



Local Government participation in the Administration of Primary Education in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State

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Abstract

This study focused on Local Government Participation in the Administration of Primary Education in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Five research questions and five null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was three hundred and twenty-nine (329) head teachers in the 329 public primary schools in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The breakdown has one hundred and fifty nine (159) male headteachers and one hundred and seventy (170) female head teachers in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State. No sampling technique was adopted as the size is manageable. Structural questionnaire tagged “Extent of Local Government Participation in the Administration of Primary Education Questionnaire (ELGPAPSEQ) was for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two experts from the Department of Educational Foundations and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation option of Science Education Department, both in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The overall reliability yielded 0.88. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation with the aid of statistical package for SPSS while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that: Local governments participation in the areas of: funding of primary education, provision of infrastructures/ physical facilities in primary schools in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone are to a low extent while hypotheses results revealed there are no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female headteachers responses on the extent to which local government participate in the area of: funding of primary education and provision of infrastructures/ physical facilities in primary schools in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone. Based on the findings the study recommended that: Local governments should prioritize education in their budgets. Advocacy campaigns can be initiated to raise awareness about the importance of education funding and also encourage collaboration between local governments and non-governmental organizations or private companies to fund educational initiatives and projects.

Keywords: Local Government participation, primary education, funding, infrastructural facilities administration.

Introduction

Primary education is generally recognized as the bedrock of the child education. The development of primary education in Nigeria was guided by the Ashby recommendations of 1960, which among other things advocated for careful planning, budgeting, co-ordination and control in order to ensure a healthy relationship between resource availability and educational expansion. In the eastern region, the main emphasis of the development programme in primary education was to ensure availability of basic education at grassroot level. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) in her National Policy on Education referred to primary education as education given in an institution to children aged normally five to eleven years plus. The FRN (2014) also maintained that the rest of other education levels are built upon it. The primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole educational system. Primary education is therefore basic, as it seeks to develop the child efficiently, so that he can be useful to himself and to the society. The ugly and vicious cycles of illiteracy, poverty and disease (ignorance) can be broken by universal basic education policy which made education accessible to all Nigerian children, at basic level of education.

One of the major issues in trying to use education as an instrument for achieving even development in Nigeria is the age-long economic question as to "who should or whose sole responsibility should the administration of primary education be or "who should finance education"? State Universal Basic Education Board, 2009). That is whether the expenditure on education should be met by the government only or by the individuals receiving education or both. Nevertheless whichever way it is interpreted, primary school administration in Nigeria is a shared responsibility among group of individuals. Viewed from either of the conceptions above, it does appear that the present Nigerian system of primary education is far from being qualitatively satisfactory, since some groups are shying away from their core responsibilities, thinking that primary school education is the sole responsibility of either State or Federal Government.

Observations have shown that, primary school system cannot be said to be well organized and effectively administered due to the conditions in most of the primary schools, and the constant crisis of confidence among the various administrative organs (Agbabi, 2020). Following the government take-over of schools in the 1970s, schools were removed from the individual, religious or private voluntary agencies and handed over to the communities as the new facilitating agencies. One of the goals of creating local government councils is to bring development to every nook and cranny of our nation. With the 1976 local government reform and 1979 federal constitution, the provision and maintenance of primary education came under the statutory delegation of local government councils (Taiwo, 2016). In order to assist local government councils in achieving this task, the Local Government Councils Education Authorities (LGEAs), were established in each local government councils and as subsidiaries of National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) under decree 31 of 1988, and charged with several responsibilities related to primary education management and financing. With these arrangements came a string of obligations which place severe fiscal burdens on the Local Government Councils and Local Government Councils Education Authorities. Thus, apart from the payment of teachers' salaries and allowances, that are compulsorily deducted at source, other primary functions of Local Government Councils Education Authorities seem to have been virtually paralyzed due to limited financial resources (Agbabi, 2020). The negative impact of this

situation on the provision of quality primary education has manifested in area of poor quality education at primary schools. This is a major concern to educational administration.

Local government is the government nearest to the rural populace. After the 1979 and 1980 constitution, the local governments have become "mini-giants" for generating motivations and encouraging mobilization for self-help (Anyanwu, 2018). They have not only become recognized as a centre for dispensing societal or communities' tasks, but also been delegated substantial functions for developing and husbanding the social and economic, development among, which includes the provision and maintenance of primary education. They therefore, become incumbents which can be used as functional instruments to mobilize the grassroots for effective achievement of primary education policy objectives. This can be made possible because the rural governments accommodate about 80 percent of the entire Nigeria population (Adeogu, 2019). Furthermore, this can be achieved through the active involvement of key members of public in their local government. These key members include the following: traditional council members, chiefs, members of their cabinets, kindred headmen, women's association, local leaders, churches (religious groups), teachers, headmasters/mistresses, age grades, schools, parents, teachers, social clubs, pupils, youths, co-operative movements among others. All these different groups can act as catalysts to bring about expected outcome of the primary education policy objectives. To guarantee the effective achievement of the primary education policy objectives active involvement and cooperation of these key, public members of the government must be encouraged since they could be able to galvanize and mobilize the support of the grassroots. The Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA's) are responsible for the day-to-day administration of primary school in their areas of jurisdiction. According to Agbabi (2020), the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA's) are responsible for employment, appointment, development, promotion and transfer of teaching and nonteaching staff of primary schools within their area of jurisdiction. The Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA's) stimulate and encourage communal participation in administration of primary school and they supervise all education committees in their areas of authority.

Administration is the ability to make people, activities and things function so that objectives are achieved. Administration involves directing and controlling the affairs of an organization. Administration as the process of controlling and directing life in a social organization can be deduced from the definition of Taiwo (2016) that within an organization, the administrations is the position of a helmsman whose work is to direct activities of others towards the achievement of stated goals. However Sonia (2018) saw administration as a process which entails the utilization of human, financial and material resources in maximizing the realization of goals. From the definition of Sonia (2018), it implies that administration is the capacity to co-ordinate many and often complicated social energies in a single organization so skillfully that they operate as a unit thus, administration is concerned with the performance of executive duties, the carrying out and controlling of day to day running of organizations. In improving the standard of education in our country, local government authority aid in administration through participating in various tasks. Udofo (2020), highlighted areas of effective performance which include: fundings, provision of instructional materials, provision of infrastructural facilities, students' personnel administration, staff personnel administration, school supervision, motivation of staff, provision of accommodations and among others.

In the context of this study; local government participation in funding, provision of infrastructures facilities, staff personnel administration and local government participation in

the provision of instructional materials in primary schools will form the major focus of the study.

Local governments play a crucial role in funding primary education by providing financial resources to support schools and ensure that all children have access to quality education. Funding is the act of providing resources to finance a need, program, or project (Aliyu, 2020). While this is usually in the form of money, it can also take the form of effort or time from an organization. Funding is money which a government or organization provides for a particular purpose. There are several ways in which local governments participate in funding primary education. One common source of funding for primary education is through property taxes collected by local governments (Lyimo, 2016). These taxes are used to fund school and provide resources for teachers, facilities, and educational programs. According to Abbass and Babajo (2018) local governments receive funding from the State government to support primary education. States distribute funds to local school districts based on factors such as student enrollment, poverty levels, and special education needs (Prew, 2018). Local governments may receive grants and subsidies from the federal government or private organizations to support specific educational initiatives or programs. These funds are used for improving school infrastructure, purchase educational materials, or implement innovative teaching strategies, this is also in line with the provision of infrastructural facilities (Abbas and Babajo, 2018).

Infrastructure facilities refer to the physical structures and resources necessary for the operation of a school, such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, playgrounds, bathrooms, and administrative offices (Aliyu, 2020). Provision of infrastructure facilities refers to the process of ensuring that these facilities are available, well-maintained, and adequately equipped to support the educational needs of students and staff. It involves planning, budgeting, and managing resources effectively to create a conducive learning environment. Bray (2021) observed that local governments play a vital role in the provision of infrastructure and physical facilities in primary schools. This includes the construction and maintenance of schools, classrooms, libraries, playgrounds, and other facilities necessary for a conducive learning environment. One way in which local governments participate in the provision of infrastructure is through budget allocation. Local governments allocate funds specifically for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of school buildings and facilities.

Thus, from the foregoing, the situation for improving Local Government Education Authorities in funding primary schools is imminent as the federal, the states or the local governments cannot shoulder the responsibility of funding primary education alone, hence, they should look for other ways for funding primary education in Nigeria. Ejia (2017) asserted that Local Government Authorities seem not to be living up to expectations towards primary level of education, even in the aspect of headteachers which recorded issues of incompetencies, corruption, mismanagement of funds and instructional materials. But Dunkin (2017) asserted that issues of transparency in financial utilization, instructional materials maintenance depend on gender of the headteachers.

Gender includes the social, psychological, cultural and behavioral aspects of being a man or woman.

Depending on the context, this may include sex-based social structures and gender expression. Okoro, (2023) referred to gender as male sex or the female sex, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones, or one of a range of other identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female. While Hanson, (2022) saw gender as the state of being male or female in relation to the social and

cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women. However, Ejia, (2017) observed that the local government councils are not living up to their responsibilities in the development of school system. The councils may be making effort but such effort are hindrances by the poor management. For example the lingering issue of poor and inadequate accommodation for the growing population of primary enrolment in the zone in particular, as well as the general poor conditions of primary schools in terms of inadequate funding, poor management of resources, high cost of teaching materials, to mention but a few (Ejia, 2017), and it is this perceived lack-lustre attitude of local government councils towards the primary level of education that has engendered this research work. hence, this has made the researcher to find out extent to which local government participate in the administration of primary education in Onueke Education of Ebonyi State.

Statement of the Problem

The launching of the Universal Primary Education (UPE), and the 6-3-3-4 system of education has raised cost of education. As more facilities are needed for its effective implementation, Government has places high premium on the administration of schools to ensure optimum realization of educational objectives. There is no doubt that primary education is far from achieving its objectives in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State and this has affected the development of primary schools in the area leading to poor academic performance of the pupils (Majekodunmi, 2021). Most parents due to poor funding, inadequate infrastructures in primary schools send their children to private primary schools, abandoning public primary schools due to poor management (Michael, 2022).

It is clear that most of the issues confronting primary education which centers mostly on the lack of effective and efficient administration. Such problems confronting primary education included poor funding which invariably leads to improper day -to-day administration of Primary Education, inadequate physical facilities, improper supervision and inspection of primary schools as well as lack of instructional materials. It is indeed that this study seeks to ascertain the extent of local government participation in the administration of primary education in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to establish the extent of local government participation in the administration of primary education in Onueke Education Zone. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent local governments participate in funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone
2. Find out the extent local governments participate in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do the local governments participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone?
2. To what extent do the local governments participate in the provision of infrastructures/ physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone?

Hypotheses

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

1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female headteachers responses on the extent to which local government participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female headteachers responses on the extent to which local government participate in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

This study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study was three hundred and twenty-nine (329) head teachers in the 329 public primary schools in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The breakdown has one hundred and fifty nine (159) male headteachers and one hundred and seventy (170) female head teachers in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State (State Universal Basic Education Board, SUBEB, 2023). The entire population was included for the study, no sampling technique was adopted as the size is manageable.

The instrument for the study was a researcher's structural questionnaire tagged "Extent of Local Government Participation in the Administration of Primary Education Questionnaire. (ELGPAPEQ).

The instrument adopted face and content validation which was validated by three (3) experts: two in the Department of Educational Foundations (Educational Administration and Planning) and one in the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation); all from the Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

The validated instrument was trial tested with twenty-eight (28) teachers in Abakaliki Education Zone in Ebonyi State which is not part of the study area to ensure its reliability. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument Cronbach's Alpha technique was used for its analysis which gave an overall reliability score as 0.882. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable and therefore considered appropriate for use.

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher, with the help of three research assistants. A total of 329 copies of the questionnaire was distributed and collected. Research questions 1and 2 were answered on individual item basis using mean and standard deviation. In answering the research questions 1and 2, data collected from respondents were analysed in SPSS (Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences) using mean and standard deviation. In taking decision for mean, range values was adopted. That is 1.00-1.49 for VLE, 1.50 – 2.49 for LE, 2.50 – 3.49 for HE and 3.50 -4. 00 for VHE. In testing the hypotheses, t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was upheld when the p-value was greater than or equal to significant level of 0.05 (p-value ≥ 0.05).

Results

Research Question 1:

To what extent do local government participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone?. Data for this research question were collected with item 1-6 of the instrument. The data were analyzed descriptively and summarized in table 4.1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent to which local government participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone

S/N	Items Statement	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Local Government authority allocate a certain percentage of their budget specifically for primary education	301	1.91	0.61	LE
2	Local government authorities provide grant to primary school to cover expenses	301	2.06	0.59	LE
3	Local government authorities often support school feeding programs	301	2.03	0.44	LE
4	Local government authorities offer scholarship to underprivileged children	301	2.13	0.58	LE
5	The authorities of local government make provision of overhead cost to headteacher	301	1.66	0.50	LE
6	Local government authorities make payment of land accrued for primary education development	301	1.73	0.48	LE
Grand mean (x)			1.92		LE

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2024

Data in Table I showed that the respondents agreed on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 with mean scores of 1.91, 2.06, 2.03, 2.13, 1.66 and 1.73 respectively. As the respondents indicated that to a extent do: Local Government authority allocate a certain percentage of their budget specifically for primary education, Local government authorities provide grant to primary school to cover expenses, Local government authorities often support school feeding programs, Local government authorities offer scholarship to underprivileged children, The authorities of local government make provision of overhead cost to headteacher and that Local government authorities make payment of land accrued for primary education development. This an indication that local government participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone is to a low extent with a grand mean score of 1.92. This showed that the means value for the cluster is 1.92 which is between 1.50 and 2.49 and corresponds to Low Extent (LE).

Research Question 2:

To what Extent do local government participate in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone?

Data for this research question were collected with item 7-12 of the instrument. The data were analyzed descriptively and summarized in table 4.2.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent to which local government participate in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone

S/N	Items Statement	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
7	Local government authorities play a crucial role in the construction of school laboratories	301	2.06	0.50	LE
8	Local government authorities help in the construction of classroom for the reduction of overcrowding in the class	301	2.20	0.58	LE
9	Local government authorities provide funds for the renovation of school buildings	301	2.05	0.61	LE

10	Local government authorities play crucial role in the maintenance of school library	301	1.90	0.53	LE
11	Local government authorities in the rehabilitation school examinations hall	301	2.10	0.40	LE
12	Local government authorities help in the provision safety school playground in primary schools	301	1.93	0.46	LE
Grand mean (x)			2.04	LE	

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2024

Table 2 revealed that items 7-12 which are on playing a crucial role in the construction of school laboratories, help in the construction of classroom for the reduction of overcrowding in the class, provide funds for the renovation of school buildings, playing crucial role in the maintenance of school library, rehabilitation school examinations hall and in the helping in the provision safety school playground in primary schools had mean scores of 2.06, 2.20, 2.05, 1.90, 2.1 and 1.93 with a standard deviation of 0.50, 0.58, 0.61, 0.53, 0.40 and 0.46 respectively. This showed that the means value for the cluster is 2.04 which is between 1.50 and 2.49 and corresponds to Low Extent (LE).

Hypotheses

1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female headteachers on the extent to which local government participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone.

Table 3: t-test of difference in the mean responses of male and female headteachers on the extent to which local government participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone

Items	Headteachers	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sign	Decision
1.	Male Headteachers	148	2.10	0.51	299	0.797	0.426	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	2.03	0.48				
2.	Male Headteachers	148	2.17	0.51	299	0.710	0.479	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	2.22	0.64				
3.	Male Headteachers	148	2.04	0.64	299	0.921	0.358	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	2.07	0.59				
4.	Male Headteachers	148	1.86	0.49	299	1.013	0.312	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	1.93	0.56				
5.	Male Headteachers	148	2.12	0.41	299	1.444	0.150	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	2.09	0.39				
6.	Male Headteachers	148	1.88	0.44	299	1.155	0.249	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	1.98	0.47				

Source: Researcher's Field Work 2023

Significant @ P < 0.05

Result on Table 3 revealed that the mean rating of male and female headteachers on extent to which local government participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone are not significant as all the items recorded not significant. This means that male and female headteachers were of the same opinion that on the extent to which local government participated in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone.

2 H0₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female headteachers on the extent to which local government participate in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone.

Table 4: t-test of difference in the mean responses of male and female headteachers on the extent to which local government participate in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone.

Items	Headteachers	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sign	Decision
7	Male Headteachers	148	2.10	0.51	299	1.074	0.284	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	2.03	0.48				
8	Male Headteachers	148	2.17	0.51	299	0.787	0.432	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	2.22	0.64				
9	Male Headteachers	148	2.04	0.64	299	0.530	0.596	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	2.07	0.59				
10	Male Headteachers	148	1.86	0.49	299	1.137	0.256	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	1.93	0.56				
11	Male Headteachers	148	2.12	0.41	299	0.504	0.615	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	2.09	0.39				
12	Male Headteachers	148	1.88	0.44	299	1.786	0.075	Not Significant
	Female Headteachers	153	1.98	0.47				

Source: Researcher's Field Work 2024,

Significant @ P < 0.05

Result on Table 7 revealed that the mean ratings of male and female headteachers on the extent to which local government participate in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone was not significant as indicated in the entire items. This shows that male and female headteachers were of the same opinion on the extent to which local government participated in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone.

Discussion of findings

Extent Local Governments Participate in Funding of Primary Education in Onueke Education Zone

Result of the study as presented in Table 1 showed that the responses of the respondents on extent Local Governments Participate in Funding of Primary Education. The respondents indicated that to a extent do: Local Government authority allocate a certain percentage of their budget specifically for primary education, Local government authorities provide grant to primary school to cover expenses, Local government authorities often support school feeding programs, Local government authorities offer scholarship to underprivileged children, The authorities of local government make provision of overhead cost to headteacher and that Local government authorities make payment of land accrued for primary education development. Also, the mean responses of the male and female headteachers responses on the extent to which

local government participate in the funding of primary education in Onueke Education Zone was not significant.

The result is in line with the findings of Ogakwa, (2003) who asserted that lack of financial support from local governments for primary education lead to inadequate resources, limited access to quality education, and disparities in educational opportunities. This gap suggests a need for local governments to prioritize educational funding in their budgets, potentially by reallocating resources or seeking additional revenue streams, such as grants or partnerships with private organizations.

Extent Local Governments Participate in the Provision of Infrastructures/ Physical Facilities in Primary Schools

The result in Table 2 which was based on the Extent Local Governments Participate in the Provision of Infrastructures Facilities in Primary Schools. The respondents, to a low extent, agreed that playing a crucial role in the construction of school laboratories, help in the construction of classroom for the reduction of overcrowding in the class, provide funds for the renovation of school buildings, playing crucial role in the maintenance of school library, rehabilitation school examinations hall and in the helping in the provision safety school playground in primary schools. Equally, the mean ratings of the respondents (male and female headteachers) responses on the extent to which local government participate in the provision of infrastructures/physical facilities in primary schools in Onueke Education Zone was not significant.

This finding is in agreement with Chika and Ebeke (2017) who indicated that Infrastructure plays a crucial role in the learning environment. Insufficient facilities, such as classrooms, sanitation, and recreational areas, can hinder effective learning and student attendance. Local governments should work to assess the condition of school infrastructure regularly and invest in necessary upgrades and maintenance to create conducive learning environments.

Conclusion

Based on the findings presented, one can draw several conclusions regarding the role of local government in primary education. The findings collectively highlight a concerning trend of insufficient local government engagement in key areas of primary education. This lack of participation can contribute to systemic issues that ultimately affect the quality of education provided to children in the community. Increased local government involvement, both in funding and in various support actions, is essential to improve the educational landscape and ensure that all children receive a high-quality foundational education. Addressing these issues will require concerted efforts and collaborative strategies among local authorities, educational stakeholders, and the community.

Recommendations

Based on the findings you've provided regarding the low participation of local government in various aspects of primary education, here are some recommendations to improve educational outcomes:

1. Local governments should prioritize education in their budgets. Advocacy campaigns can be initiated to raise awareness about the importance of education funding and also encourage collaboration between local governments and non-governmental organizations or private companies to fund educational initiatives and projects.
2. Local governments should create and implement strategic plans to assess existing infrastructure needs and budget for necessary improvements and also engage communities in

the assessment and development of school infrastructure to ensure facilities meet the actual needs of students and teachers.

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