage community use of facilities*: Often, the school buildings sit empty after the end of the normal school day. Encouraging non-profit community groups to use the facilities is not only good use of resources but also provide opportunities for the schools to get involved in community projects.
2) *Senior Citizens Banquet:* At least once a year, perhaps around the time of celebration, invite Senior citizens to a luncheon banquet at the school; banquet can be sponsored by a school services organization, by non-profit corporation, or by private industry. Usually, parents are willing to come in to assist in the preparation of the meal.
3) *Back to school week:* Choose a week during the school year to invite parents and community members to your school. Make a special effort to personally invite the community and business leaders to attend school for the other part of the day.
4) *Career Day*: hold annual career day; this is not only good educational experience for the students, but also helps local business people to learn more about the school and its needs. In addition, it helps to understand the employment needs in the area.
5) *Newsletters*: Provide periodic newsletters not only to the families of the students, but also to board members, business leaders and other community members. A simple database can be used to include new people, encourage members of the school and community to suggest other folks who might be included in the mailing list.
6) *New Releases*: News release mailed to local media should be a good strategy for public relations and community outreach programme.
7) *Honour Rolls*: In the local media, publish a list of students who made significant accomplishment during the school year.
8) *Gold Cards*: Give students who earn a place on the Honour Roll a gold card which is honoured by participating businesses who provide discount to those students for the marking period.

Murphy & Tacy cited in Bakwai (2013) provided a checklist for a strategic approach. These are as follows:
1) Identify your community-relations goals: At the board level, ideally, as part of the strategic planning processes, establish community relation goals and assign responsibility for addressing them.
2) Research concrete, specific ways in which the communities need school help, support, involvement or presence.
3) Identify the areas where the schools need community help.
4) Learn how the channel of communications really works in your community.
5) Develop a prioritized plan of action based on the research.
6) Act to know community expectations, concerns and sensibilities-including local regulations and local regulatory bodies.
7) Ensure that each time the strategic plans are revisited and also the community relation strategies are reviewed.

Suleiman (2012) stated that there are various ways in which community can participate in education for development. Some of this ways exist while other can be made to exist. These are:-
1) Establishment of community schools.
2) Obtaining membership of an organization that aimed at making contributions to the education sector.
3) Physical execution of projects.
4) Sponsoring some student's excursion/educational visits to importance places and agencies.
5) Community scholarship.

6) Getting involved monitoring the standard of educational institution of learning operating in the community.
7) Organizing lectures, or talk on career choice and opportunities.
8) Sponsoring publications of books written by citizens of the community.
9) Religious bodies/agencies should diversify in encouraging and propagating the advantage of education.
10) Establishing community base organization (C.B.O) such as self help groups.
11) Sponsoring speech and prize giving days, cultural displays, exhibition of students work, debate, prize, inter school competition etc.

3.2 Administrative strategies and child development

It is very vital for the school heads to know that the choice of strategies for community participation affects child development. For implementing effective community participation for sustainable child development, the following strategies must be followed:

1) Teamwork and trust between schools and the families they serve: Students learning should be considered as a team effort between schools and families. What children learn in school should be reinforced in the community and what they learn in the community should be reinforced in the school. This sense of connection makes children focused, directed and disciplined. Administrators are expected to build trust, shared values, ongoing bidirectional communication and mutual respect with parents (Handover research, 2014).

2) Employ effective organization and teacher training: Thorough teacher training and effective logical organisation must be done. Community participation should not be on ad hoc basis and teachers must be properly trained on techniques they should employ to ensure active participation. It is observed that teacher training has effect on the academic achievement and performance of children (Ibrahim, Dalhatu, Tukur & Sambo, 2013)

3) Cultural diversity should inform the content of community participation: For the child to develop properly, he must fit in the society and culture he belongs. Therefore, school heads should tailor their expectation for and approaches to community participation to the culture with which they live.

4) Communicate effectively with parents: The success of any strategy is premised on open and frank lines of communication between school heads, teacher, parents and community members. To effectively support child's education, there must be timely communication between parents and teachers and also parents must be kept up to date on grades, attendance, and other pertinent information.

5) Link community participation to learning: Headmasters should ensure effective link between community participation to students learning. The most effective strategies for community participation are those directly related to students learning.

6) Age utilization: School headmaster should understand that the pupils age and developmental stage is the most crucial and most in need for community participation. Children need parents to actively support their learning through at-home activities to prepare them for independence. The community participation efforts at primary schools should reflect the important developmental changes needed at this stage and critical gain in math and reading skills that children experience during this time (Handover research, 2014).

7) Consider and address parents' needs: Parents needs and desires must be taken into account for community participation to be successful. It should be recognized that all parents regardless of income, educational level or cultural background want their children to do well in school.

8) Build relationship with community organization: School headmaster should ensure community organisations' participation is connected to pupils learning and development. Community organisations may support school disciplinary policies, present information sessions and conferences or sponsor in-school workshop. In these and many more ways community participation can provide sustainable child development.

4. Suggestions

1) It is suggested that educational administrators should include community in policy formulation and implementation so as to win their trust and ensure team work.

2) Teachers should be properly trained and provided with necessary materials and proper planning for community participation should be done with all commitment and seriousness.

3) Policies on community participation should be flexible to allow diffusion of culture, norms, values, ethics and religion.

4) Online portal should be established to communicate all activities of child to his parents, also notice boards, phone messages could be used to communicate to parents.

5) Educational administrators should ensure all strategies are framed towards learning and child development.

6) Child friendly policies should be made to ensure success of community participation in child development.

7) Parents needs and desires for their children should be captured in curriculum development to make parents feel motivated and responsible.

8) It is also suggested that policies should be formulated and fully implemented to include students learning and child development as a compulsory activity in all non-governmental organisations and unions.

5. Conclusion

This paper tries to address administrative strategies on community participation in primary education towards sustainable child development. Different researchers have identified different strategies for community participation. But these available strategies have not yielded the results needed in Nigerian primary education and the need to reframe, rethink and revitalise the administrative strategies on community participation keeping in mind sustainable child development.

6. Implication to Educational Administrators

The implication of this paper to educational administrators is the need to incorporate pupils learning and sustainable child development as the key factor and paramount in choosing strategies for community participation. This will improve parent and community participation and also improve students' academic performance, social competence, higher self esteem, motivation to achieve, good quality work habits and aspiration for higher education.

Likewise, educational administrators must train teachers on techniques for improving parent involvement, gaining their trust, training parents on how to involve in children's schooling, and ways for community engagement in primary education for sustainable child development. This is necessary because teachers relate more with pupils in the school setting and have more knowledge on pupils learning. Educational administrators also need to look at the different situations and circumstances in their schools (such as culture, religion, economy, government etc), and apply the best strategy that will ensure not just total participation but overall change and improvement of child development, community development and also teacher development and stop sticking to old methods that are no longer attractive and no longer profitable.

There is a great need for educational administrators to reframe policies on strategies for community participation to refocus on child development and learning.

References

[1] Bakwai, B. (2013). *.Assessment of School Community Relationship in Secondary Schools in Zamfara State*. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria.

[2] Collins Dictionary Online (2011). https://www.thefreedictionary.com

[3] Handover Research (2014). Effective Family and Community Engagement Strategies. *https://www.google.com*

[4] Ibrahim, N.T., Dalhatu, I.J, Tukur, U., & Sambo, S. (2013). The effect of Teacher Qualifications on primary school children achievement in Primary Science of Sokoto South LGA, Nigeria. *Sokoto International Journal of Counselling Psychology* , 1 89-97. Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria.

[5] Kanau, A.A & Haruna, M.J. (2013). Towards Promoting Community Participation in Education in Nigeria. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(7-16).

[6] Manga, S. D. (2015*). Introduction to Educational Management*. Published by Usmanu Danfodiyo University Press Sokoto.

[7] Mitrofavona, Y. (2015). Building Community-School Relations. *Nebraska Extension Lancaster Country/Lincoln, NE 68528/402-421 https://www.google.com*

[8] Oden, S.N., Bisong, N.N. & Bisong, E.F. (2013). Community Participation and Basic Education Delivery in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal (LICEJ)*, 2 (1) 11-21.

[9] Okam, C.C. (2002). *Readings in New Developments in Nigerian Education*, *Issues and Insights*: *A Collection of Curriculum Papers*. Jos Nigeria. Deka Publishing Company.

[10] Oxford Dictionaries online (2001). Oxford University press.

[11] http://dictionary.oxford.org/dictionary/English

[12] Suleiman A.T. (2012). *Community Participation in Education for Development*. An Unpublished Manuscript, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

[13] Tukur, A.L.Y. (2000). *The Community Contributions Towards Development of Primary Schools in Yabo L.G.A*. An Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria.

[14] Wikipedia online (2017). https://www.wikipedia.org.