

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (P.T.A.) AND COMMUNITY IN THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

The success of secondary schools in Anambra State is to a great extent contributed by Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A.). This study therefore examine the role and responsibilities of the P.T.A. and community in the Nigerian Educational system. Three research questions are used for the study. A questionnaire of two parts with 18 items was used for data collection. Mean was equally used for data analysis. The findings indicate that P.T.A. help a lot in fund raising for setting up of structures, installation of discipline in schools, students welfare, resources management, etc. It has also revealed that effective communication helps a great deal in school success. Among other recommendations is that government should provide for the organization as to disabuse their minds that government only thinks of the organization only when they need money.

Introduction

The Parent Teachers Association is a voluntary and welfare Association of Parents and Guardians, as well as teachers of a particular school. In some countries this association of parents and teachers is called by other names. Irrespective of whatever name it is known in different countries, the objectives of Parents/Teachers Association (P.T.A.) is essentially the same. The promotion of such understanding and co-operation between the teaches and parents, as would make it possible for each party to contribute towards the creation of a conducive atmosphere that will facilitate

the process of learning and teaching in schools (Okeke 2004).

According to Elui (2007), the aim of P.T.A. is to enable parents know what is going on in the school and also give their opinion on certain issues concerning children. The P.T.A. finances capital projects like construction of new administrative or classroom block, fencing of the school, provision of staff quarters, staff rooms, laboratories, etc. She went further to say that through P.T.A., parents and teachers interact and take decisions on the management and welfare of the children, teachers and the school. It is

responsible for alleviating most problems that the school management might encounter in ensuring that children are properly set for learning, including extra-curricular activities like inter-house sports. (National P.T.A. 1988).

The P.T.A. can solve the problem of inadequate teaching staff by recruiting and paying part time teachers. They can also finance the cost of extra lessons for children preparing for external examination (Elui 2004).

Under the auspices of the P.T.A., parents have come to appreciate that the process of educating their children is a responsibility they will jointly share with the teachers. Iwuanyanwu (2006) opined that teachers on the other hand are made to accept the fact that parents have not only a duty, but also a right to take active part in discussing and taking decision on all the facts or aspects of the education of their children. In fact, the effect of a good organized and effective parent-teachers Association is to make both parents and teachers alike to (a) want to understand more about the children that are being educated so as to be in a better position to help them move effectively (b) appreciate the necessity for constant dialogue and communication between parents and teachers and hence the need to create a system or channel through which it will take place; (c) realize that the two parties are equally important in the education process of the children and that the educational objectives we have for these children will not be achieved without both parties playing active role.

The position of Parents-Teachers Association in our present educational system can only be fully appreciated when viewed from a historical perspective. Before the Nigerian civil war in 1967, there was no Parent-Teachers Association in our schools, at least not as they presently exist. The Parent-Teachers Association where it existed at all, was a very informal organization without any structure, constitution nor officers. Infact, it existed and operated as occasional informal invitation of some parents by school authorities, to the schools annual event such as Sport Day, Prize Giving Day, Speech Day, or school's feast or Foundation Day. Before the civil war, most of the schools were owned and managed by different Christian missionary bodies as well as private individuals. In fact, in the area that is now known as Anambra State, the government did not own any post-primary institution. Before the civil war, almost all the schools both primary and secondary as well as teachers training institutions were owned by the missionaries and some philanthropic individuals who were responsible for the appointment, discipline, promotion as well as termination of teachers. The school proprietors received grants-in-aid from the government to help them in the running of schools. Another source of revenue available to school proprietors were fees of different types which were charged to the pupils. With the money realized from all these sources, they paid the teachers, equipped the school and defrayed other sundry expenses incurred in the day to day running of the schools Okeke (2004).

The State Ministry of Education concentrated on the maintenance of standards in terms of curriculum and the school structure.

Statement of the Problem

The Parent-Teachers Association has already become part of the present school system but the degree of its usefulness is largely dependent on how far individual administration use it. This fact is recognized when it is stated in the handbook on school Administration that "PTA can be a useful arm of the school administration depending on how well it co-operates with the Principal and staff in its vital role which should be to act as a link between the school and the home in solving problems of personality, finance and general conduct of the pupils. Parents as individuals should be listened to, each time they bring up a complain and the school side of the matter should be presented clearly to them.

The problem is not so much of whether the PTA is ready to co-operate, because it is ever willing to do so, as the principal and staff are ready to be forthcoming, in giving all the necessary and relevant information that will elicit spontaneous co-operation from the parents. Another is whether the teachers are willing to see and treat parents as partners, equally concerned with the welfare of the child in school and finally is the PTA allowed to operate freely and independently, without undue interference and meddling with school authorities and officials of the state commission, as well as the Ministry of Education.

Simply put, the issue is whether the authorities do give the Parent-Teacher Association the type of co-operation it requires to become a viable organ capable of effecting the type of changes or innovations in our schools, that would make teaching easier for the teacher, and learning more interesting and meaningful to the pupils as well as make education more responsive to the needs of the community in general. On the other hand, is the PTA just established as an organ that is only called upon to help, as and when the authorities need money in school for one thing or the other. In other words, do the school authorities treat or see the PTA as a body that should never be led into or involved in the 'intricacies' and 'mysteries' of education about which the member know little or nothing. The extent to which the PTA can realize the objectives for which it is established depends very much on how far those who are supposed to make use of the organization are prepared to employ it. The potentials of PTA in our educational system are limitless provided it is well guided. Admitted, the PTA has contributed immensely to the improvement of various school systems in Onitsha local government especially in the provision of infrastructure, but it is also equally true that there are many complaints against the organization particularly from the parents. These complaints range from excessive levies, misuse or misappropriation of funds by the school authorities, undue manipulation of the PTA by the school administrators to further their own personal ends, lack of understanding of the

purpose of the PTA as well as the role the parents expected to play. These complaints need to be investigated in order to see whether they have any basis and also the fundamental causes of the complaints. It is against this that the researcher is investigating on the roles and responsibilities of PTA and community in the Nigeria education system.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the roles of PTA in running secondary schools.
2. What are the positive contributions by the PTA in running of schools.
3. How can the co-operation between principals/staff and parents turn round the school system?

Research Design

This is a descriptive survey study. This design enabled the researcher to collect detailed and factual information on the extent of the roles and responsibilities of the PTA and community in the Nigerian educational system.

Area of Study

Area of study is the six education zones in Anambra State of Nigeria namely Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha. There is a total of 260 secondary schools in the state at the time of study.

Population of the Study

The population for this study was made up of 1,145 respondents. This population comprised 50 officials at State

Education Commission, 50 principals, 500 teachers and 500 parents.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample consisted of 1,115 respondents selected using stratified random sampling techniques. The respondents were stratified based on 10% of the total population.

Instrument for Data Collection

A questionnaire titled the Roles and Responsibilities of Parents Teachers Association and Community in Nigerian Educational System Questionnaire (R²PTACNESQ) was used to collect data by the researcher. The questionnaire is made up of two parts. Part A was personal data while part B contained items on extent of roles and responsibilities of PTA and community in Educational system. The items were structured on 4 point scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Validation of the Instrument

To ascertain the validity of the R²PTACNESQ, the researcher presented the research purpose, questions and the initial draft of the questionnaire to two experts in educational management. They made some corrections which the researcher effected before the final draft was produced.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach Alpha method. The copies of R²PTACNESQ were distributed on 5 officials of state

Education Commission, 5 principals, 10 teachers and 10 parents from Enugu State Education System. After analysis of the response, co-efficient values of 0.78 were obtained from part B of the instrument. This was considered satisfactory the researcher for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The copies of the questionnaire were distributed on the sampled respondents in their different offices with the help of research assistants. Out of 1,115 copies of questionnaire distributed, 5 were lost; therefore, 1,110 presenting 99.64% were used for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean ratings were used in answering the research questions. The mid point for 4 point scale which is 2.5 is used as agreement level of the items. Items with mean ratings of 2.5 and above were accepted while items with mean ratings below 2.5 were rejected

Results

Research Question One: What are the roles of P.T.A. in running of secondary schools?

Table 1: Mean rating of the roles of P.T.A. in the running of secondary schools

The research subjects were asked to indicate the areas in education that the P.T.A. is supposed to be involved in.

S/n	Area in Education	Staff of Com. \bar{X}	Principals \bar{X}	Teachers \bar{X}	Parents \bar{X}
a	General Education Policy e.g	1.20	1.60	1.80	1.47
b	Records	3.80	3.50	3.60	2.60
c	Fund raising for setting structure and other things	1.00	1.20	1.80	2.00
d		2.80	2.70	3.00	2.90
e		3.50	3.20	3.00	2.80
f	Curriculum issues e.g Textbook	3.00	2.90	2.70	2.85
g	Rules and Procedures disciplinary issues	2.00	2.40	2.20	1.80
h		2.80	2.70	2.65	2.97
	Students welfare, feeding sanitation				
	Resources management – finance, land etc.				
	Staffing – number, character etc				
	Decision making				

From the table one, it can be seen that the supposed role of P.T.A. in the running of our secondary school is in the areas of fund raising for infrastructure, rules and procedures, students welfare, resource management and decision making. They are all above the mid point of 2.50 while items No. 1 General education policy e.g. records and staffing

number, character etc did not measure up to mid point and therefore rejected by the respondents.

Research Question Two: What are the positive contributions by the PTA in the running of secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean rating of the contributions of the PTA in the running of secondary schools.

In answer to this research question, the respondents were asked to indicate the aspects of education the P.T.A has made significant contributions for the various secondary schools.

S/n	Contribution	Staff of Com. \bar{X}	Principals \bar{X}	Teachers \bar{X}	Parents \bar{X}
1.	Building of classroom blocks, dining halls etc	3.00	4.00	2.80	3.68
2.	Setting of disputes between students and teachers.	2.50	2.60	2.65	2.55
3.	Provision of laboratory/games equipment	2.80	2.60	2.55	2.62
4.	Provision of chairs and tables	3.00	3.20	2.80	2.90
5.	Walling of school compound	2.50	2.53	2.58	2.70

From table 2 above PTA make contribution in the nature of building of classroom blocks, dining halls and science laboratories. They also help in settling disputes between students and teachers. They also contribute in the

provision of laboratory and games equipment, in addition they provide chairs and tables and in the walling of the school compounds in their various schools.

Research Question Three: How can the co-operation between principals/staff and parents turn round the school system

Table 3: Mean ratings of how the principals/staff and parents turn round the school system.

Respondents' views on how the principal and staff are ready in giving all the necessary and relevant information that will bring about spontaneous co-operation

S/n	Number of meetings held in a session	Staff of Com. \bar{X}	Principals \bar{X}	Teachers \bar{X}	Parents \bar{X}
1.	One meeting in a session	1.00	1.20	1.40	1.05
2.	Two meetings in a session	2.00	2.02	2.30	1.50
3.	More than two meetings in a session	2.80	2.70	3.80	3.00
	There is free flow of Information	3.50	3.00	2.80	2.78
4.	Agree	3.50	3.00	2.80	2.78
5.	Disagree	2.00	1.80	2.28	2.40

From the above table, the number of meeting held each session varies. Indications prove that respondents agree on holding more than two meetings in a session.

On the other hand, 80% of the respondents agree that there is free flow of information between the principal, teachers and parents in the P.T.A. while 20% principals disagree.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study indicate that both the principals/teachers, parents, staff of commission all agree that the work of P.T.A. in secondary schools are very enormous. P.T.A. help a lot in the fund raising and setting up of structures, installing discipline in schools, students welfare, resource management and decision-making. This is in agreement with Okeke (2004) who stated P.T.A. is the backbone of success of schools in Anambra State. Elui (2007) also suggested that P.T.A. finance cost of extra lessons for their external examinations.

The findings also reveal that P.T.A. contribute a lot in building of classroom blocks, dining halls, settling of disputes between students and teacher, provision of laboratory, game and equipment. They also help to provide chairs and tables and walling of schools (Elui 2007, Eke 1980).

The study also reveals that the principals and teachers agree that more than two meetings of the association will help to promote the co-operation in schools. They also agree that there is free flow of information between the members of the P.T.A. (Okoye 1980).

Conclusion

The role of Parents Teachers Association in secondary schools in

Anambra State cannot be over-emphasized. They help in fund raising for setting up structures, for the students, making rules and procedures for discipline, catering for students welfare and making of decision. They also help in resource management with regards to finance and school property.

P.T.A. meetings are held as and when the parties are ready but they agree that the more the number of their meetings, the better. It is agreed that good communication is very helpful for the progress/success of the schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should provide funds for the organization as to disabuse their mind that government only thinks of the organization when there is need to raise money to carry out some specific projects in the schools.
2. The organization should appoint men of proven probity to handle the money contributed by the members of the association in order to avoid misappropriation of such funds.
3. Formal channel of communication can be opened between the school and parents so that whenever each party has a problem, it will be easy to tackle.

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