

Research article

GOOD SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP: A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CURRICULUM IN THE NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Preamble

This paper focused on good school relationship as a tool for effective implementation of the new secondary school curriculum. The school was conceived as a social system consisting of defined boundaries within which individuals interact and interrelate in the performance of activities for the purpose of achieving educational goals. In this paper the community was perceived based on its types for instance the traditional, adopted, radial and national communities. Curriculum is an integrated course of academic studies at every level of educational endeavour. It was the recommendation of this paper among others that enhancing good school-community relations entail having an understanding of the community.

Keywords: school, community and curriculum.

Introduction

The school may be conceived as a social system consisting of defined boundaries within which individuals interrelate and interact in the performance of activities for the purpose of achieving educational goals. It is a conglomerate of individuals, personalities, structures, values, interests, needs, activities and programmes functioning for the attainment of a common goal. Efarekeya (1986), Odiba & Aku (2008), Odiba (2007) and Odiba & Igonoh (2014) posited that scholars of organizational management viewed the concept of a social system from varied perspectives. For instance, Parsons the father of social system defined social system as follows:

... a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a Situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of tendency to the optimization of gratification and whose relation to their situations including each other, is defined and mediated in terms a system of culturally structured and shared symbols.

In the same vein, Carr, defined a social system as an aggregation of individuals and institutional organizations located in an identifiable geographical locality and functioning in various degrees of interdependence as a permanent organized unit of the social order.

Homans in his wisdom posited that, the activities of interrelations and sentiments of the group members together with the mutual relations of these elements with one another during the time the group is active , this constitute what we call a social system.

Lipham and Hoeh defined a social system as the aggregation of human interactions.

In summary therefore, a social system could be defined by the assemblage of individuals interacting on the basis of a number of activities in a definable environment of some specified goals.

Assumptions of a Social System

The following are the assumptions of a social system:

1. Social systems are comprised of interdependent parts, features and activities that contribute to the entire organization.
2. Social systems are goal oriented.
3. Social systems are peopled. People act in the roles of administrators, teachers, students and security operatives.
4. Social system are structural, having different components and allocate resources based on its democratic nature.
5. Social systems are normative. In this case each person is expected to behave in a manner. Formal rules, regulations and informal guides prescribe appropriate behavior.
6. Social systems are sanction bearing.

The External Environment of the Institution

The school organization is an open system, in continual interaction with the external environment in which it is a microcosm in a macrocosm. Anything outside the boundaries of the institutions' building is external environment of the school may be the immediate community in which the school is located.

The school is an open-system with defined permeable boundaries through which inputs and outputs to the school system are exchanged. Exchange of resources are made possible through the semi-permeable membraneous boundaries which the school shares with the surrounding environment. The resources which represent inputs in form of students, teachers, and other support personnel, principals, facilities and materials are brought from the external

environment into the school for its effective functioning. Outputs are returned to the external environment in form of information and graduates.

The school through its regulatory mechanisms determines the nature of inputs and kind of community members who gain access to the school premises. In so doing, the school maintains stability and prevents anything that will offset its equilibrium. Hoy and Miskel (1978) refers to the internal regulatory process of the school as home stasis. This is why schools have fences around their grounds to ward-off undesirables from the streets, or policies which regulate the behaviours of staff members including students.

Interestingly, essentially, the environment affects the school, for example, (see fig. 1), and so also technological and scientific development, economic activity, social and cultural influences, and governmental (political) actions. In order to be effective, principals must respond to the opportunities and challenges, risks and limitations, presented by the external environment. This is based on the fact that “changes in inputs will affect the transformation or conversion process and hence the outputs”.

In order to understand the operations of school organizations and to improve organizational performance, it is necessary for school administrators to consider how to achieve an internal and external balance. It is obvious

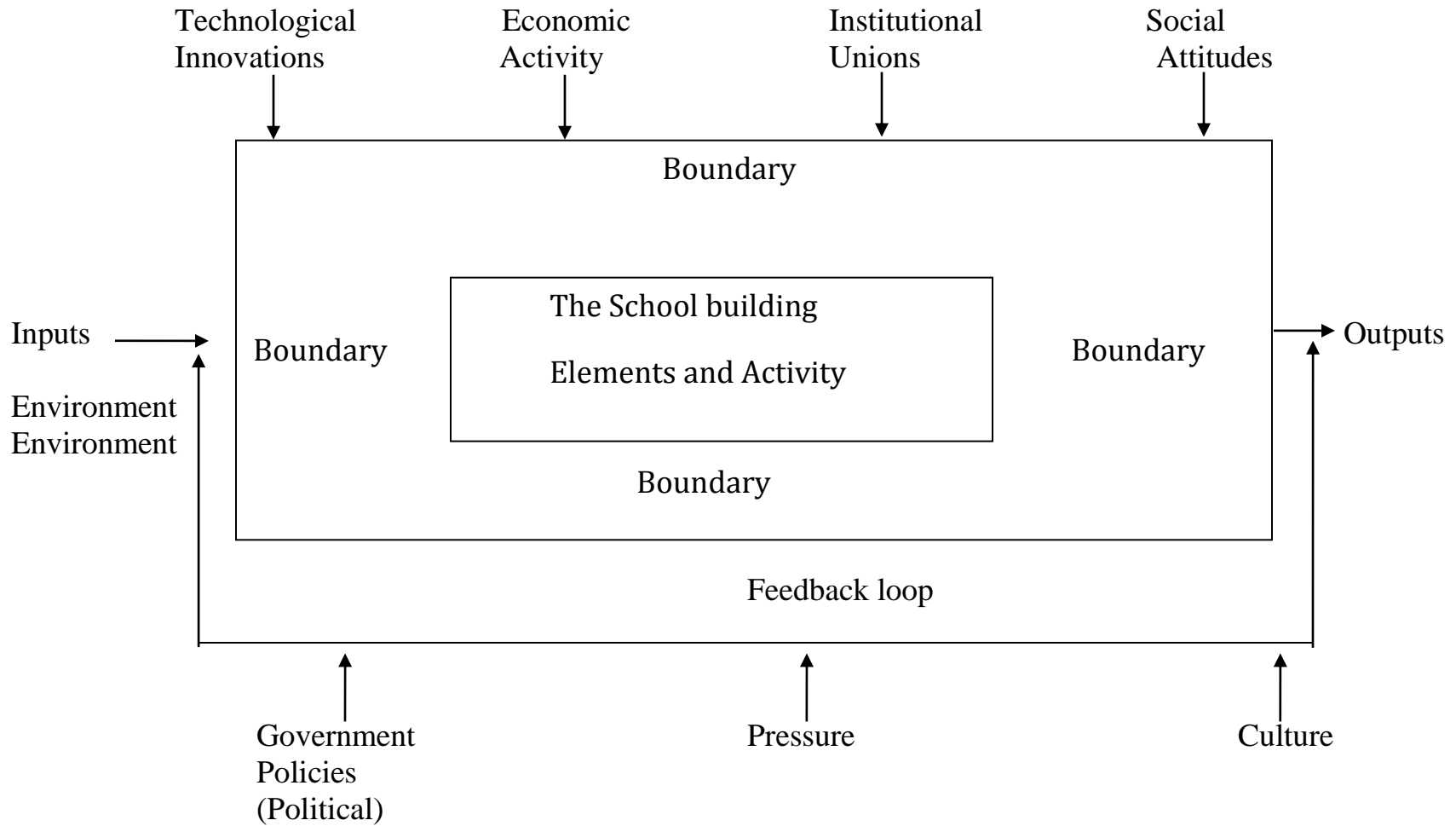


Figure 1: The School External Environment and its Influences

Source: Hoy, W. K. & Miskel, L. G. (1978). Educational administration. Theory, research and practice. USA Random House

Structural Relationships

The structure of the school provides the basis for interaction among the various individuals and groups in the system. The principal derives his role from the educational edicts and professional literature which prescribe his duties and expectations. His relationship with other individuals in the school depends to a large extent on his leadership ability and self-role expectations for the Headship position.

Efarekeya (1986) suggested that the democratic leadership behavior tends to yield more support for the Head in his relationship with Lecturers, students, members of the PTA and community members. A Head, who is democratic in his orientation, encourages members of the school to participate directly on matters related to administering, teaching and learning. Decision-making related to the effective performance of these activities are shared responsibilities of the system elements such as individual's administrators, teachers, other employees and students.

Stability in the internal environment is also maintained through the orderly arrangement of functions and the concomitant responsibilities associated with each position. Rules and regulations provide the machinery for ordering behaviours in the social system.

Furthermore, the self-role expectations and alters' role expectations may induce certain behavioural patterns among the various individuals in the social system. The behaviours may be patterned according to expectations which the individuals have of themselves and the expectations which others have for the different roles played by individuals occupying various levels of responsibilities. In some cases, these expectations may be convergent when members can identify their expectations along a common basis; and divergent when there is conflicting expectations among the system's participants. Convergent expectations may be developed when the principals expectations for his position coincides with others' expectations (that is, expectations of teachers, students, other employees, and parents) of the Headship position. In this regard, relationships become cordial and behaviours are directed toward goal achievement. But if the Heads expectations of himself and what his teachers expect of him are at variance, role conflict may arise.

These sources of role conflicts have been referred to as self – role and alters' expectations by lipham and Hoeh, Jr. in Efarekeya (1986).

The most important aspect of these role relationship has to do with role congruity and subordinate satisfaction. When there is high degree of agreement between principals and teachers, there is high level of job satisfaction for teachers and the principals. Thus, the social system therefore consists of role-relationships linked by structural relationships. The structural hierarchy in the school permits relationships to be established between and among organizational participants. The interaction of groups or members in the performance of their roles can be source of conflict, however, interdependence of members is well established through structural relationships and expectations for the achievement of results.

The Community Conceptualized.

The community would be viewed from the perspective of its types. Igwe (1990) considered the following as the types of communities in any given society.

- i. Traditional Community: This refers to a group of people living together in the same place with common values and history, bound together by multiple economic, social, religious and kinship ties and descended from people who lived in that place. All our traditional villages fall into this category.
- ii. Adopted Community: This refers to a group of people living in the same place and sharing common interests but do not necessarily have strong historical links and local ties. The various housing estates in most towns are examples of adopted community.
- iii. Radial or Dispersed Community: The people in this stance, do not necessarily live together as close neighbours but share strong ethnic, cultural or religious ties and choose to identify with the communities to

which they belong in terms of these ties rather than geographical neighborhood. Examples of this community include, Igala, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba communities in most Urban Areas, the Roman Catholic community, Muslim community or Anglican community etc.

- iv. National Community: This refers to the usage of the word community in a much wider sense. In this sense all citizens of the country form the national community. For example, the Nigerian community in Ghana, the English or French community in Nigeria.

Good School Community Relationship

The school community interacts and interrelates in the performance of specific duties. According to Okeke, Nosiri, Elele, Ogwumba & Igwe (1998) and Igwe (1990) there are three major areas in which the school relate and interact with the communities around them. These areas are the following:

- i. Socialization: The schools sustain and uphold the young people as members of the communities where they exist by socializing the young people as member of the communities into which they were born. The school in calculates in the young people the respect and loyalty towards community culture and social values. In short, the integration of pupils and students into their communities so as to contribute, strengthen and enrich their cultural heritage. This is the main assumption of the traditional community.
- ii. Social Order: The school an expression of social order also intensify social divisions. Schools are established along the line of language group or religious affiliations. All the denominational schools and Religious secondary schools or mission schools constitute examples of the social order.
- iii. Social Transformation: Schools basically are agents of social transformations. Suffice one to posit that, at the level of school structure and organization, the provision of central schools for an area creates a consciousness of belonging to a wider community. The schools therefore represent one of the main links between a local community on one hand and the larger society on the other hand.

The New Secondary School Curriculum.

The Nigerian Education system permits the Junior and Senior Secondary Education formation, with different curriculum. For instance the curriculum of the junior secondary education according to the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2013), shall be as follows:

1. English Studies
2. One Nigerian Language
3. Mathematics
4. Basic Science and Education
 - Basic Technology
 - Information Technology
 - Physical and Health Education
5. Religion and National Values
 - Christian Religious Knowledge
 - Islamic Studies
 - Social Studies
 - Civic Education
 - Security Education
6. Pre-vocational Studies
 - Home Economics
 - Agriculture
7. French Language
8. Cultural and Creative Arts
9. Business Studies

10. Arabic (optional)

NPE (2013) further stated that the curriculum for senior secondary education shall consist of the following fields of studies:

1. Science and Mathematics
2. Technology
3. Humanities
4. Business studies

Infact chapter 3 section 38 of NPE (2013) provided a clearer understanding of the senior secondary school curriculum as

38.1. Compulsory cross-cutting subject

- i. English Language
- ii. General Mathematics
- iii. Trade/Entrepreneurship Subject
- iv. Civil Education

38.2. Field Studies

38.2.1. Science and Mathematics

- i. Biology
- ii. Chemistry
- iii. Physics
- iv. Further Mathematics
- v. Health, Education
- vi. Agriculture
- vii. Physical Education
- viii. Computer Studies.

38.2.2. Technology

- i. Technical
- ii. General Metal Work
- iii. Basic Education
- iv. Electronics
- v. Auto Mechanics
- vi. Building Construction
- vii. Wood Work
- viii. Home Management
- ix. Food and Nutrition

38.2.3. Humanities

- i. Christian Religious Studies
- ii. Islamic Religious Studies
- iii. Visual Art
- iv. Music
- v. History
- vi. Geography

- vii. Government
- viii. Economics
- ix. Literature in English
- x. French
- xi. Arabic
- xii. Nigerian Language

38.2.4. Business Studies

- i. Store Management
- ii. Accounting
- iii. Commerce
- iv. Office Practice
- v. GSM Maintenance and Repairs
- vi. Animal Husbandry
- vii. Fishery
- viii. Marketing
- ix. Sales Manship

The curriculum of both the Junior and Senior Secondary Education are in line with the society's desire and aspiration in making education relevant to the development of the society. The school alone cannot bring about effective implementation of the new curriculum. Thus there is need for a good school-community relationship to propped effective implementation of the new curriculum. It is obvious fact that maintaining a good school community is a tool effective implementations of the new curriculum but how do principals go about this. It is not enough to court the benefits or contributions of the school to the community and the contributions of the community to the school, but how do we create it.

Enhancing Good School Community Relationship

It takes a village to raise a child is an African proverb that have gotten international through former us first lady Miss. Hillary Clinton. This proverb has indeed become a global proverb especially in a global world, global economy and global educational system.

The school and the community are the major institutions that creates the effective, efficient, useful and wholesome citizen thus a mutual relationship is of vital importance for them, there is a clear and urgent need for the school and the community it exist to forge a level of partnership that is benefit to the child. Share information and ideas that is beneficial so the children while in schools while developing a community that is working towards the best interest of the child.

Our discussion in this segment shall dove-tail the views of Barry locus and Loraine Thompson (2013) in their book school-community Hard-book. Enhancing a good school – community relationship is a miracle doing for our aiding schools in all ramifications. The following alternatives can be used to develop a good school – community relationship.

1. Understanding the community. A good understanding of the community will help tremendously to perfect the school-community relationship. The school should have information concerning the community it serves. The maxim “if you are not informed you are deformed” become relevant in this case. Three information are required about the community namely:
 - i. Information about the composition about the community. For instance have the data about the income, educational level and occupations of the majority of the residents. The data so collected will other things being equal assist in formulating new programs and adopting the existing ones to meet the needs and aspirations of the students.

- ii. The school should know the opinion of the community regarding both broad educational issues and the day to day operation of the school this involves the tone of the school generally and the attitude of both the staff and students in pursuing the educational goals of the school.
 - iii. The school should have some familiarity with the educational resources available in the community. The knowledge of this can aid the utilization of the resources to enrich and enhance the school program.
2. Using communication media. It is believed that the school has a number of communication media available to it. Some of these are the mimeographed notes to parents and the public media like television, radio and the newspaper. Infact, appropriate choice and utilization of communication media can greatly enhance a school community relations program. The following principles tend to guide the selection and use of communication media;
- i. Identity and list all available media.
 - ii. Develop langrage plans for the utilization of the most promising media.
 - iii. Choose the medium or media best adopted to the time, the message and the coverage desired.
 - iv. As far as possible, develop a balanced usage of available media.
 - vi. Establish and maintain a fair policy for news release through the various media available
 - vii. Give public recognition to media and individuals who have made special contributions or sundered outstanding service to school-community communication.
 - viii. Conduct periodic evaluation of the adequacy appropriateness, and effectiveness of the media used.
3. Involving students in the community. This can be in the form of field trip, work experience programme and other forms of community service. The school work experience programs allow students to spend a part of their days, week or month as part of the labour force of their community. The employer receives the student's labour while the students learn the skill, behaviour and attitude necessary for successful employment. This can be very careful in the entrepreneurship program of the school. A well organized program reflects favourably on the school offering it, while a poorly administered program gives a poor impression of the school remarkable that using community resource for field trips help to strengthen ties between the school and the community. And also assist in developing a member of skills in the content areas.
4. Involving the community in the school. Our traditional parent-teacher Association or conference becomes a major tool. The parent-teacher Association becomes a genuine means of communication between parents and the school. The parents though this formation can also questions about the child's progress, general school policies, programs and events. The resources in the community can be better harnessed for greater contribution to the development of the school programs and curriculum implementation.

Conclusion

The understanding of the school organization and its external interest provide a better means of actualizing the secondary curriculum. The school and the community benefits maximally from their interactions and interrelationships. School heads should follow the recommendation given in this paper.

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