COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN LOWER BASIC EDUCATION DELIVERY FOR PROMOTING PUPILS ACADEMIC INTEREST AND PERFORMANCE IN PANKSHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY, PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated community involvement in lower basic education delivery for promoting pupils academic interest and performance in Pankshin local government education authority, Plateau State. Three research question and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling was adopted to select 200 respondents out of the total population of 600 teachers from Lower basic schools in Pankshin L.G.A. The instrument titled: community involvement in lower basic education delivery for promoting pupils academic interest and performance (CILBEDPPAIP) questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents from the sampled schools. Face and content validity of the instrument was determined by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha and the reliability coefficients of 0.82, 0.80 and 0.81 was obtained with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.81 which was considered high for the study. Data were collected and analyzed using mean and standard deviation while Pearson Moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the communities are involved in lower basic education delivery at moderate rate and absence of community involvement in lower basic education would affects pupils' academic interest and performance poorly. Findings also revealed low positive involvement of community in lower basic education delivery for promoting pupils academic interest and performance. There was significant relationship between community involvement in lower basic education delivery and pupil's academic interest and performance in Pankshin Local

Government Education Authority. There is no significant difference between community Involvement in Basic Education Delivery in Lower Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority and Academic Interest of Pupils in Lower Basic Schools in Pankshin. Based on the findings of the study , it was recommended that school heads should ensure good school community relationship as this could help mobilize community members to increase their involvement in school management. On the other hand, advocacy materials can be printed and placed at strategic corners in the school as well as awareness campaign on the importance of community involvement in education to enhance sustainable growth in education and economy.

Keywords*: community involvement, basic education, pupils, Academic interest, Academic Performance*

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right and a crucial element in the development of any society. The development of any nation overtime has been seen to hinge heavily on the educational foundation of its citizens. This implies that education is a means of effecting change on the society through individuals in the learning environment in order to build a well developed country. Basic Education according to international standard of classification of Education (ISCED) (2011) is the first nine years of formal schooling and is made up of two levels. Level I is primary education (usually six years) and level 2 refers to lower secondary (usually three years JSS 1-3) in the Nigerian context. It also covers non-formal and informal activities intended to meet basic learning needs of people of all ages (UNESCO, 2011). In Nigeria, Basic Education is seen as system of learning from basic one to basic six known as lower basic and from junior secondary one to junior secondary three which is known as upper basic. This basic education is designed to give children proper and foundation training for sound mind and appreciates the societal values. This supports the notion highlighted in the National Policy on the philosophy of education which includes but not limited to living in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice, and promote African solidarity and world peace through understanding (FRN, 2013)

Globally, primary education otherwise known as lower basic education in Nigeria serves as the foundation upon which all other levels of education are built. In many developing countries, primary education is the most critical stage, as it equips children with essential basic

knowledge and skills that shape their future learning experiences and social development. Negligence of the communities' involvement has negative roles in the educational domain which could results to social menace such as hunger, banditry, militancy, kidnappings, stealing; Almajiris among others.

Community involvement is the active involvement of parents, families and local communities in the planning, designing, coordinating, executing, supervising, monitoring and evaluation of programmes or projects for better education delivery. Community involvement includes parents, local leaders, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders actively involving in various educational activities such as provision of infrastructure, decision-making processes, and school governance. The researchers defined community involvement as an active collaboration of various stakeholders which include parents, non-governmental organizations and community members in the educational process. This holistic approach is grounded in the understanding that education is not solely the responsibility of the government or schools but a collective societal effort. Poor community involvement of some communities in Plateau state has contributed to people abandoning their ancestral homes and farms due to series of attacks by herdsmen which has resulted to killings of women, children and constant conflicts within the schools and its environment among others. This could be attributed to being illiterate and timid, this is because school is seen as a place that modifies individual's behaviors from undesirable to desirable as well acquires necessary cultural values and knowledge for decision making. When children are trained in a hostile environment they will tend to behave in undesirable manners therefore community involvement should be given a priority to avoid poor involvement of the parents, philanthropists and guardians. This is in line with Lukeman (2024) who opined that poor community involvement in education contributes to social menace. Lack of community involvement in education delivery encourages local challenges, and promotes divisive practices that cannot accommodate the diverse needs of pupils (Lema and Mwila, 2022).

Community involvement is imperative for any policy designed to improve educational performance in a country. Parents and community participation is one of the five key elements common to school effectiveness models, the others being learning, teaching, responsiveness to children's needs and management. This is one of the reasons while impact of community involvement on pupils' academic interest and performance is profound and multifaceted as when communities are actively involved in education delivery, pupils are more likely to

develop a keen interest in their studies and achieve higher academic performance. This enhancement occurs through various channels, including improved school environments, better resource allocation, increased motivation and support for pupils (Anisiobi and Obidike, 2020). First, community involvement leads to the creation of a conducive learning environment. When parents and community members participate in school activities, it fosters a positive school culture and enhances the physical and emotional atmosphere of the school. For example, communities can help maintain school facilities, provide additional learning materials, and support extracurricular activities, all of which contribute to a more engaging and stimulating educational environment (Lema and Mwila, 2022)

In addition, effective community involvement ensures better resource allocation and management. Communities contribute resources that may not be readily available through government funding, such as volunteer labor, local materials for school construction, and financial donations. This supplementary support helps address gaps in the education system, providing schools with the necessary tools and infrastructure to enhance learning experiences (Anusiobi and Obidike, 2020). The presence of a supportive and engaged community boosts pupils' motivation and self-esteem. When pupils see that their education is valued by their families and community members, they are more likely to take their studies seriously and strive for academic excellence. Community involvement is a collaborative input, abilities and skills from the parents, relatives and other members of the community in the educational process. Plateau State, located in the central region of Nigeria, exemplifies these broader national dynamics, facing unique educational challenges and opportunities that warrant detailed investigation as to whether involving the community in basic education will improve pupils' academic interest.

Academic interest refers to the enthusiasm, motivation, and curiosity that pupil's exhibit towards their educational pursuits (Lee, Lee and Jeong, 2023). It is a critical component of the learning process, influencing how pupils engage with their studies, the effort they put into their academic work, and their overall attitude towards learning (Nwana and Okeke, 2024). Academic interest is not merely a transient feeling; it is a sustained inclination that drives pupils to explore subjects more deeply, seek out additional knowledge, and apply themselves diligently to their academic tasks (Harefa, 2023). Pupils' academic interest is the feelings, attraction and attentions a child has towards a particular subject or subjects of a learner that motivate them to pursuit academically. The researchers defined academic interest as a

psychological construct that plays a major role in various life activities including academic performance.

Academic performance refers to the measurable performance of a pupil in their educational pursuits, typically evaluated through various forms of assessments such as exams, standardized tests, projects, and assignments (Okeke and Uwakwe, 2024). It is an indicator of the extent to which a pupil has acquired the knowledge, skills, and competencies set out in the educational objectives. Academic performance is often quantified by grades or scores, which provide a tangible measure of a pupil's proficiency and understanding in specific subject areas (Emesi and Anyanwu, 2024). The researchers defined academic performance as the ability to meet academic expectations, which includes: obtaining good grades, participating in class, and demonstrating a solid understanding of the concepts being taught. Academic performance also has to do with how well or badly a child performs academically in school.

Ideally academic interest and performance cannot be achieved if there is no collaborative approach from the host community. This collaborative approach makes the school and classroom environment conducive for learning. Classroom environment provides pupils with effective instruction and promotes smooth teaching-learning process and affect academic performance positively. The power of the classroom environment is expressed in the formulation of interest as key factor in the enhancement of student engagement. According to Kpolovie, Joe and Okoto (2014), academic interest is the affective reaction triggered by specific or appealing stimuli in the environment. It can be enhanced through the manipulation or modification of certain aspects of the learning environment and contextual factors such as teaching strategies, task presentation and structuring of learning experiences. Academic performance represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments (Steinmay, 2014). Therefore community participation is necessary if universal basic education must be used for sustainable development in Nigeria especially in Pankshin local government education authority, Plateau State.

Observation has shown that many schools in Plateau State suffers from inadequate infrastructure, hindering effective teaching and learning. Teacher quality and stability are critical factors in pupil’s performance, yet many basic schools in Plateau state face high turnover rates, disrupting the learning environment and negatively impacting pupils performance. This goes a long way in affecting the academic interest of the pupils in basic

education level. It is because of poor and fluctuating performances of the pupils in basic education that prompted public outcry which has emerged due to below-expectation in academic performance of pupils in Plateau State. Recent observations by Dawap (2024) revealed that many pupils struggle with reading fluently, writing accurately, and communicating effectively, exhibiting poor handwriting and performing poorly in terminal exams. Even Prof. Mathew Sule, the then Executive Chairman of the State Universal Basic Education Board, noted that upon visiting schools, he found many primary five pupils unable to read, write, or even spell their names (Dawap, 2024). His subsequent visits to both rural and urban schools confirmed that the entire education system was in dire need of urgent attention as the academic interest and performance of the pupils is on the decline (Vanguard, 2018). Poor level of community involvements in basic school in Plateau state may have caused set back on academic interest and performances as well as increase in social vices in the community. Based on the backdrop, this study seeks to explore these dynamics in detail, examining the specific ways in which community involvement impacts primary education in Plateau State and identifying best practices that can be replicated and scaled across similar contexts.

Statement of the Problem

Involvement of parents, school administrators, philanthropists and guardians promotes conducive environment and academic excellence among the school pupils. It is a source of joy which arouses pupils interest in academics seeing their parents and significant others being part of their school progress. But situation in Plateau State is worrisome due to poor community involvement in basic education delivery which may have contributed to the high number of school dropout especially in Pankshin local government Education Authority. Observation has shown that Pankshin local government struggles with several issues within its education sector, including insufficient funding, a lack of qualified personnel, and inadequate educational resources. Despite the recognition of the importance of community involvement, many schools continue to experience limited engagement from parents and local communities. Factors such as socio-economic challenges, lack of awareness, and inadequate communication between schools and communities may hinder effective collaboration as a result, schools often operate in isolation, without the vital input and backing of the communities they serve. This situation exacerbates educational disparities, leaving many children without the foundational skills and knowledge necessary for their future academic and socio-economic success. Ultimately, the

underperformance of pupils in Plateau State may undermines the broader goals of national development and the potential for the community to thrive. Hence the researcher seeks to examine community involvement in basic education delivery for promoting pupils academic interest and performance in lower basic schools in Plateau state.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the community involvement in lower basic education delivery in promoting pupils academic interest and performance in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau state. Specifically, the study seeks to

1. determine the benefits of community involvement in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.
2. Examine how community involvement promotes academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.
3. Find out how community involvement promotes academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the benefits of community involvement in lower Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State?
2. How does community involvement promote academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau state?
3. How does community involvement promote the academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau state?

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in mean rating of community involvement and academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community involvement and academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Methods

The study employed descriptive survey research design. Three research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The population of the study comprised of 600 teachers from lower Basic schools in Pankshin. 200 teachers were selected as the sample for the study using simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement. 10 teachers each were selected from 20 schools out of the 42 lower Basic schools in the area. A questionnaire structured by the researchers titled: Community Involvement in Lower Basic Education Delivery in Promoting Pupils Academic Interest and Performance (CILBEDPPAIP) was used for data collection. The items were structured along the modified four point scoring scale of Strongly Agree, SA =4 points, Agree, A=3 points, Disagree, D=2 points and Strongly Disagree, SD=1 point. Face and content validity of the instrument was determined by the three experts, two from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one from the Department of Educational foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), all in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha formula was used to compute internal stability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82, 0.80 and 0.81 was obtained with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.81 which was considered high for the study. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while Pearson Moment coefficient was used to answer the hypotheses. The decision rule was set at 2.50 which is the midpoint for the scale. Therefore, items with mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted as indication of areas of community participation while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as indication of areas of low level of community participation

Results.

Research Question One: What are the benefits of community involvement in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.?

Table 1: Mean ratings on benefits of community involvement in lower Basic schools n Pankshin local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

S/N	Benefits of Community Involvement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	It will improve relevance of school curriculum to societal needs.	3.20	0.61	Agreed
2	It increases government-community relation and partnership.	3.30	0.58	Agreed
3	Effective communicating with school authority	2.83	1.06	Agreed
4	Checking indiscipline in school through local vigilante	2.56	0.86	Agreed
5	Implementing policy decisions of PTA.	2.86	0.63	Agreed
6	It helps to reduce dropout rate.	3.42	0.86	Agreed
7	It improves attendance and promptness for pupils and teachers.	3.30	0.48	Agreed

Data in table 1 shows that items 1 -7 have mean scores of 3.20, 3.30, 2.83, 2.56, 2.86, 3.42 and 3.30 respectively which shows that the items are benefits of community involvement in lower Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Research Question Two: How does community involvement promote academic interest of pupils in lower Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State?

Table 2: Mean ratings on community involvement in promoting academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin. Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

S/N	community involvement promote pupils interest in the following ways;	X	SD	Decision
8	Classroom construction by the community.	3.25	1.16	Agreed
9	Provision of basic furniture such as lands, tables, chairs, food items among others.	3.40	0.68	Agreed
10	Donation of fund by the community	1.78	1.02	Disagreed
11	Construction of access roads to schools	1.90	1.13	Disagreed
12	Donation of ICT facilities in schools	1.60	1.24	Disagreed
13	Provision of enough social incentives such as school feeding programme in schools	3.40.	0.68	Agreed
14	Sponsoring children through scholarships	3.25	1.16	Agreed
15	Collaborate with the teachers to know pupils that have special talent	3.25	0.77	Agreed

Data in table 2 above shows that items 8, 9, 13, 14 and 15 are ways community promotes academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in the study area while items 10,11 and 12 does not promotes academic interest of pupils in lower basic schools in the study area.

Research Question Three: How does community involvement promotes the academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State?

Table 3: Mean ratings on how community involvement promotes the academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

	Community involvement promote academic performance in the following ways;	**X**	**SD**	**Decision**
16	Prize and award giving to the best performing pupils through P.T.A help to improve academic performance of pupils.	3.10	0.52	Agreed
17	Recruitment of PTA teachers in important subjects in rural areas due to shortage of teachers	2.53	0.72	Agree
18	Community active participation and decision making relating to the curriculum of the school.	2.80	0.61	Agreed
19	Provision of transportation for children by the community	3.10	0.52	Agreed
20	Provision of adequate instructional aids by the community	2.53	0.72	Agreed
21	Management of the school in the area of organizing extra mural classes for the better academic performance	3.30	0.48	Agreed

Data in table 3 shows that items 17 to 21 have mean scores above 2.50 which indicates that the items were accepted by the respondents as ways community involvement promotes the academic performance of pupils in basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority in Plateau State.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community involvement and Academic interest of pupils in basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority in Plateau State.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson difference between Community involvement and Academic Interest Scores of Pupils in Basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority in Plateau State.

Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**R**	**Df**	**Pvalue**	**Decision**
Community involvement	118	.822	12.699				
Academic interest	82	0.37	13.114	0.700	27	0.000	
Total	200						

Table 4 above shows the difference index r value is 0 0.700 degree freedom of 27 and pvalue of 0.00, (P .00 <0.05). The result shows that the difference is significant because the pvalue lower than0.05 alpha level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of community involvement and academic performance of pupils in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.

Table 5: ***Test of Pearson significance between community involvement in lower Basic schools and promoting academic performance in lower basic schools in Pankshin Local Government Education Authority, Plateau State.***

Variable	N	R	P value	Decision
Community involvement	86			Not significant
		0.84	0.000	
Academic performance	114			Not significant
Total	200			

Table 5 above shows that the significance relationship of community involvement in Basic Education Delivery in promoting pupils academic performance in lower basic schools was 0.84 and had p-value (p.00 < 0.05) which indicates that the p-value (0.05). There is a significant relationship between community involvements in lower basic school. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed the benefits of community involvement in lower basic schools such that it improves relevance of school curriculum to societal needs, Community involvement increases government-community relationship and partnership. It was also discovered that community involvement promotes good relationship and partnership, helps to reduce dropout rate and improve attendance rate of pupils among others. Therefore, the

findings of this study was in collaboration with Usman (2018) who opined that community involvement in school governance in such areas of provision of financial and material supports are key factors to determine school effectiveness in sub-Sahara Africa.

Finding of this study revealed that community provision of adequate financial aids for the renovation and construction of classroom blocks, provision of basic facilities such as lands, tables and chairs and school feeding programme among others are ways the community can promote the academic interest of pupils. The finding is in collaboration with the work of Edem and Phoebe (2008) who opined that community participation includes provision of basic needs to complement government efforts.

Findings revealed that prize and award giving to the best performing pupils through PTA teachers, recruitment of PTA teachers in important subjects due to shortage of teachers and active participation on some decision making relating to curriculum of the school among others are ways community involvement community can promote academic performance This finding supports the opinion of Abimbola, Onyewuchi and Adeniyi (2024) that community participation in basic education delivery involves being active in some decision making of the school relating to the school curriculum and societal needs to avoid clustering of "Almajiri" in Hausa language popularly known as street beggars. This finding is supported by Lema and Mwila (2022) who stated that community involvement in education improved resource condition in schools. Education for sustainable development can only be attained when curriculum is made relevant to community needs. In terms of increased accountability, involvement of parents and communities in school management have been shown to be a means of making school more accountable to the society which fund them.

Conclusion

Community involvement in lower basic education delivery in promoting pupils academic interest and performance is the active involvement of parents and communities in the day to day activities of the school for better education delivery. Community involvement in education is a sure way of attaining effective school functioning, economic competiveness by helping schools produce market capable workforce, pupils' well-being and sustainable development. Provision of basic infrastructures, recruitment of PTA teachers and involvement in the decision making in basic school among others are very essential.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it was recommended that;

1. School heads should ensure good school community relationship as this could help mobilize community members to increase their participation in school management.
2. Formation of school community councils could help bring the schools and communities together for better community involvement in educational management and school improvement.
3. Nigerian government should enforce laws, regulations and sanctions that will compel parents and communities to be actively involved in the management of education.

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