

**APPRAISAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION IN THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE  
OF ENUGU STATE**

**Ejeh Emeka Ifeoma<sup>1</sup>, Okenjom Godian Patrick<sup>2</sup>, Abidde Ebenade Famous<sup>1</sup> and  
Alimigbe Francis Anno<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Educational Foundation, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

<sup>2</sup>Department of Educational Foundation, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki-Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study investigated the extent of Local Government participation in the administration of primary Education in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. One research question and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. A 36-item researchers structured questionnaire was developed and administered to 986 respondents. The sample of the study was 986 participants comprising of five (5) education secretaries, 282 head teachers and 699 teachers. The population of the study were studied as the sample size which was obtained through simple random sampling technique. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A mean score of 2.50 was adopted as the cut-off-point or acceptable level for the items. The t-test statistic was employed in testing the three null hypotheses formulated for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis of the findings showed that the respondents are of the view that the local government councils in Nsukka education Zone do not participate meaningfully in the administration and funding of primary education. Based on the findings the study recommended that the three tiers of government should combine to fund primary education to avoid it being abandoned by a particular tier, among others.*

**KEYWORDS:** Local Government, Administration, Participation, Primary Education

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Members of any social group are identified by a shared consciousness of a kind and a common bond of interest and purpose. Such a bond of shared consciousness and interest dictate certain lines of action, one of which is for the survival of the group. Ehusani (2003) stated that education in the broad sense is the entire process of socialization by which men and women learn to adapt to and where necessary conquer their environment. He continued by saying education is development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor faculties of individuals in order to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to survive and make progress in the human society. Education has been identified as a dynamic instrument of change, hence, developed and developing countries have adopted it as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. It is against this backdrop that the Federal Government of Nigeria is committed to the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and in the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school system (Imogie, 2000). According to Imogie (2000) education is a catalyst, which paves the way for the realization of people's aspiration in all facets of life. This is seen in the overall development of people in the society. He further stated that education is a process by which the human elements of a society, young and old are nurtured and how knowledge, skills and desirable quantities of behaviours are taught and learned. To him, education enlightens,

enables, enriches and empowers educated people to be full of wisdom, aware of and participate in civil, social, economic, political and educational activities of his or her society, contributing positively to solving societal problems.

In Nigeria, like other countries of the world, efforts are often made to shape the direction and dimension of the educational system for capacity building through articulated policy. In this study, particular attention is paid to a very recent educational policy of the Nigerian government known as Universal Basic Education, its challenges and what can be done to make the policy achieve its desired objectives, since this policy covers both primary, (from primary one, all through to junior secondary school class 3) to reinforce the implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE) in order to provide greater access and ensure quality throughout the Federation as it is free and compulsory (Arhedo & Omoike; 2007; Arhedo, Adomeh, and Aluede, 2009). The importance of education in the world today shows the great premium placed in its expansion and development in all societies. Such premium is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria (1999), which can be described as an attempt to give meaning to the life and well-being of children of school age. This is in line with Federal Republic of Nigeria. National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), which stressed that the importance of education is based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizenry.

Primary education is generally recognized as the bedrock of the child's educational genesis, which all other factors such as success or failure affecting the final academic attainment of the child revolves. The development of primary education in Nigeria was guided by the Ashby recommendations of 1960, which among other things advocated for careful planning, budgeting, co-ordination and control in order to ensure a healthy relationship between resource availability and educational expansion. In the eastern region, the main emphasis of the development programme in primary education was on the teacher education (training) with a view to provide good quality education in primary schools. Primary education is referred to in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) as education given in an institution to children aged normally five to eleven years plus since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole educational system. Primary education is therefore basic, as it seeks to develop the child efficiently, so that he can be useful to himself and to the society. The ugly and vicious cycles of illiteracy, poverty and disease (ignorance) can be broken by universal basic education policy made accessible to all Nigerian children.

One of the major issues in trying to use education as an instrument for achieving even development in Enugu State is the age-long economic question as to "who should or whose sole responsibility should the administration of primary education be or "who should finance education"? (SUBEB, 2009). That is whether the expenditure on education should be met by the government or by the individuals receiving education. Nevertheless which ever way it is interpreted, primary school administration in Nigeria is a shared responsibility between and among groups and individuals. Viewed from either of the conceptions above, it does appear that the present Nigerian system of primary education is far from being qualitatively satisfactory. In other words, the primary school system cannot be said to be well organized and effectively administered due to the conditions in most of the primary schools, and the constant crisis of confidence between and among the various administrative organs. Following the government take-over of schools in the 1970s, schools were removed from the individual, religious or private voluntary agencies and handed over to the communities

as the new facilitating agencies. It therefore stands to reason that communities and local governments have the onus provide the assumed local contribution formally provided by the voluntary agencies. One of the goals of creating local government councils is to bring development to every nook and cranny of our nation.

With the 1976 local government reform and 1979 federal constitution, the provision and maintenance of primary education came under the statutory delegation of local government councils (LGCs). In order to assist local government councils in achieving this task, the Local Government Councils Education Authorities (LGEAs), were established in each local government councils and as subsidiaries of National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) under decree 31 of 1988, and charged with several responsibilities related to primary education management and financing. With these arrangements came a string of obligations which place severe fiscal burdens on the Local Government Councils and Local Government Councils Education Authorities. Today it is only a few local government councils which do not know whether primary education should be funded through the so called zero-allocation budget, which has in turn, affected the activities of Local Government Councils Education Authorities (Ebonyi, 1998). Thus, apart from the payment of teachers' salaries and allowances, which are compulsorily deducted at source, other primary functions of Local Government Councils Education Authorities seem to have been virtually paralyzed due to limited financial resources. The negative impact of this situation on the provision of quality primary education is not hard to see. This is a major concern to educational administration. To enable Local Government Councils vis-a-vis Local Government Councils Education Authorities perform their statutory functions, there is therefore the need to analyze the economic problems of Local Government Councils Education Authorities with the aim of identifying their causes, implications and remedies.

Local government is the government nearest to the rural populace. After the 1979 and 1980 constitution, the local governments have become "mini-giants" for generating motivations and encouraging mobilization for self-help. They have not only become recognized as a centre for dispensing, but also been delegated substantial functions for developing and husbanding the social and economic, development among, which includes the provision and maintenance of primary education. They therefore, become incumbents which can be used as functional instruments to mobilize the grassroots for effective achievement of primary education policy objectives. This can be made possible because the rural governments accommodate about 80 percent of the entire Nigeria population (Ebonyi, 2007). Furthermore, this can be achieved through the active involvement of key members of public in their local government. These key members include the following: traditional council members, chiefs (Igwes), members of their cabinets, kindred headmen, women's association, local leaders, churches (religious groups), teachers, headmasters/mistresses, age grades, schools, parents, teachers, social clubs, pupils youths, co-operative movements, etc. All these different groups can act as catalysts to bring about expected outcome of the primary education policy objectives. To guarantee the effective achievement of the primary education policy objectives active involvement and co-operation of these key public members of the government must be encouraged since they are able to galvanize and mobilize the support of the grassroots.

The Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA's) are responsible for the day-to-day administration of primary school in their areas of jurisdiction. According to Ogbonnaya and Oboegbulam (2004), the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA's) are responsible for employment, appointment, development, promotion and transfer of teaching and non-

teaching staff of primary schools within their area of jurisdiction. The Local Government Education Authorities (LGEA's) stimulate and encourage communal participation in primary school and they supervise all education committees in their areas of authority.

In Enugu State in general and in Nsukka Education Zone in particular, several problems exist in financing as well as administration of primary schools (Otuh, 1998). Many primary schools lack classroom accommodation, instructional materials, no proper supervision and inspection of primary schools, library facilities are lacking as well as lack of qualified teaching staff. There is also gross negligence in the maintenance of existing facilities. Secondly, the dearth of reliable data on primary schools provisions in the state in particular and in the country in general, had been of concern to both the states and federal ministries of education respectively. The establishment of the National Primary education Commission (NPEC) by decree 31 of 1989 was aimed at ameliorating the deficiencies in the financing, administration and management of primary education in the country. In trying to solve some of the problems of primary education in terms of funding and management, two Federal Government Commissions (the Onabamiro committee of 1981, and the study group of funding education under the chairmanship of Babs Fafunwa (1981) recommended that the state should provide teachers with instructional materials while the local government should provide schools with furniture and also maintain school buildings (Adesina 1990). Since the introduction of the local government reforms Edict of 1976, every state in the federation has been divided into Local Government Areas, and the administration of primary schools entrusted to them.

The Ministries of Education through their Chief Education Officers responsible for primary education continue to regulate the professional conduct of staff; to provide pre- and in-service education for teachers according to Ocho (2005); to provide expertise in curriculum development, and to supervise the schools. In southern states the administrative functions of the local school boards also vary from state to state. In the Western States, for example, which comprise Ogun, Ondo, and Oyo States, the boards are responsible for the appointment, transfer, discipline, promotion, and general welfare of the primary school teachers.

However, the local government councils are not living up to their responsibilities in this regard. The councils may be making effort but their efforts have not made any impact. For example the lingering issue of poor and inadequate accommodation for the growing population of primary enrolment in the zone in particular, as well as the general poor conditions of primary schools in terms of inadequate funding, poor management of resources, high cost of teaching materials, to mention but a few (Otuh, 1998), and it is this perceived lack-lustre attitude of local government councils towards the primary level of education that has engendered this research work. Onwuka (1995) also expressed dissatisfaction with the system of management and control of primary education using Enugu North Education Zone as a case study. She identified some of these problems to include:

1. poor and inadequate staffing;
2. Insufficient supply of instructional materials such as textbooks, libraries and other teaching aids.
3. Poor and inadequate accommodation for the growing population of primary enrolment in the zone.

4. Inadequate supervision/inspection of the schools by the local government education authority and the State Primary Education Board (SPEB).

These problems identified, show that the short-comings of the local government system border on administrative machinery put in place to ensure effective implementation of various government policies and programmes at this level.

The term administration has been variously defined by various scholars. Some see administration from the perspective of the goal expectation while others see it from that of role expectations. In other words, the first group defines administration based on the goals the administrators hope to achieve but the second group defines it based on the roles they are to play. However, Gullick and Urwick in Nwankwo (1982) see administration as getting things done with the accomplishment of the defined objectives. This explains why the science of administration is concerned with the system of knowledge whereby man may understand relationships, predict results and influence outcomes in any situation where men are organized at work for a common purpose. Adam in Ozigi (1978) defined administration as the capacity to co-ordinate many and often complicating social energies in a single organization so skillfully that they operate as a unity.

Administration, therefore, is the process of utilizing men and materials in an organization to achieve the goals for which the organization was established. In utilizing them, the administrator directs, leads, controls and coordinates the efforts of the group of the organization. However, our political leaders must realize that the only way to progress, peace and unity is through education. There are no two ways to building a united and dynamic nation than improving the conditions of service of teachers. When this done, the teaching profession will *be* able to attract better qualified teachers, motivated to teach, provided teaching materials, infrastructural facilities, instructional materials are provided as well as sponsoring them for capacity acquisition programmes like workshops, seminars, in-service trainings and creating a very conducive environment for the teachers and pupils in order to enhance effective teaching and learning process in primary school. By so doing, the primary level of education which is the preparatory ground for effective and efficient educational processes, will breed wonderful and capable future leaders.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to appraise the extent of local government participation in the administration of primary education in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. Specifically, the study was intended to:

1. Appraise the extent of the local government participation in the provision of funds to primary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

### **Research Questions**

The following research question was formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent does local government councils participate in the funding of primary education in Nsukka Education Zone?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance.

**H01:** There is no significant difference between the mean response of teachers and education secretaries on the extent to which local government participate in the administration of primary education in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State.

## METHODS

This research adopted a descriptive survey design aimed at appraising extent of local government participation in the administration of primary education in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. A survey design according to Denga and Ali (1983) is "chiefly concerned with finding, describing and interpreting what is, that is with the conditions of relationships that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs, points of view or attitude that are held, processes that are going on or trends that are developing. This study was concerned with the survey of the conditions and practices that prevailed and the processes that were going on as well as the points of view of teachers, head-teachers and education secretaries on Local Government Participation in the Administration of Primary Education in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. The area of this study covered Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. Nsukka Education Zone comprises of three (3) local government areas namely: Nsukka, Igbo-Etiti and Uzo Uwani in the geographical location of the area under study. The area is mainly populated with peasant farmers who produce yams, cassava, and maize as well as palm oil. The zone has low percentage of civil and public servants. The people of the area are hospitable. University of Nigeria Nsukka is located in Nsukka Education Zone.

The population of this study consisted of all the headteachers and teachers of all the primary schools currently existing in the Zone. It will also include all the education secretaries. There are two hundred and eighty two (282) primary schools currently existing in the Zone which automatically gives two hundred and eighty two (282) headteachers. The number of teachers in the schools is put at three thousand four hundred and ninety five (3495). Included in the population are three (3) supervisory education secretaries. (Planning Research and Statistics (PRS) (UBEB, 2015).

The sample for this study comprised 986 respondents (282 headteachers, 699 teachers and 3 education secretaries). All the head teachers numbering two hundred and eighty two (282) were used as part of the sample. For the teachers Nwanna's opinion was applied. According to Nwanna (2009), when a population runs into thousand, 20-30% of that population should be used as the sample. Hence, in this study 20% of 3495 teachers was used representing a total of six hundred and ninety- nine (699) teachers.

The instrument used for data collection was a researchers structured questionnaire titled "Appraisal of Local Government Participation in Administration of Primary Education" (ALGPAPPE) was used to gather information from the subjects.

After the researcher had constructed the questionnaire, the thirty six (36) items instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts: two from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from Science Education Department (Measurement and Evaluation) all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. These experts were requested to study the items and assess the suitability of the language in terms of clarity, adequacy and relevance of the items in addressing the research questions, bearing in mind the purpose of the study. Their corrections and amendments were effected and no item was dropped. In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, data from the thirty-six (36) -item instrument were used to

compute the reliability co-efficient. The thirty-six (36) item instrument was administered on 30 teachers (30 of them) in a field testing carried out by the researcher in Enugu North Education Zone which is not part of the location for the main study. Data collected from the field-testing were used to carry out reliability analysis. From the analysis, reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained. This was done using Cronbach alpha statistical method. This figure was adjudged high for the internal consistency of the instrument source and therefore suitable for the study. Nine hundred and eighty four (984) copies of the questionnaire were distributed by the researcher and her research assistants to the different respondents in respective establishments. Six trained research assistants were used by the researcher in this study. The respondents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire on the spot which they did. This method ensured maximum return of the copies of questionnaire, on the whole, all the copies of questionnaires were retrieved.

The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation statistics while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistic.

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1

To what extent does local government councils participate in the funding of primary education in Nsukka Education Zone?

The data and result generated for this research question 1 are as shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Mean Results Based on Extent of Local Government Participation in Funding Primary Education**

S/N	Items	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	$\bar{X}$	SD	Interpret
1.	The local government provides funds for overhead cost to head-teachers for the smooth running of primary schools administration.	10	3	250	741	1.30	0.53	LE
2.	The local government provides funds for the provision of furniture (desk, tables, chalk).	5	13	191	777	1.24	0.49	LE
3.	The local government provides funds for the construction of classroom block.	4	29	234	710	1.31	0.55	LE
4.	The local government sparingly provides fund for the smooth running of primary schools.	4	18	193	775	1.23	0.46	LE
5.	The local government stimulates community participation in funding of primary education.	4	9	611	362	1.65	0.52	LE
6.	The local government awards scholarships to primary school pupils to further their education	4	9	199	774	1.22	0.47	LE
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>1.33</b>		<b>LE</b>

The results in table 1 showed that respondents scored all the items at little extent as the mean values are in the region of 1.0 – 2.0 (i.e. little extent). Also, the grand mean value is 1.33 which is also in the region of little extent. This means that the assertion of respondents is that local government area councils participate in the funding of primary education to a little extent.

### Results of Hypotheses Testing

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean responses of headteachers and education secretaries on the extent to which local government council participate in the administration of primary education in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State.

**Table 2: t-test Result based on the Responses of headteachers and Education Secretaries**

S/N	Variable	No	$\bar{X}$	S.D	DF	t.cal	t.crit	Decision
1.	Headteachers	282	1.33	0.54	285	1.35	1.960	Accepted
	Education secretaries	5	1.10	0.06				
2.	Headteachers	282	1.24	0.47	285	1.15	1.960	Accepted
	Education secretaries	5	1.06	0.05				
3	Headteachers	282	1.32	0.56	285	1.16	1.960	Accepted
	Education secretaries	5	1.08	0.08				
4	Headteachers	282	1.26	0.49	285	1.47	1.960	Accepted
	Education secretaries	5	1.04	0.07				
5	Headteachers	282	1.65	0.52	285	1.17	1.960	Accepted
	Education secretaries	5	2.00	0.09				
6	Headteachers	282	1.24	0.47	285	1.27	1.960	Accepted
	Education secretaries	5	1.20	0.21				

Hypothesis 1 states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of teachers and education secretaries on the extent of local government participation in funding primary education in Nsukka Education Zone. The results in Table 2 shows that t-cal is less than the t-crit (i.e.  $1.27 < 1.96$ ). Hence, HO<sub>1</sub> is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference as stated by the hypothesis above.

## DISCUSSION

### Discussion of Findings

#### Extent of Local Government Council Participation in the Funding of Primary Educations

The study in its finding sought to determine the extent to which local government councils in Nsukka Education Zone participate in funding primary education. The results as shown in Table 1 revealed that the local government councils participate in funding primary education to a little extent. This finding is in line with the work of Otuh (1998) who stated that the local government councils are not living up to their responsibilities in regards to participation in administration of primary schools in terms of funding and provision of resources. For example the lingering issue of poor and inadequate accommodation for the growing population of primary enrolment in the zone in particular, as well as the general poor conditions of primary schools in terms of inadequate funding, poor management of resources,



high cost of teaching materials, as well as the perceived lack-lustre attitude of local government councils towards the primary level of education.

On the hypothesis on funding, the result shows that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of headteachers and education secretaries in Nsukka Education Zone.

## **CONCLUSION AND EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS**

At the course of carrying out this research it was discovered that the local government councils in Nsukka Education Zone do not participate really in funding primary education in the area. The local government councils do not participate to any noticeable extent in the provision of facilities in primary schools in Nsukka Education Zone. Thus, there is need to re-orientate the local government heads (executives) to appreciate and see the need for them to be greatly involved in the success of the administration of primary schools in their various areas of jurisdiction.

However, the local government councils in Nsukka Education Zone to a great extent participate in the day-to-day administration of primary schools. This participation is seen in the areas like handling disciplinary problems of staff of primary schools, recruiting teaching and non-teaching staff among others. It was also discovered that local government councils in Nsukka Education Zone are to less extent involved in staff personnel administration of primary schools in the area. In the area of supervision and inspection, the local government councils are below expectation in participation, in other words, they participate in supervision and inspection to less extent. From the above, there is need for the legislatures in the state to enact laws mandating the full involvement and participation of the local government for the implementation, in other words effective supervision and inspection exercise will go a long way in enhancing the performance of the teachers and the pupils in the teaching-learning activities.

Primary education is a foundational level of education that needs to be well funded, controlled and managed. Adequate provisions of education to the citizens contribute greatly to the socio-economic development of the country. Therefore, good administration of primary level of education is required to foster national growth and development. However, Nigerian primary school system lacks the fundamental requirements of what the foundation years of education should be. Rather Nigeria appears to be pursuing mass schooling instead of mass literacy education.

Our political leaders must realize that the only road to progress, peace and unity is through education. There are no two ways to building a united and dynamic nation. By improving the conditions of service of teachers, the profession will be able to attract better-qualified people with the spirit of the teacher, provide teaching materials both infrastructural facilities, instructional materials, manpower development through workshops and seminars, as well as creating a very conducive environment for the teachers and pupils in order to enhance effective teaching and learning process. By so doing the primary level of education which is the preparatory ground for effective and efficient educational processes will breed wonderful and capable future leaders.

Above all, the administration of primary education is the joint responsibility of the federal, state and local governments. In this connection, government welcomes and encourages the

participation of local communities, individuals, and other organization, each contributing its share in accordance with agreed plan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. In order to achieve the objectives of the primary level of education, the three tiers of government should combine to fund primary education.
2. The federal government should provide enabling environment to enable private individuals, co-operate bodies companies/co-operations that benefit from the service of products of schools to participate in financing primary education.
3. The ministry of education and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) should directly over see the affairs of primary education in each local government council.
4. Teacher education is a dynamic process which enables teachers to develop and use professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in the performance of their professional functions, hence, should be encouraged and sponsored by the local government to attend conferences and in-service training.
5. Since teachers are in every education system, the government should do everything possible to ensure regular payment of salaries and allowances that are commensurate with the tedious tasks of molding pupils which are under care by teachers.
6. Teachers should also be adequately motivated so as to boost their morale, by so doing they will improve on their productivity and as well enjoy job satisfaction.

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