



Influence of Community Participation on the Administration of Public Secondary Schools in Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of community participation on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. Three specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study was 4,305 comprising 300 principals and 4,005 teachers of all the 300 public secondary schools in Benue State. The sample size for the study was 366 teachers and principals selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Community Participation and Administration of Public Secondary School Questionnaire" (CPAPSSQ). The questionnaire was validated by three experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer research questions while Chi-Square Goodness of fit to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that community participation has low influence on school administration in terms of conflict resolution, security and resource mobilization. The nature of the influence across the variables of school administration was observed to be significantly low. The study concluded that, community participation in the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State is markedly insufficient across critical areas such as conflict resolution, security, resource mobilization, extracurricular activities and awareness creation. The study therefore recommended among others that schools should establish community-led mediation programs and restorative justice initiatives can provide alternative methods for resolving conflicts; schools should collaborate with local law enforcement agencies, community watch groups, and retired law enforcement officers to bolster security efforts. Engaging these stakeholders in providing security services and assisting with crowd control during school events can enhance safety measures within school premises and schools should partner with community organizations, alumni associations, and local businesses to secure sponsorships, grants, and donations for school projects.

Keywords: Community Participation, School Administration, Conflict Resolution, Security and Resource Mobilization

Introduction

Globally, community participation in the administration of schools is recognized as a crucial element in fostering inclusive and effective education systems. The involvement of local communities in school governance and decision-making processes is seen as a means to enhance accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs of students and families. This global recognition of the importance of community participation stems from a broader understanding of education as a collective responsibility involving various stakeholders, including parents, educators, policymakers, and community members (Okebukola & Jegede, 2017). Recognizing the limitations of centralized decision-making and the need for grassroots involvement, governments and educational authorities have increasingly emphasized the role of communities in shaping the direction and priorities of their local schools. This shift towards decentralization and community empowerment reflects a growing need to provide quality education.

Nigeria's commitment to providing quality education is reflected in its secondary school system, which serves as a critical stage in the educational journey of its youth. In Nigeria, secondary education is vital to the development and progress of the nation. It provides access to higher education and job opportunities, promotes national and social development, and contributes to personal development. The Nigerian government has invested in secondary education to ensure that every individual has access to quality education. This is because secondary education promotes social development by equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills to participate actively in society (Okebukola & Jegede, 2017). Secondary education plays a critical role in advancing social development, alleviating poverty, and fostering sustainable development (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2021). The objectives of secondary school education, as outlined by the Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria (2013) through its national policy on education encompass several key areas aimed at preparing students for societal engagement, higher education, cultural appreciation, ethical development, and workforce readiness. It is worthy of note that in attainment of the objectives and goals of secondary school education in Nigeria, school administration is critical.

The term administration is regarded as the process of integrating the appropriate human and material resources that are made available and made effective for achieving the purposes of a programme. Peremotode cited in Ochai (2013) defines school administration as a discipline that is concerned with facilitating the accomplishment of the school organization through systematic utilization of the available human and material resources. It is concerned with identifying, maintaining, motivating, controlling and unifying formally and informally organized human and material resources within an integrated system like the school designed specifically to achieve predetermined objectives. The effectiveness of the school administration depends on the qualities and quantities of both human and materials resources available for the implementation of the school policies and programmes. School administration covers areas like school-community relationship, staff administration, students' administration, teaching and learning, planning and implementation, financial resources allocation, school development, plant maintenance and management, supervision of teachers, school planning and school security among others. Within the realm of school administration, the role of communities cannot be underestimated.

Community participation refers to the active involvement of parents, guardians, community leaders, and other stakeholders in the governance and management of public institutions, including secondary schools. This collaborative approach to education promotes engagement, shared responsibility, and partnership between schools and their surrounding communities (Epstein, 2018). In Nigeria, as in other countries, communities are increasingly encouraged to participate in the educational process, recognizing its potential to enhance the quality and quantity of education and improve the overall well-being of individuals within the community (Bray & Lillis, 2016). To Bray and Lillis (2016), community participation is a functioning commitment of people inside a community to fathom conditions, impact arrangements and projects that are outfitted towards improving the nature of their lives. It assumes an essential role in advancing education in terms of quality and quantity; and it is believed that community participation and strengthening have the potential to significantly contribute to educating individuals and improving their quality of life.

Community participation in school administration is vital, as it not only promotes transparency and accountability but also fosters a sense of ownership among community members. This involvement of the community in school administration aligns with the global Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015). Furthermore, community participation in the administration of public secondary schools takes on great significance. Communities are integral stakeholders in the educational process, and their active engagement ensures that schools are more accountable, effective, and responsive to the specific needs of the students and the local context. Communities play a critical role in complementing the efforts of school administrators and government bodies. Community participation in secondary school administration can manifest in various forms, influencing key aspects of school life. These areas of participation in school administration can include but are not limited to conflict resolution, security, resource mobilization, extracurricular activities, and awareness creation.

Conflict resolution, within the context of this study, is a critical aspect of school administration in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. It refers to the process of addressing and mitigating disputes, disagreements, or tensions that may arise within the school community, involving various stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents, and school administrators. It encompasses a range of activities aimed at managing conflicts in a constructive and peaceful manner, promoting a harmonious learning environment, and preventing disruptions to the educational process (Cohen, 2013). The issues could be on matters including academic disputes, disciplinary matters, disagreements over school policies, and interpersonal conflicts among students or staff. Community participation in this context involves the active involvement of community members in the resolution of conflicts that may arise in public secondary schools. Their role may include mediating disputes, providing input on conflict resolution processes, or supporting the school in various ways to ensure that conflicts are addressed effectively. Hence, conflict resolution is integral to the smooth functioning of secondary schools, as disputes and tensions, if left unaddressed could disrupt the educational process, lead to decreased morale among school community members, and even pose safety concerns for students and staff.

Security in schools is a multifaceted concept in school administration. It refers to the comprehensive measures and strategies in place to safeguard the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of students, staff, and the school environment from threats, risks, and disruptions (Anderson, 2015). School security encompasses various aspects, including physical safety, protection against potential threats or dangers, and the creation of a conducive and secure atmosphere for teaching and learning. School security involves not only physical safety measures like surveillance systems, access control, and crisis response plans but also encompasses the development of a nurturing and supportive school climate, emphasizing emotional well-being and a sense of belonging among students. In the context of this study, community participation in enhancing security might involve local stakeholders, parents, community leaders, and school staff collaborating to develop and enforce safety policies, as well as promoting a positive and secure atmosphere for teaching and learning. Their involvement may influence the development and implementation of security practices, provision of necessary resources, and creating a conducive environment that fosters safety and emotional well-being for all members of the school community. The focus on community involvement in enhancing school security naturally extends to resource mobilization.

Resource mobilization as a critical aspect of school administration refers to the strategic process of acquiring and efficiently utilizing various resources, both financial and non-financial, to support educational programs and enhance the overall learning environment. To Anyanwu and Okonkwo (2014), it is the process of gathering and leveraging the collective resources, both tangible and intangible, available within the community to support the effective administration and functioning of schools. This encompasses financial resources, infrastructure, human capital, and community expertise, among other assets, which can be channeled towards improving educational facilities, programs, and overall learning experiences within these schools. In this study, community participation and resource mobilization go hand in hand as local communities are engaged in efforts to pool resources that may be channeled into various areas of school administration. This can include fundraising campaigns, contributions of teaching materials, volunteering of community members to support school activities, or initiatives to improve school infrastructure. By actively participating in the mobilization of resources, the community may strengthen its ownership of the school and contributes to the overall quality of education, ultimately leading to a more vibrant and

responsive educational environment in public secondary schools. Aside resource mobilization, another critical aspect of school administration is extracurricular activities.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that effective community participation in secondary education administration may contribute to conflict resolution, safety, and security in schools. It may ensure that schools are adequately resourced, enabling the provision of extracurricular activities that enhance the holistic development of students. Additionally, community involvement may promote awareness creation regarding the importance of education and the need for active participation in educational processes. The participation of communities in the administration of secondary schools is hence, very crucial for enhancing the administration of schools for the achievement of objectives and goals.

Over the years, it has been the researcher's observations that community participation in secondary school administration in Benue State has been suboptimal. This observed lack of involvement could adversely affect school effectiveness and overall quality of education. It is however worthy of note that active community participation fosters a sense of ownership among local stakeholders. When communities are actively involved in school administration, they are more likely to hold schools accountable, leading to improved transparency and the efficient use of resources. This study therefore explores the influence of community participation in the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State, particularly in areas such as conflict resolution, security, resource mobilization, extracurricular activities provision, and awareness creation.

Theoretical Analysis

This work is hinged on Community Based Management Theory by Elinor Ostrom (2009). Community-Based Management Theory posits that the active involvement of local communities in decision-making and management processes of educational institutions leads to more effective and efficient school administration. It emphasizes shared governance, collaborative problem-solving, and community ownership of schools. Community-Based Management Theory emphasizes the principles of shared governance, collaborative problem-solving, and community ownership of schools. It recognizes that the community has a vital stake in the success of its local schools and that their active participation can lead to more relevant and responsive educational programs. In educational institutions where educational resources may be limited, involving the community can be a means to supplement resources, improve infrastructure, and enhance the quality of education provided.

Elinor Ostrom's Community-Based Management Theory, when applied to educational settings, encompasses several key concepts. First, it underscores the significance of collective decision-making within schools, involving teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. This emphasis on collaboration can enhance the effective management of educational resources and the school environment, fostering a more inclusive and responsive administration. Second, Ostrom's theory advocates for local governance and self-organization, recognizing the effectiveness of such approaches. In the context of school administration, this concept encourages community participation in school governance and the establishment of local school management committees. These committees can play a pivotal role in decision-making, policy formulation, and resource allocation, ultimately empowering the community to actively shape the educational landscape.

The relevance of Community-Based Management Theory to this study is that it serves as a valuable lens through which researchers can analyze the scope of influence of community participation on the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State. Applying this theory allows the study to illuminate the intricacies of community involvement and its potential to enrich the educational landscape in the region. Additionally, it functions as a guiding framework that aids in comprehending the pivotal role of the community in school administration. By examining how community participation aligns with the fundamental tenets of shared governance, collaborative decision-making, and community ownership, the research provides valuable insights into the degree to which these principles are put into practice within the educational context of Benue State.

Problem Statement

Community participation in the administration of public secondary schools is a crucial aspect of the educational system. It is considered a vital means to foster community ownership of education, enhance the quality of schooling, and promote a collaborative partnership between schools and their local communities. Community involvement can positively influence various aspects of school management, including conflict resolution, security and resource mobilization. In an ideal scenario, community participation should manifest as active involvement and collaboration between school stakeholders and the local community. Communities should play an integral role in decision-making processes, ensuring the resolution of conflicts, providing additional security for the school, contributing to resource mobilization efforts. This would lead to improved school administration and the provision of quality education.

However, the researchers have observed that the reality often differs from this ideal scenario. In many public secondary schools in Benue State, community participation in school administration seem to be limited, inconsistent, or sometimes entirely absent. It is the researcher's observation that conflicts within public secondary schools in Benue State are not being effectively resolved, leading to disruptions in the teaching and learning process; schools face security challenges, including incidents of vandalism, theft, and other safety concerns and schools struggle to mobilize the necessary resources for essential school projects, leading to a lack of resources for educational activities. In view of the prominent roles that community participation is known to play in the enhancement of secondary school administration, the observations by the researcher could be that community participation in these areas are lacking or ineffective. Ultimately, the consequences of these observations is that the quality of educational administration may be hindered thus affecting the overall development of public secondary schools in Benue State. In view of these observations and the likely consequences as pointed out, the researchers investigated the influence of community participation on administration of secondary schools in Benue State.

Objectives

Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives

1. ascertain the influence of community participation on conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria
2. determine the influence of community participation on security of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria
3. find out the influence of community participation on resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions are raised to guide the study.

1. How does community participation influence conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of community participation on security of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?
3. How does community participation influence resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Community participation has no significant influence on conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria
2. Community participation has no significant influence on security of public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria
3. Community participation has no significant influence on resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was survey research design. The population of the study was 4,305 comprising 300 principals and 4,005 teachers of all the 300 public secondary schools in Benue State. The sample size for the study was 366 teachers and principals. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane (1969) sample size determination formula. The instrument for data collection was self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Community Participation and Administration of Public Secondary School Questionnaire" (CPAPSSQ). The questionnaire was divided into 5 clusters, A, B, C, D and E. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by three experts, one each from Measurement and Evaluation and two from Educational Administration and Planning and one from Measurement and Evaluation, from the departments of Guidance and Counselling and Educational Administration and Planning respectively. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was trial-tested on 30 respondents made up of principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Nasarawa State who did not constitute the study sample but considered to have similar characteristics to the subjects under study. The reliability index of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha method and coefficient 0.82 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable. Data collected for the study were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions and Chi-Square Goodness of fit was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: How does community participation influence conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the influence of community participation on conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	VHI	HI	LI	VLI	Mean	St.D	Remark
1	Community members, often act as mediators in conflicts among students, teachers, and school administrators.	34	60	173	91	2.10	.89	Low Influence
2	Community members with counseling skills offer emotional support on how to address disputes within the school	31	77	161	89	2.14	.89	Low Influence
3	Communities support the implementation of restorative justice programs in schools	28	40	189	101	1.99	.84	Low Influence

4	Communities that support fostering of sense of unity in their schools help reduce the likelihood of conflicts occurring in schools	15	71	177	95	2.02	.80	Low Influence
5	Community members have ensured inclusivity in schools, thus ensuring that all voices are heard in the conflict resolution process.	80	184	56	17	2.85	.89	High Influence
Cluster Mean						2.22	.86	Low Influence

Data presented on Table 1 revealed that except for item 5 with a mean of 2.85 which is above the benchmark of 2.50, the respondents rated 'low influence' on other items (1, 2, 3 and 4) with mean scores ranging from 1.99 – 2.14 which are below the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .80 – .89 which showed that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses. The grand mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.22 and Std. = .86. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that, influence of community participation on conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria is low.

Research Question 2: How does community participation influence security in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria??

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the influence of community participation on security in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	VHI	HI	LI	VLI	Mean	St.D	Remark
6	Community members living near the school act as additional "eyes and ears" to monitor the school environment, thus deterring potential threats to school	98	160	57	43	2.88	.95	High Influence
7	Communities that establish neighborhood watch programs that involve volunteers patrolling the school vicinity during and after school hours, thus maintaining a secure environment	39	48	169	102	2.07	.92	Low Influence
8	Community members, including retired law enforcement officers or security professionals, who volunteer their time to provide security services to the school, add extra layer of protection	30	68	173	87	1.84	1.01	Low Influence
9	During school events or gatherings, community members assist in crowd control ensuring the safety of participants and attendees.	28	56	170	104	2.02	.87	Low Influence
10	Communities that establish partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, ensure a swift response to security incidents in the school	29	71	168	90	2.11	.87	Low Influence
Cluster Mean						2.18	.92	Low Influence

Data presented on Table 2 revealed that except for item 1 with a mean of 2.88 which is above the benchmark of 2.50, the respondents rated 'low influence' on other items (7, 8, 9 and 5) with mean scores ranging from 1.84 – 2.11 which are below the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .87 – 1.01 which showed that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses. The grand mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.18 and Std. = .92. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that, influence of community participation on security in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria is low.

Research Question 3: How does community participation influence resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the influence of community participation on resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	VHI	HI	LI	VLI	Mean	St.D	Remark
11	Community members that participate in various fundraising events generate funds for the school.	25	70	164	99	2.06	.87	Low Influence

12	Community organizations often offer sponsorships to support school projects	19	58	161	120	1.93	.84	Low Influence
13	Communities assist schools in identifying grants from government agencies to support the development of the schools	21	49	177	111	1.94	.82	Low Influence
14	Community members with expertise in various fields offer their skills to the school, thus reducing the need for external contractors or consultants and saving resources	21	80	150	107	2.04	.87	Low Influence
15	Communities that contribute in-kind donations, such as classroom materials significantly reduce the school's expenditure on essential resources.	79	153	69	57	2.71	.98	High Influence
Cluster Mean						2.14	.88	Low Influence

Data presented on Table 3 revealed that except for items 15 with a mean of 2.71 which is above the benchmark of 2.50, the respondents rated 'low influence' on other items (11, 12, 13 and 14) with mean scores ranging from 1.93 – 2.06 which are below the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .82 – .98 which showed that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses. The grand mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.14 and Std. = .88. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that, influence of community participation on resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria is low.

Hypothesis 1: Community participation has no significant influence on conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Table 4: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of significance of influence of community participation on conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Response Options	Observed N	Expected N	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α – level	Remark
VHI	38	89.5					
HI	86	89.5					
LI	151	89.5					
VLI	83	89.5					
Total	358		3	72.503	.000	.05	Significant

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value, P<0.05

Table 4 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 72.503, degree of freedom (df) =3 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value (α) of 0.05. Since P<0.05, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, community participation has significant influence on conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Hypothesis 2: Community participation has no significant influence on security in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Table 5: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of significance of influence of community participation on security in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Response Options	Observed N	Expected N	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α – level	Remark
VHI	45	89.5					
HI	81	89.5					
LI	147	89.5					
VLI	55	89.5					

Total	358	3	77.122	.000	.05	Significant
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Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value, P<0.05

Table 5 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 77.122, degree of freedom (df) =3 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value (α) of 0.05. Since $P<0.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, community participation has significant influence on security in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Hypothesis 3: Community participation has no significant influence on resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Table 6: Chi-Square Goodness of fit test of significance of influence of community participation on resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Response Options	Observed N	Expected N	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	α – level	Remark
VHI	33	89.5					
HI	82	89.5					
LI	144	89.5					
VLI	99	89.5					
Total	358		3	70.492	.000	.05	Significant

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value, P<0.05

Table 6 shows the Chi-square calculated value of 70.492, degree of freedom (df) =3 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value (α) of 0.05. Since $P<0.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, community participation has significant influence on resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria

Discussion

The first finding of the study revealed that community participation has significant low influence on conflict resolution in public secondary schools in Benue State. Most notably, the respondents rated low that, communities support the implementation of restorative justice programs in schools and communities that support fostering of sense of unity in their schools help reduce the likelihood of conflicts occurring in schools. This finding aligns with Oden, Bisong, and Bisong (2013) who found low community involvement in enhancing a conducive learning environment. The limited participation in restorative justice programs and fostering unity might stem from a lack of structured collaboration between schools and the community, as well as insufficient outreach efforts to engage community members effectively. More so, the findings of Idike (2011) study, which identified peace and unity challenges among community members, supports the finding from this study that internal community issues may hinder effective participation in school activities. The finding however disagrees with that of Ogunbiyi and Obiweluozor (2022) whose study the influence of community participation in conflict resolution in the administration of public secondary schools found that communities to a great extent participated in conflict resolution of public secondary schools. This observation from the finding of this study could be attributed to several factors. There may be a lack of structured programs and initiatives that actively involve community members in school activities, particularly in conflict resolution and restorative justice. Without clear frameworks and consistent engagement opportunities, community members may not be fully aware of or equipped to participate effectively in these areas. Additionally, there might be limited resources and training available to community members, which hampers their ability to contribute meaningfully. The low rating on the support for the implementation of restorative justice programs and the fostering of unity indicates that while there is potential for community involvement, the current efforts are insufficiently organized or promoted to make a substantial impact. This suggests a need for schools and policymakers to develop more robust strategies to integrate community participation in a way that maximizes its potential benefits for conflict resolution and overall school harmony.

Secondly, the findings of the study revealed that community participation has significant low influence on security in public secondary schools in Benue State. Importantly, the respondents rated low that, community members, including retired law enforcement officers or security professionals, who volunteer their time to provide security services to the school, add extra layer of protection and during school events or gatherings, community members assist in crowd control ensuring the safety of participants and attendees. The low influence of community members on school security, including the involvement of retired law enforcement officers mirrors findings from Elechi (2003), which noted limited community roles in pupil personnel administration. This suggests a broader trend of communities not fully leveraging local resources for school security. The finding of the present study may be due to several underlying issues. One potential reason is the insufficient integration and coordination of community security efforts with the schools' existing security protocols. Despite the presence of community members, including retired law enforcement officers or security professionals, their contributions may not be effectively organized or utilized to create a substantial impact. Additionally, there might be a lack of formal training and clear guidelines for these volunteers, resulting in inconsistent and unreliable security support. The low rating given by respondents on the effectiveness

of community members in providing security services and assisting with crowd control during events suggests that these efforts are perceived as inadequate or sporadic. This could be due to limited engagement, resources, or recognition of the importance of their roles by the school administration. To improve security through community participation, there needs to be a more structured approach that includes proper training, clear roles, and better collaboration between schools and community members.

Thirdly, the findings of the study revealed that community participation has significant low influence on resource mobilization in public secondary schools in Benue State. Particularly, the respondents rated low that, community organizations often offer sponsorships to support school projects and communities assist schools in identifying grants from government agencies to support the development of the schools. Respondents rated low on community organizations offering sponsorships and identifying grants is consistent with the findings of Ijamu (2015) that community involvement in funding public secondary schools was limited. Both studies indicate a gap in leveraging community resources for school development. The finding however does not align with that of Ejeh et al. (2016) who found significant participation in school funding. This finding of the present study can be attributed to several factors. One key issue may be the lack of established partnerships and effective communication channels between schools and community organizations. Without strong relationships and ongoing dialogue, schools may struggle to engage community members and organizations in supporting school projects financially or in identifying potential grants. Additionally, there might be a limited awareness or understanding within the community about the schools' specific needs and how they can contribute meaningfully. The low ratings on community organizations offering sponsorships and assisting with grant identification suggest that there are either insufficient efforts to solicit such support or a lack of strategic planning to involve the community in resource mobilization. This scenario underscores the need for schools to develop more proactive outreach and engagement strategies, educating community members and organizations about the benefits and importance of their contributions, and establishing clear, mutually beneficial partnerships to enhance resource mobilization efforts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that community participation in the administration of public secondary schools in Benue State is markedly insufficient across critical areas such as conflict resolution, security and resource mobilization. This insufficiency suggests a pressing need for enhanced engagement strategies to leverage community resources and expertise. Strengthening community involvement could foster a more secure, resource-rich, and holistic educational environment, addressing the current gaps and contributing to the overall improvement of school administration and student outcomes.

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

1. Schools should establish community-led mediation programs and restorative justice initiatives can provide alternative methods for resolving conflicts. Through this, workshops and training sessions should be organized to equip community members with conflict resolution skills, enhancing their capacity to contribute positively to maintaining peace within school environments.
2. Schools should collaborate with local law enforcement agencies, community watch groups, and retired law enforcement officers to bolster security efforts. Engaging these stakeholders in providing security services and assisting with crowd control during school events can enhance safety measures within school premises.
3. Schools should partner with community organizations, alumni associations, and local businesses to secure sponsorships, grants, and donations for school projects. Establishing transparent communication channels and accountability mechanisms will build trust and encourage greater participation from community members in fundraising campaigns..

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