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Roles of Parent-Teacher Association in the Management of School Library

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ABSTRACT

The parent-teacher association (PTA) is a non-commercial, non-sectarian, and non-partisan body that comprises parents/legal guardians of students, teachers, and administrative staff of the school whose aim is to collaborate with the school to promote students' educational success and wellbeing. This paper aimed at highlighting the contributions of the PTA to school library management. Deducing from the literature review, the PTA supports the rights of libraries to supply materials and information that encompass all perspectives on recent and previous happenings that are uncensored in terms of bias, partisanship or doctrinal criticism. In addition, the PTA could assist the school by providing books or other material for use in the school library. In order to achieve its goal, members of the PTA must ensure that the school has a functional and well-equipped library that can facilitate students' academic vision and success.

Keywords: Parent-Teacher Association, School Library, Students

INTRODUCTION

A parent-teacher association (PTA) is a formal organization composed of parents, teachers and other school staff intended to facilitate parental participation in the school. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2009), the PTA is a not-for-profit body consisting of students' parents/guardians, teachers, and other administrative staff and whose objective is to promote parents/guardians' involvement in school-level decision-making, and support fundraising initiatives for supplemental educational projects. In the same vein, Mutinda (2015) sees PTA as a formal body made up of parents whose children are officially registered as students in the school together with their teachers. Thus, the PTA is a voluntary association of parents and teacher in a particular school established for its development (Ugwulashi, 2012).

The PTA facilitates parents' participation in the affairs of their children at school. They occur in public schools, private schools and mission schools. According to Tatiah and Iqbah (2011), the PTA constitutes part of the formal structures of governance through which parents and the community can participate in their children's education. It is assumed that educational provision is enhanced through such structures, and school governance and educational quality are improved. Furthermore, this concept of internal grouping arrangement tends to facilitate a good school-community relationship. In this perspective, by obeying the principles of a good school-community relationship, parents have the opportunity to understand what exists in the school their wards attend and the constraints school experienced in carrying out the administrative and instructional functions. Nuhu (2008) asserts that the PTA has evolved into an association to be reckoned with because of its genuine interest in helping the school. In Nigeria, PTA is backed by law in some states, making it compulsory for parents and teachers, while in other states, it is voluntary (Ugwulashi, 2012). However, the PTA is established both at the local, state and national level.

OBJECTIVES OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS (PTAs)

In the 1960s, when schools were not too many in Nigeria, governments could effectively fund education, and only a few PTAs existed. However, with the advent of numerous problems in the Education Sector, it became necessary for most schools (Primary and Secondary) to have PTAs to assist in solving the schools' problems. As a result of the proliferation of PTAs all over the country, it became necessary to organize them into Schools or Institutional PTAs, Local Government Central PTAs, State PTAs and National PTA of Nigeria. This development indicates that parents would no longer sit and watch educational standards in public schools continue to fall. Some aims and objectives of the National PTA of Nigeria, according to Shehu (1996), include:

- to provide a platform for parents, guardians, sponsors and teachers of students of Nigerian Primary, Secondary and Tertiary educational institutions to meet, exchange views, deeply analyze issues, make recommendations, take and effectively pursue implementation of decisions on matters affecting education in Nigeria with the appropriate agencies;
- to co-operate with and support morally and financially the Federal, State and Local Governments, Ministries, Boards, Commissions, and all other relevant organizations, institutions and establishments of education to achieve a high standard of academic performance, discipline, morality, service and integrity in Nigerian schools;
- to foster mutual understanding, harmonious relationship and cooperation among parents, guardians, sponsors, and teachers to fulfill their common.
- to promote mutual understanding, balanced relationship and cooperation among parents, guardians, sponsors, and teachers in the fulfillment of their common goal the welfare of the schools and the students therein;

- to make for a healthy and sympathetic understanding of the education policies and programmes of government and thus influence same to create a suitable climate for the reception of the same;
- to ensure a suitable, uniform and high standard of discipline, both at home and school;
- to assist materially and otherwise in providing the schools with such additional requirements that will enable it to carry out its educational functions adequately; and
- to assist in the proper and all-around development of the children physically, morally, socially, and mentally so that they grow to become useful and law-abiding members of the society.

Officers involved in Parent-Teacher Association

The PTA is basically made up of two arms; the Executive and the General Assembly. The general assembly meets once a year, while the executive often meets as the need arises (Last Man Standing, 2013). However, according to Ibezimako (2017), the association is built on structures, both human and material. It comprises an executive committee called a School Committee. In most cases, it is made up of twelve members, of whom four are selected from among the school staff, including the head of the school known as the headmaster/headmistress, the principal, a teaching staff and a counsellor of the school. Furthermore, Nuhu (2008) noted that the officers of a PTA and their offices are as follows;

- Chairman – a parent within the school location;
- Vice-Chairman – a parent within the school location;
- Secretary – a teaching staff;
- Assistant Secretary – a parent;
- Treasurer – a parent within the school location;
- Financial Secretary – a teaching staff;
- Auditor – an external parent;

- Ex-officio – the headmaster/headmistress/principal;
- Internal Auditor – a teaching staff; and
- PRO – a parent within the school location.

Ex-officio Members of PTA

An ex-officio member is a person who does not have a membership with an organization but can serve on its board. This is usually because of another position the person holds or because of his/her expertise in an area. Unlike other board members, the ex-officio board member has the privilege of partaking in some board activities, but this is not required. Such activities include attending meetings and debating motions. In some cases, the ex-officio board member can vote and present motions. This happens when he/she holds a particular board title, such as being the organization's treasurer. Alternatively, someone who is and an employee of the organization concerned may also vote. In this case, however, the school appoints from amongst its staff apart from the headmaster/headmistress or principal as the case may be who is automatically a member of the PTA executive, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and the school counsellor to serve as an ex-officio member in the executive committee of the parents' teachers association of the school. The ex-officio, apart from holding positions as in the executive committee as Treasurer, Secretary, also serves as an adviser to the committee in decision-making.

ROLES OF PTA IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

A lot has been said about the operations and functions of the PTA. However, this association has majorly defined roles for every school ranging from the nursery and primary school to the secondary schools. In some schools, they are seen majorly seen as a fundraising group, while in some other schools, they are seen as one of the school's highest decision-making body. According to Kochhar (2008), the PTA plays a major role in funding school

activities and programmes. According to ResearchClue.com (2015), the following are some of the roles performed by the PTA:

- To represent the views of parents/guardians of the school;
- To promote a positive view of parents via effective collaboration with the parents' representatives on the board of management;
- To inform parents of current changes in the school system, if the need arises;
- To network with other parents associations through involvement with National Parents Council;
- To establish a forum through which parents and teachers can exchange information and research in relation to education/welfare of children;
- To proffer solutions on better ways to administer the school;
- To support parents, teachers and students to ensure that all children are treated in accordance with the ethos of the school;
- To support the teaching staff, and to work with them in delivering the school curriculum;
- To help raise funds for the school and the Parents Association, in consultation with the Principal and Board of Management;
- To keep parents informed about activities planned for the school;
- To influence policy development at the school; and
- To influence policy development at the national level once affiliated to the National Parents Council.

From a global perspective, PTA plays major roles in education. In the United States of America, the PTA is involved in determining curriculum and instructional decisions, promoting communication, raising school funds, and lobbying the state and national legislation on behalf of the students (Onderil & Makori, 2013). According to Chang (1995),

the PTA in Hong Kong provides a channel for teachers and parents to work, articulate their educational views, and make a parent policy for participation in the educational process of their children. In South Africa, the PTA has been involved in providing hygiene facilities such as sanitation facilities within the school environment (UNICEF, 2009). Obi (2003) stated that in Nigeria, the PTA ensures high moral standards and academic excellence in consultation with the school board management. The author further noted that the PTA promotes the common interest of the school, students and staff but do not interfere directly with the day-to-day running of the school.

Furthermore, since the PTA is a representative of the parents in a school, and part of its role is to reach out to other parents to get involved in the school's life, support school activities, and generally ensure that the welfare of their children is taken care of. And from the objectives of the PTA in Nigeria, it is obvious that they are playing a very prominent role in the maintenance and development of education in this country. The achievement of the PTA could be seen in most schools where their presence is felt. Some of these achievements include; persuading the government to support the school's efforts, encouraging a good understanding between the teachers and parents, and serving as an avenue for encouraging the students when they realize that their parents are interested in their school activities. They also help to reduce crises in schools; the PTA supports the parents to appreciate more the activities of the school, the problems of their children and that of the school as a whole. They complement government efforts in providing infrastructure, like buildings, water, electricity, vehicles; they also provide books and other teaching materials and generally maintain the school to meet up with their desired quality education for their children.

In the pursuit of quality education, according to Ayeni (2014), the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria in 2008 made a paradigm shift from School Inspection (usually periodic, limited in practice and focused on defects identification/faults finding) to Quality

Assurance in Education, which is an evolving education policy reform initiative that focuses on continuous prevention of defects through holistic monitoring and evaluation process, aimed at improving the quality of school management, learning environment, curriculum delivery and pupils'/students' learning achievement through the involvement of meaningful, close, strong and goal-oriented partnership between the school authority and other relevant stakeholders. The issue of quality assurance in education is everyone's responsibility, including the PTA. This is driven by a shared vision of excellence, sincere efforts and skilful articulation, implementation and review of educational policies and programmes by the stakeholders to strengthen institutional management and assured quality education for the learners.

The synergy among stakeholders, especially between principals and parents is necessary because the school is a community asset and provision of quality education is a collective responsibility; it therefore, becomes imperative for parents to invest in the training of their children to enable them to achieve the desired standard that will meet the expectation of the society. This collaboration is a building block for a virile, responsive and sustainable quality assurance system for human capital development (Ayeni, 2010).

Developing a partnership between the school principal and parents is a means of encouraging parents' participation in schooling activities and not an end in itself. It is desirable because it has a positive impact on students' learning outcomes. The collaboration provides parents with opportunities to shape their children; raise expectations and common goals among home, school and community; build mutual trust and confidence among all members of the school community; provide a variety of learning opportunities, materials and positive learning environments for all members of the school community; reduce the number of difficulties/challenges faced by students; and promote public education.

Sustainable quality assurance in an educational institution is made possible when every member of the institution contributes his/her quota to the quality process (Temponi, 2005). This is premised on the principle of Deming's cycle of continuous improvement, which is fundamentally based upon Plan, Do, Check and Act cycle (PDCA) (Deming, 1986). This process provides a veritable platform for synergy between the principals and significant parents who are members of the school management board/school based committee to strategically articulate educational goals, programs and strategies; systematically monitor the implementation process; give feedback to those concerned to critically assess, evaluate and review the quality of resource inputs, teaching-learning process and students' learning outcomes in line with the set standards.

ROLES OF PTA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL LIBRARY

The PTA respects and supports parents' right to provide direction to their wards to select suitable reading and educational materials. The PTA supports the rights of both public libraries and school libraries to supply materials and information that encompass all perspectives on recent and past issues and are uncensored in terms of bias, partisanship or doctrinal criticism (National PTA, 2003). According to the position statement of the National PTA (2003), the PTA has the responsibilities of monitoring, supporting and advocating for laws, regulations, policies and programs that: (i) promote people's right to make use of a library without prejudice due to their origin, age, background or ideology; (ii) support the creation of local school system policies to ensure that educators, parents, students and other community members have the rights to play their roles in evaluating, selecting and adopting or removing procedures for instructional materials and of school library materials used by students in public schools; (iii) provide schools with materials that are free of prejudice, challenging and fascinating to students, thus, offering an avenue to explore ideas and concepts, make informed judgments and increase students' access to diverse resources; (iv)

showcase the diverse racial and ethnic heritages of the people, and the contributions of all groups in the educational materials and textbooks used by the schools; (v) demonstrate correctly the place of men and women of all racial, regional and occupational groups in textbooks and materials utilized by public schools; and (vi) maintain school libraries and media centers in all public schools with school boards' supports and, when required, PTAs and communities. Nuhu (2008) noted that besides financial donation for funding the associations' projects, members of the PTA could assist the school by providing books or other material for prize-giving or use in the school library. A previous article by Mulberry (1936) demonstrated several instances on how the PTA contributed to library service. We consider Mulberry's paper a useful reference for present-day library researchers and school administrators willing to explore how school libraries especially in rural regions could be assisted by the PTA in order to effectively serve the school. Finally, based on the literature review, we would like to submit that the PTA is a non-commercial, non-sectarian, and non-partisan body that comprises parents/legal guardians of students, teachers, and administrative staff of the school whose aim is to collaborate with the school to promote students' educational success and wellbeing. In order to achieve its goal, members of the PTA must ensure that the school has a functional and well-equipped library that can facilitate students' academic vision and success.

CONCLUSION

The parent-teacher association (PTA) is a non-commercial, non-sectarian, and non-partisan body that comprises parents/legal guardians of students, teachers, and administrative staff of the school whose aim is to collaborate to promote students' educational success and wellbeing. The PTA plays a major role in the development of a school through the provision of moral and financial supports. Besides financial donation for funding the associations' projects, members of the PTA could assist the school by providing books or other material for

prize-giving or use in the school library. In order to achieve its goal, members of the PTA must ensure that the school has a functional and well-equipped library that can facilitate students' academic vision and success.

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