

MANAGING THE MICROCOSM AND MACROCOSM CHALLENGES IN SCHOOL – COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP FOR QUALITY ACADEMIC DELIVERY IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Managing the microcosm and macrocosm challenges in school and community relationship is quite necessary in determining quality academic delivery in Nigerian Universities. The study examined the various types of relationship: (career oriented relationship, validation relationship, sacrificial relationship, trophy relationship) and also that of micro and macro challenges in school – community relationship which includes: politics, trespassing/encroaching, leadership and finance, law, teaching and vision respectively. The study also identified POSDCORB as a major management strategy towards curbing the challenges of school and community relationship. The study also reviewed the various characteristics, importance and also the two major types of schools. Different types of problems and functions of a community were all addressed. Microcosm and macrocosm challenges of school – community relationship with their solutions in relation to all the variables were all stated. It was concluded that school – community relationship are inseparable when managed very well. Based on the study, it was recommended amongst others that, micro and macro challenges hinder school – community relationship therefore they should be avoided. Quality academic delivery in Universities is dependent on the level of relationship that exist in the two communities.

Keywords: Management, School, Community, Microcosm, Macrocosm, Quality Academic Delivery.

Introduction

Schools and communities are like egg and yoke they work in together, hence the mother and child type of love that revolve around them. Nwosu (2019) posited that school needs community as community needs school. It is also very crucial for the

society to be in the know the functions and duties of the school functionaries and also that of the educational stakeholder same thing with community, as their functions differs, so also their challenges. The actualization and accomplishment of

educational goals and objectives is highly dependent on the peaceful coexistences between the school and the host community. School as the microcosm of the community that is the macrocosm, is where young talents are discovered and good character moulded for the betterment of the society. On the other hand, community is formal and complex with the sole aim of protecting, assisting and providing for the school that is situated within its environment. However, governments at all levels play a major role before, during and after siting of school in a particular area being the larger community that contributes more. Human and physical resources both within the school and the host community are all accountable to the government of the day so as to aid smooth running of school activities. Qualitative and quantitative product of a school from a community is as a result of adequate funding and financing from the bottom to the top. In Nigeria nowadays, government from top to bottom finds it very difficult to finance and provide the necessary resources in school ranging from furniture, classrooms, teaching aids, accommodation, incentives etc. for smooth teaching and learning in schools. Based on the inadequacy or lack of provision of basic amenities by the government to the schools, host communities both small and big steps in and make their contribution and sponsorship to the school for quality academic delivery. This research focused on how the microcosm and macrocosm challenges that existed in school-community relationship are managed. Therefore, the study is considered under the following sub-headings or variables: management, school and community, microcosm and macrocosm challenges, ways of managing the challenges for quality academic delivery, conclusion, recommendation, school and community relationship

Concept of Management

The planning, administration and organization of activities and programmes within an organization whether formal or informal is considered to be management. Administration and management are of two different meaning, while administrators channel their energy basically on human resources for effectiveness, managers focus on physical resources for efficiency. Agu (2018) posited that management is a path by which results are achieved using both living and non-living things to achieve a set goal. However, in educational sector, management is coming together of all the stakeholders with a view to achieving a common goal in education. In this content, the management staff are the managers, pilots and policy makers in the university. Managerial skill is in built in managing challenges that exist between the school and community.

Management Strategy

Over the years, the best management strategy as reported by different authorities and also cited by Abraham (2013) is POSDCORB. This acronym is all about management if gotten perfectly and it stands for: P = Planning, O = Organizing, S = Staffing, D = Directing, C = Coordinating, R = Reporting and B = Budgeting. Moving further, planning as a strategy for management goes with siting of school, for easy accessibility by the students, planning number of teaching personnel in the school, ensuring that all the physical resources (building, hostels, classrooms, instructional materials and other school plants) are available, planning for good curriculum guide for school operation. Staffing and placement of staff according to their areas of specialization is paramount in management and managing educational resources.

Organizing: bringing people together irrespective of their background to achieve a

common goal in any organization plays an important role in managing schools.

Directing: giving good directions and instructions to subordinates in an organization, especially in school environment helps to a high extent in perfecting lay down plans with a minimal available resources in school.

Coordinating: gathering and assembling all the resources like human, physical, financial, time and liquid together in most appropriate manner as a manager, enhances the path to success quickly.

Reporting: In every system there is usually an evaluation time to assess what has been done within a particular period of time and also to ascertain the level of progress. This approach is usually done from bottom to top that is the lower person reporting to the higher person.

Budgeting: Management without finance is dead on arrival. Therefore, proper budgeting and allocation of funds to an organization is very crucial for effective and efficient production. Management is a key factor in school and community relationship and with good approach and managerial strategy earlier stated, a mutual relation and good understanding between the school and host community will be established.

School

School is a breeding ground that helps in molding and structuring students and giving them a better life so as to face the larger society. Taiwo (2018) has it that school and its classroom are diagnostic and laboratory centres where problems are discovered and immediate attention given. In the same vein, Sanusi (2020) posited that school is where raw talents are discovered with the aim to produce a well cultured, physically and mental balanced personalities. Most importantly, school is the best formal organization in any society and also the only

agent of education. In a nut shell, school can still be describes as a dining table where both the big and small, young and old, rich and poor, brilliant and dull, teachers and students gather to deliberate and learn new things that will better the society.

Characteristics of School

The distinguishing features of a school from other formal organizations are as follows:

1. Teaching and learning character: it has the sole responsibility of producing graduates into the society through teaching and learning.
2. Character building: it helps to culturally prepare children on how to face life after school and also imbibe or inculcate in them good habits and sound mind.
3. Acquisition of knowledge: the basic characteristic of school/education is the transmission of knowledge from one person (teacher) to the other person (student).
4. Regimented area: it is a well systematic place where instructions, directions and orders are given and obeyed with a focus on seniority and respect among the students and teachers.

Importance of school: There are two major important variables in school and schooling and these are: primary importance and secondary importance.

- Primary importance: the school here begins from the family as the primary area where learning begins right from the parents of the child. When a child is born, he learns the mother tongue and culture before being prepared for the larger place of learning with other students. Primary importance of school is made up of the immediate family of the child like the father, mother, siblings, uncles and aunties. This can as well be called catch them young importance.

- 156 - Secondary importance: secondary importance of school/education is a continuation of already started process that is geared towards making somebody in the society. Secondary importance helps to achieve the following
- (a) Employability skill
 - (b) Acquisition of problem solving skills.
 - (c) Bridging the gap between the rich and the poor.
 - (d) Giving back to the society.
 - (e) Economic growth

Types of School: According to Ike (2019), there are two main types of school and they include (1) Special school, (2) General school.

1. **Special School:** going by the name, it is a school specially designed for some set of special people with a special care and attention for them. The schools are as follows: (i) school for the deaf and dumb, (ii) school for the mentally challenged, (iii) school for the blind, (iv) school for the physically challenged.
2. **General School:** This type of school can be found anywhere and it is meant for the public both the rich and the poor to attend; participate and acquire knowledge. The various types of general school are as follows:
 - (a) Community or public/private school: The owners of these schools are government and private individuals. They run the schools as business with the aim of making profits and also impacting knowledge respectively.
 - (b) Missionary/Theology school: This is where men of God like priest, pastors, evangelist, and preachers are trained in accordance to the doctrine of their religion.

- (c) Herbalist/traditional school: This school is for those who do not believe in western or contemporary education and culture, they see it as an act of removing or taking off their attention from their culture, e.g. 'Boko Haram' that has an ideology that western education is evil. Therefore, most parents prefers their children or wards to learn and master their culture and subsequently practice it in full capacity.

Finally, school as a major formal organization in the society, contributes positively towards the development of the nation with its numerous functions.

Community: Coming together, living together, sharing together in one characteristic and in a particular geographical area with one another is termed community. Agreeing to this, Amadi (2021) stated that community is a set of people living together with a common characteristics and in a particular place. Every community is usually situated in a particular area like cities, villages, institutions, religion, neighbourhood, etc. and also with a common laws to guide the dwellers. One of the common factors of people living in a community is communication and being able to communicate properly. Ike (2019) stated that, once an interaction between groups of individuals is able to meet and solve their problems then community exists there. Community of any kind generally has a common goal of helping co-inhabitant, solve their personal problems with good assistance.

Types of Community: Traditionally, community as an organization is divided into two main parts and they are: formal community and informal community.

1. **Informal Community:** It is made up of group of people in a particular place that interact, though not formally. Mba (2020) posited that informal organizations are very significant in the society. The following are the informal community (i) study groups, (ii) street football, (iii) praying group, (iv) newspapers reviewing/analyzing groups, etc.
2. **Formal Community:** These are globally recognized community where exchange of goods and services, assistance, interaction and problem solving takes place in one accord. They include:
 - Urban community: these are towns and cities where all the infrastructures exist, with many people living together in that geographical area, e.g. Port Harcourt City, Lagos City, New York City, London, etc.
 - Rural community: This is another wider scope of community where many people with a common character live and actualize their aim with cooperation from other inhabitants, e.g. villages, ancestral homes, less developed areas, etc. This particular community is faced with major challenges like bad road, lack of electricity, poor funding etc.
 - Neighbourhood community: It is a community of few people that understands themselves both in class and standard with a corresponding respect to the individuals' level in the society.
 - National community: In the eye of the world, Nigeria is a community with a very large population of people that despite their different cultural and ethnic diversity, still understand themselves by living

together and solving their problems collectively. Therefore, every nation is a mother community of other communities in that country.

- Global/International community: The world is the overall community on earth with the highest number of population or inhabitants though with different lifestyle but one characteristic and goal.

Functions of Community

There are several functions within and outside community, for a smooth operation. Among all the functions, few are stated below.

- (i) Provision of security: Assisting the government in protecting facilities like school, electric transformers, boreholes etc through a local channel like vigilante or community police is one of the major functions of a community to its environs.
- (ii) Maintenance of facilities: Communities, both formal and informal, play a major role in maintaining facilities under their care by making sure they are in good shape at all time for durability.
- (iii) Donation and sponsorship: Major players and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are residents in the community usually denote both cash and other materials that make life easier for schools and other members of the public.

School-Community Relationship

School-community relationship is mutualistic in rare cases parasitic and works simultaneously to achieve a unified goal. School and community has no monopoly of success respectively, that is they both need each other to succeed and whatever affects one also affects the other. Sani (2016) maintained that the quality of education that

emanates from any school depends on the type of relationship that exists between the school and the community. School being the microcosm (small community) of the macrocosm (larger community), operates in accordance with the set rules and laws of the host community. The relationship, however, helps to boost the educational curriculum and ensures effective utilization of the curricular content for quality academic delivery in the university.

Moving further, schools and host communities operate side by side by engaging or bringing together families, teachers as in-loco parentis, stakeholders in the community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government for a better planning of educational policies in the country. Basically, schools bring intellectual properties, solutions to the problems of the community and job creation to the society through the host community while communities contribute their quota with the available resources (financial and physical) within their possession.

Objectives of School-Community Relationship

The objectives of the relationship as stated by Amadi (2021) include:

1. To promote the interest of students and inculcate in them the importance of unity.
2. To bridge the gap between school and community in the areas of conflict and clash.
3. To establish a conducive learning environment for quality academic delivery.
4. To strengthen more the source and channel of economic distribution and sharing among the two parties.
5. To have a major interactive channels that will enhance problem solving among the two parties.

Agents of School-Community Relationship

According to Taiwo (2018), below are some of the agents of school – community:

1. Community Development Committee (CDC): This comprises of the youths, the elderly and the traditional rulers which are been segmented into different groups like, light committee, security committee, scholarship committee, development committee, etc. All these committees interface with the government in order to bring or attract development to the school and community at large.
2. Parents Teachers Association (PTA): Being a member of the community and also the parents of the students, both the interest of the school, students and community are protected.
3. The religious body: The church, mosque, and tradition religions all contribute positively in sustaining the relationship that exist between the community and the school.
4. NGOs and Pressure Groups: Groups like NLC, ASUU, ANSU, NUPENG, etc all protect the interest of the two parties in solidarity either for or against any policy or laws that are meant for the groups.
5. Alumni and Old Boys Associations: In many occasions, they intervene and help to solve some problems and challenges that government could not solve immediately for the school and society.

Common Qualities of School and Community

School and community are organizations of different structure though with one vision and objective. The common features of the two are as follows:

- (a) Decision making: Every organization either formal or informal all have decision making body Nwosu (2019). In

the local community, it starts with the traditional rulers down to the least person in authority within the rural area. In school also, the principal down to the gate keeper all contribute in decision making and implementation. Decision making in these two groups are usually taking from top to bottom and not bottom to top.

(b) Communication: there are usually established means of communication and interaction for proper understanding of each other.

159 Leadership style: Both possess leadership style which could be autocratic, democratic or laissez-faire style of leadership. In adopting a particular style, the following are elements that go with it: (i) power, (ii) authority, (iii) duties and roles, (iv) decision taking,

(d) Participation: Both participate actively within their jurisdiction

(e) Continuous learning: Learning is continual therefore, with the help of the school, communities learn new things to widen their reasoning and understanding of the modern world.

(f) Trust: The subordinates of both school and community have high trust for them.

Types of Relationship in School and Community

In this research, four main types of relationship exist. They are:

1. Career oriented relationship: Agu (2020) identified this type of relationship as one of the best because it aimed towards career improvement and attainment. The two parties relate based on what they can gain from each other.
2. Validation relationship: This can also be called do for me, I do for you relationship. The school and the community helps each other to validate,

revive and implement policies easily based on the common relationship they both have.

3. Sacrificial relationship: In every relationship, there must be sacrifice and sacrifices are made because of relationship and love. School and teachers sacrifice a lot to teach the students of the host communities which their sacrifice cannot be quantified or measured. Same way also, the community make much sacrifice by putting their lives in protecting school facilities from hoodlums.

4. Trophy relationship: The end point of every relationship is celebration and lifting of trophies.

Microcosm and Macrocosm: these two concepts are used to describe whole and little, small and big portion of living and non-living things. However, in this context, micro and macro are used to describe small and big challenges in school and community relationship for quality academic delivery in Nigerian universities.

Microcosm Challenges of School-Community Relationship

There are many micro challenges that hinders smooth, cordial and mutual relationship between the school and the community. In the cause of this research, few of the challenges are as follows:

- (a) Politics: The involvement of schools in local or community politics contributes heavily to the conflict that always arise between both. In the same vein, community interferences in the activities of school triggers lack of respect and recognition from the school to the community which at the end problems and clash erupt.
- (b) Trespassing and encroachment: Trespassing is the community forcefully

having access to the properties and possessions of the school without being allowed, permitted or granted access to enter. Same channel too, schools find it as a norm to encroach into the land of the community or cross the boundaries so as to forcefully grab community land for their personal interest. This also raises high chances of conflict among the two which can lead to fatality damage.

(c) Leadership style: Any leadership style adopted by the school head or the community head that is not democratic or participatory leadership style to carry both sides along will always lead to disagreement and major conflict in the two communities.

(d) Wrong siting of schools: If the siting and planning of school is wrongly done, there will be problem of full participation and cooperation or the gap between the two communities will be very difficult to contain.

Amie-Ogan (2021) posited that school resources have direct impact on the learning environment with much determinant to educational outcome. If the resources cannot be accessed, then the problem will be unavoidable.

Macrocosm Challenges of School-Community Relationship

Macro challenges comes with bigger negative influence on the two sides of the community. Some of these challenges are stated as:

1. Finance: Finance as one of the major resources controls the economy of a country and as well determines the direction of the ball. When the nation as a larger community lacks fund to finance and take up its responsibility in assisting educational community and rural communities, the end point is usually strike, protest, social unrest, criminality,

etc. On that note, the hormonal relationship among other communities of interest will not be guaranteed. The resultant effects to these lapses of inability of the government to provide funds is unemployment, high debt, lack of saving, increased societal problems etc.

2. Law: Rules, regulations, policies, bye-laws and others are either formulated by the government or has a nod of the government to carry on irrespective of the law. There are negative and positive policies, or good and bad laws that most times are targeted towards a certain group of persons or communities just to ensure their goals are not met. Allowing this to go on is provocative and usually causes a twist like riot, protest, killings etc. all these unrest happens in collaboration with the school and community in fighting for their right.

3. Teaching profession: Teaching and learning takes place anywhere and anytime with the sole aim of impacting knowledge from one person to another person most times under a good environment Nwosu (2019). Therefore, when the government as the coordinating community fails to dish out the required manpower in the respective areas for quality academic standard, school and community relationship will be shattered.

4. Vision: Being proactive and able to identify future problems and solve them, contributes or unifies the school and community more.

Ways of Managing Microcosm and Macrocosm Challenges

Challenges and problems are bound to occur within educational sector so as to help strengthen the foundation and functions of educational institution for a better human

capital development in the society. Agu (2018), stated the following factors as ways by which school and community challenges can be managed.

- ✓ Good governance
- ✓ Good governmental policies
- ✓ Dialogue and conflict resolution skills
- ✓ Provision of funds
- ✓ Equity, justice and fairness
- ✓ Provision of adequate man power to school and social amenities to communities
- ✓ Appointment of community stakeholders and school managers into governing council

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Quality academic delivery in Nigerian Universities

Excellent academic delivery and performance is achieved through the production and provision of all the contributory machineries in education. Sanusi (2020) agreed that the availability of educational resources helps to solve academic challenges in education. Less provision of educational resources by the stakeholders poses a big threat to the quality of academic delivery in Nigerian universities. Therefore, proper management of both microcosm and macrocosm challenges between the school and the community helps to a high extend in achieving high quality academic delivery in Nigeria universities. Peaceful environment with a good working standard and policy both for the school and the community helps in human capital development.

Ways to Strengthen School-Community Relationship

Strengthening school-community relationship enhances quality academic delivery in schools. Ways of bonding the relationships are as follows:

- (a) Engage all stakeholders: Bringing everybody on board under one umbrella will tighten more friendship in school and community.
- (b) Good understanding
- (c) Good economic plan
- (d) Standard curriculum
- (e) Problem solving spirit
- (f) Availability of funds
- (g) Respect for each other
- (h) Good policy
- (i) Availability of manpower

Conclusion

This research work centered on managing the challenges that exist between school-community relationships in managing the problems, and good management strategy that will help to boost the cordial relationship already in existence. Application of all the factors that helps in strengthening the relationship of the two communities, to an extent helps to stop or quench the various problems in school-community relationship for quality academic delivery in Nigerian universities.

Suggestions

Based on the investigations made, the following suggestions were made:

1. A good management strategy should always be adopted in managing the challenges already stated.
2. All the micro and macro challenges should be avoided.
3. Schools should know their limit vis-à-vis so as to maintain the cordial relationship among them.
4. All stakeholders should be carried along when taking decisions.
5. Provision of fund and other materials should be encouraged.
6. Sacrificial relationship should be the best relationship to operate.

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