

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES IN SATELLITE CAMPUSES OF RIVERS STATE OWNED UNIVERSITIES**

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### ***Abstract***

*This study examined Community Engagement in the Management of School Facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State Owned Universities. The research design adopted in this study was descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 234 people comprising ten (10) Deans and Heads of campuses and 224 community leaders in host communities of satellite campuses of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample size of this study was 234 respondents consisting of 10 Deans and Heads of campuses and 224 community leaders in host communities of satellite campuses of the two universities. The entire population was studied without sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instrument for data collection in this study was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Community Engagement in the Management of School Facilities in Satellite Campuses Questionnaire". The instrument was validated by two experts. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics. A cumulative reliability index of 0.76 was obtained which showed the instrument was reliable. The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics. The findings of the study revealed among others that host communities engage in securing school facilities and provision of financial support for maintenance of school facilities in satellite campuses of Rivers State Owned universities to a high extent. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that campus heads in newly established and old satellite campuses of public universities should set up a campus security committee that should be made up of security personnel employed by the school, local vigilantes and security personnel in host communities. This way, there would be collective effort in managing school property in these campuses.*

**Keywords:** *Community, Engagement, Management, School Facilities, Satellite Campus*

## **Introduction**

Universities as the highest citadels of learning in formal education have three core mandates which are teaching, research and community service. In teaching, universities provide the needed training for potential professionals in different fields including medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, and teachers and so on. It stands to reason then that a nation's level of development is determined to a large extent by the quality of university education it provides for its citizens. It is in with this that the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy of Education (2013) identified the goals of tertiary education as follows: to contribute to national development through higher level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in informal and formal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide higher quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes and prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community services; forge and cement natural unity and promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013).

In a bid to extend university education and development to rural areas, most universities have established satellite campuses outside the location of their main campus. This view was supported by Fumasoli, and Stensaker

(2018) who noted that as a result of the ongoing progress of higher education, universities across the globe have increasingly expanded their operations to encompass larger and more intricate systems. The establishment of satellite university campuses, in particular, has become a prevalent feature in the realm of higher education on a global scale. It is not uncommon for universities to establish these satellite campuses in areas that previously lacked access to a higher education institution (Abel & Deitz, 2012).

Furthermore, a noteworthy trend has emerged wherein international branch campuses, which are satellite campuses of a parent institution located in a foreign country, are being established. A prime example of this is The University of Nottingham, which has set up four campuses within the United Kingdom, in addition to two international campuses in Malaysia and China. Likewise, St. John's University boasts of five satellite campuses situated across the United States, Italy, and France. The University of Southampton also operates a satellite campus in Malaysia, while New York University has established three campuses in New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai.

In Rivers State as in most parts of Nigeria, the case is not different as public universities in the state have satellite campuses in different parts of the state. For example, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education have a satellite campus in Ndele community in Emohua LGA of Rivers State. Similarly, the

immediate past Governor of Rivers State Barr. Nyesom Wike in February, 2021 announced the establishment of satellite campuses of the Rivers State University in Emohua, Etche, Ahoada and Sapele. By February, 2023, the Vice Chancellor of the university announced the commencement of academic activities in these campuses (The Tide Newspaper, 2023).

The essence of establishing these campuses is to stimulate economic activities and assist in the development of the host community and neighbouring communities. This view was supported Gu and Zhang (2021) who noted that most cities in China with comparatively weak economic situation demand for administering satellite campuses to meet bilateral needs.

Furthermore, the establishment of these satellite campuses presents a major financial burden on the universities as they are supposed to manage the school facilities in these campuses as they do those in the main campuses. Unfortunately, most of these satellite campuses do not get as much attention and funding as the main campuses. Consequently, most of the school facilities in the satellite campuses are poorly managed.

Facilities management encompasses a comprehensive array of processes, principles, policies, programmes, and projects that are integrated to guarantee the existence of an environment conducive to learning. The role of the school administrator assumes a paramount position in the realm of facilities management. An inadequacy in learning facilities necessitates a meticulous and collaborative endeavor by the school administrators to ensure that the current resources are effectively administered. Igbiniedion (2014) observed that facilities management creates an avenue for the employees within an organization to fulfill

their primary responsibilities proficiently. The intrinsic value of the school is derived from the nature of its facilities. It has a great impact on the level of satisfaction the students will experience. It determines how friendly the teaching and learning environment could be and all these account for the need to effectively manage the available facilities.

Johnson (2007) noted that provision and management of school facilities is a vicious cycle. The facilities manager ensures that buildings and their services meet the needs of the people that work in them. They ensure maintenance of the facilities and daily or weekly cleaning schedules as well as determining and scheduling repairs, renovations, projects, waste reduction improvements and safety inspection.

Management of school facilities requires huge financial resources and given the limited funds that public universities have, they often channel such resources in the management of main campuses. This explains why facilities in most satellite university campuses look dilapidated and worn out. This underscores the need for a more collaborative effort from different stakeholders to manage school facilities in satellite campuses. One key stakeholders are the host communities of these satellite campuses. Often times satellite campuses are established to bring development of a particular locality, therefore, the communities ought to be engaged as stakeholders to manage facilities of the school.

According to Manoj-Kumar (2019), community engagement refers to the way that people cooperate to solve different problems in the community and make decisions together. It refers to the way people take responsibility and accountability

to identify and solve different problems for the development of society.

In the course of ensuring the effective participation of community members in the construction and maintenance of school facilities, University of Randaz (2019) proposed that the preferred approach is school construction with community involvement through the utilization of force account. This approach not only involves the local community in the preparation and construction process of the new educational facilities, but also allows for the utilization of local builders or a group of local builders. In this instance, the School Construction Committees, in collaboration with the Local Government Authority (LGA), assume responsibility for the contractual and procedural aspects through the implementation of force account. Studies have shown that community plays a significant role in education issues, especially in the management of school facilities. Education stakeholders including the community have been contributing to bring new school facilities and the repair and management of the facilities. In the same way, the community has grown to the forefront of ensuring that facilities meet the number (Bray, 2000). It is against the background that this study examined community engagement in the management of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Universities are the apex educational institutions where high level manpower needed to man different sectors of the national economy are trained. These institutions are also centres for knowledge generation through quality research. This explains why in recent years, the demand for

university education has increased astronomically. This is seen, for instance in the large numbers of people who seek admission into public universities in Rivers State and other parts of Nigeria. In a bid to cope with the increasing number of students and engender development in different parts of the state, successive governments have established satellite campuses in other parts of the state different from where the main campuses of the universities are located. For example, the Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education have satellite campuses in Ndele, Ahoada, Etche, Emohua and Sapehwa all in different local government areas of Rivers State.

The establishment of these campuses in rural areas which are somewhat secluded from the metropolis poses some challenges, especially, in the area of management of school facilities in the areas. The threat of theft of these facilities and poor maintenance of dilapidating ones are some concerns that have been raised by both lecturers and students alike. Unlike main campuses that have 24 hours security personnel and are renovated almost immediately they have issues, these satellite campuses do not get such attention. This affects students' and lecturers' interest in engaging in teaching and learning activities in these campuses. This underscores the need for other stakeholders to support in the management of these facilities. The question then is would engaging host communities in the management of school facilities improve the quality of education provided in satellite campuses? Providing answer to this question is the problem of this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine community engagement in the management of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of

Rivers State owned universities. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent to which host communities are engaged in securing of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities.
2. Determine the extent to which host communities are engaged in the provision of financial support for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities.
3. Ascertain the extent to which host communities are engaged in the provision of human resources for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent are host communities engaged in securing school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities?
2. To what extent are host communities engaged in the provision of financial support for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities?
3. To what extent are host communities engaged in the provision of human resources for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities?

**Methodology**

**Classification**

- Very High Extent (VHE) = 4
- High Extent (HE) = 3
- Low Extent (LE) = 2
- Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1

**Value Range**

- 3.50 – 4.00
- 2.50 – 3.49
- 1.50 – 2.49
- 1.00 – 1.49

The research design adopted in this study was descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 234 people comprising ten (10) Deans and Heads of Campuses and 224 community leaders in host communities of satellite campuses of Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The study adopted total enumeration method in which the entire population was studied without sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instrument for data collection in this study was a self-designed questionnaire titled “Community Engagement in the Management of School Facilities in Satellite Campuses Questionnaire” (CEMSFSCQ). The instrument was validated by two experts in Community Development and Measurement and Evaluation. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics. A cumulative reliability index of 0.76 was obtained which showed the instrument was reliable. Copies of the instrument were administered on the respondents by the researchers and retrieved personally. Out of the 234 copies of the questionnaire administered, 210 were properly filled and used for the study and out which, 200 were from community leaders and 10 from Deans and Heads of Campuses. The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics. Decision rule for the research questions were based on the classification of level of extent as shown below:

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** To what extent are host communities engaged in securing school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities?

**Table 1: Mean responses on the extent to which Host Communities are engaged in securing school facilities in Satellite Campuses**

S/ N	Items	Mean	N = 210 SD	Remark
1	Host communities set up local vigilantes to protect school facilities in satellite campuses.	3.18	0.79	High Extent
2	Host communities engage police personnel in their communities to set up police check points around the roads leading to satellite campuses.	3.14	0.78	High Extent
3	Traditional rulers pass laws to punish perpetrators of burglaries in satellite campuses in Rivers State owned universities.	2.85	1.03	Extent
4	Community leaders encourage community members to report any theft or vandalization of school properties by miscreants in the host communities in their satellite campuses.	2.73	1.07	Extent
5	Universities employ community members as in-house security personnel in satellite campuses.	3.29	0.82	Extent
6	School authorities often report threats on their facilities to community leaders in host communities of satellite campus.	3.32	0.79	Extent
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>3.48</b>		<b>Extent</b>

The analyzed data in Table 1 showed the mean and standard deviation scores on the extent to which host communities engage in securing school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities. The mean scores in items 1-6 fall within the range of high extent showing that majority of the respondents agreed with the items in the table. With a grand mean score of 3.48 the answer to research one is

that host communities engaged in securing school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities to a high extent.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent are host communities engaged in the provision of financial support for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities?

**Table 2: Mean Response on the extent to which Host Communities are engaged in the provision of financial support for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses**

S/ N	Items	N = 210		Remark
		Mean	SD	
7	Companies hosted by communities where university satellite campuses are located provide funds for building of school facilities	2.69	0.39	High Extent
8	Host communities sometimes come up with initiatives to financially support satellite campuses to maintain school facilities.	2.12	1.12	Low Extent
9	University authorities collaborate with host communities to raise funds for maintenance of school facilities in satellite campuses.	2.59	1.08	High Exte
10	Universities create satellite campus maintenance fund and encourage community members to donate to this fund.	2.61	1.17	High Extent
11	Local Government Chairmen sometimes provide funds to satellite campuses to buy school facilities that are not available.	2.56	0.65	High Extent
12	School authorities engage Non-Governmental organizations operating in host communities to support with funds for maintenance of school facilities.	2.80	1.08	High Extent
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2.56</b>		High Extent

The analysed data in Table 2 showed the extent to host communities engage in the provision of financial support for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities. The mean scores of items 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12 fall within the range of high extent implying that majority of the respondents agreed with these items. However, item 8 falls within the range of

low extent, implying that majority of the respondents disagreed with the items. With grand mean score of 2.56, the answer to research question two is that host communities engage in the provision of financial support for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities to a high extent.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent are host communities are engaged in the provision of human resources for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities?

**Table 3: Mean Response on the extent to which Host Communities are engaged in the provision of human resources for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses**

S/ N	Items	210 Mean	N SD	Remark
13	Host communities provide community members with electrical skills for maintenance of school facilities.	2.67	0.66	High Extent
14	Universities employ the services of community members to clear grasses in school fields and around other facilities in their satellite campuses	2.64	0.89	High Extent
15	University authorities engage the services of community members to secure school facilities in satellite campuses from theft.	2.61	0.77	High Extent
16	Companies in host communities provide professional artisans to maintain school facilities in satellite campuses.	2.76	1.10	High Extent
17	When constructing school facilities in satellite campuses community members with several building skills are employed.	2.81	0.81	High Extent
18	Community members supply sand and other building materials needed to build or renovate school facilities in satellite campuses.	2.99	0.98	High Extent
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>2.75</b>		High Extent

The analysed data in Table 3 showed the extent to which host communities are engaged in the provision of human resources for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities. It was revealed that all the items in the table fall within the range of high extent. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed with the items in the table. With grand mean score of 2.75, the answer to research question three is that host

communities are engaged in the provision of human resources for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities to a high extent.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study in research question one revealed that host communities engaged in securing school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities to a high extent. Host

communities set up local vigilantes to protect school facilities, engage the services of police officers in communities for security and traditional rulers pass laws to punish perpetrators of burglaries of school facilities in satellite campuses. Universities also employ community members as university security personnel, encourage community members to report theft of school property and the school report security threats in their satellite campuses to community leaders. The finding aligns with the findings of Okoror (2022), which disclosed that in order to confront emerging security challenges and safeguard lives and properties on campuses throughout the nation, universities, host communities, and security agencies must collaborate. Okoror urged stakeholders and members of the academic community to remain vigilant, as it is apparent that security agencies alone cannot address security challenges without the participation of concerned community members. He emphasized that it is the responsibility of every individual to supplement governmental endeavors by working in unison to protect the immediate surroundings. Similarly, Igbinedion (2014) observed that school facilities are better protected when community members take on the initiative of protecting these facilities. The findings of the study for research question two also revealed that host communities engage in the provision of financial support for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities to a high extent. Companies and Non-Governmental Organizations operating in communities where satellite campuses are located provide funding for school facility management, Local government authorities also sometimes support with funding for facility

maintenance. Other than these, communities also collaborate with universities for fund raising and setting up of campus maintenance fund to maintain school facilities in satellite campuses. This discovery aligns with the research conducted by Shukia and Saleem (2020), which indicated that when assessing the extent to which community members contribute to the financial and material upkeep of school facilities, the study found that 82% of participants affirmed the provision of such support, while 18% expressed disagreement. Furthermore, during an interview, one participant articulated that community members organize themselves through communal gatherings to raise funds for the maintenance of school facilities. Then representatives present the contributions from the community members to the school management committee.

The findings of the study for research question three revealed that host communities engaged in the provision of human resources for the maintenance of school facilities in Satellite Campuses of Rivers State owned universities to a high extent. Host communities with electrical and other building skills are engaged when school facilities are built or renovated. Community members are also engaged in cutting grasses and do supplies of sand and other building materials for building or renovating school facilities in satellite campuses. This finding is supported by the findings of Shukia and Saleem (2020) that there is direct and indirect participation of the community in the management of school facilities. Direct community participation is when the representatives from the community are involved in the planning and managing of school facilities. But indirect community participation is when the

community members are responsible for providing their views and contributions to their representatives to present in the management committee. Similarly, Ken (2019) emphasized that since it is difficult for all community members to be involved directly in school management, the government suggest that each school must form School Management Committee (SMC). Through these committee, the community were involved by selecting their leaders as representatives in school management.

### Conclusion

The study concluded that communities are engaged in management of school facilities in host communities in Rivers State owned universities in such areas as securing school facilities through local vigilantes and engagement of human resources in communities for the building and renovation of school facilities in satellite campuses. Communities also support in funding of projects for maintenance of school facilities through financial contributions from local government, companies and non-governmental organizations operating in areas where satellite campuses are located.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Campus heads in satellite campuses of public universities should set up a campus security committee that should be made up of security personnel employed by the school, local vigilantes and security personnel in host communities. This way, there would be collective effort in managing school property in these campuses.
2. University authority should approach and establish a working relationship with Local government authorities, companies and Non-Government Authorities operating in communities where satellite campuses are located. This way, they can make more financial support towards maintaining school facilities.
3. University authority should come up with policies that would ensure all services for maintenance of school facilities in their satellite campuses must be provided by members of host communities. Except for those services that community members do not have the expertise to provide.
4. Community leaders in host communities should come together to set up vigilantes that would protect school facilities in satellite campuses in their communities. This would help in the proper management of these facilities.

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