



Community Participation in the Delivery of Basic Education at Abakrampa Traditional Area in the Central Region of Ghana

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the problems confronting community participation in the running of public basic schools at Abakrampa traditional area in Ghana. Specifically, the study assessed the nature of community participation in terms of cooperation between school authorities and community members, problems confronting the participation of community groups, and interventional strategies put forth by educational authorities to enhance community participation in education delivery. The study adopted the cross sectional survey design with mixed methods approach. The population comprised circuit supervisors, headteachers, teachers, parents and other stakeholders of the basic schools in the area. The sample was 150. The headteachers, teachers and circuit supervisors were selected purposively while parents and school management committees' members were randomly selected. Questionnaire and interview guide were the instruments used. Frequency, percentage, and chi-square were used to analyse the quantitative data while the qualitative were analysed manually using open, axial and selective coding systems. The findings revealed the need to foster community-school participation in order to enhance educational delivery, management and development in public basic schools at the traditional area. In conclusion, one can say that community-school participation is necessary for orderly development of schools, aside from engendering trust, accountability and help to solve school problems so that academic work can flourish in an atmosphere of peace and orderliness. It is, therefore, recommended to school authorities to constantly communicate with community leaders

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and parents regarding the activities of the schools and also organise biannual fora and public hearings on the need for them to get actively involved in school matters. This will create room for them to appreciate the challenges the schools are facing and also for the school authorities to understand and appreciate the expectations and needs of the stakeholders regarding education delivery in the community.

Keywords: Community participation; community members; school authorities; stakeholders; school-community relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, while the debate continues on how to re-vamp education systems, to answer to the needs of individuals, as well as families, communities and nations, it seems almost incontrovertible that the fostering of strong participation of the community cannot be over-emphasised. The school is established by the community as such it is the need and the wishes of the community that are carried out by the school [1]. The school is, therefore, the microcosm of the macro society. The school, therefore, needs to work in harmony with the society or the community and the community is also expected to support the school so that the school succeeds in carrying out the aims, the needs and aspirations of the community. In modern society, the school is responsible for socialisation new members of the society; as a result communities must sponsor the school for effective delivery of education [2]. This can happen with ease when the school create room for external agents to participate in the governance of the school.

The need for school to consider external forces for its success was recognised in the late 50s [3]. In this period the need for organisational manager to view their organisation and their interrelated part as being intertwined to the outside world was stressed. Consequently, managers of societies, major organisations, educations, business and government have been compelled to place an increasingly focus on the rapidly changing environment and its effects on the internal operations on a social organisation such as the school [4]. One obvious reason for this focus is that an organisation such as a school depends partially on the outside world for success. School managers must, therefore, be able to identify the important factors in their schools environment that have major impact on its operation, so that they can make appropriate responses to the environment inputs [1].

Most countries are now adopting educational decentralisation system which ensures that the process of schooling at the basic school level move from a top-down model to a bottom-up model [5,6]. Societies are adopting this system because the current progressive regulatory design adopted by basic schools appears to be becoming incapable in addressing the social and functional needs of today's basic schooling system [6,7]. The hierarchical model mirrors the past system of basic schooling where parents/guardians were denied admittance to schooling, decision-making and where regard for power/authority protected the basic schooling system from criticism by parents group and other major stakeholders [8]. The move from centralised, site based management is as a result of the shift from top-down governance to bottom-up structure. This shift involves the participation of major stakeholders in basic education who share in the decision-making and from the programmes and goals of the basic school system.

The various traditional areas and communities in Ghana were, therefore, expected to exercise ownership, right and responsibilities towards their public basic schools. It has to be realised that basic education is a joint venture between the government and the community. Individuals in the community like parents, philanthropists, prominent citizens and opinion leaders such as chiefs, assemblymen and so on in communities are expected to assist the school. The same is expected of organisations like the local authorities, religious bodies, non-governmental organisations, school managements committees (SMC), among others. Bray [9] explains that communities' role in school include participation in school management, ensuring that the pupils are in school and ensuring adequate supply of books. The various traditional areas and local authorities are responsible for the provision of school lands and buildings, and other items. However, the training, supply and payment of teachers at the basic level of education are done

by the state through the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ghana Education Service (GES).

Traditional areas like Abakrampa and other communities desiring to have basic schools opened in their areas are encouraged to put up structures with approval from MoE. The extent to which the various traditional areas in Ghana, particularly Abakrampa, participate in the development of basic education is of paramount importance to me. This is so because the area and its people are functional to the basic schooling system of the area. Therefore, they must support the basic schools and the schools must also socialised new members of the traditional area with its modern knowledge, values, skills and competencies to make the citizens responsible and competent members of the society [10,11].

Therefore, the side lining of SMC members by some public basic school headteachers meant that the views of some parents and community members will not be presented in the decision making process. This confirms the assertion that professionals or bureaucrats may resist moves to boost community partaking in educational decision-making [8,10]. In a developing area like Abakrampa, Ghana, communal involvement in the running of basic education is vital. The community and the school must, therefore, create a cordial relationship to ensure public involvement in the delivery of education at the basic level.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Ghana's Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030 propagates decentralisation in the governance of public basic schools at the local level through effective community participation. This, to a large extent, will ensure that no new members of the society are deprived access to basic education. Involvement of major stakeholders in the governance of education at the local level through effective community participation will create learning environments that are responsive to all learners' needs, devoid of discrimination and conducive to successful scholastic attainments, and ultimately to a more equitable society [1,2,12]. To facilitate the effective implementation of major stakeholders' participation in basic education, the Ministry of Education has developed standards, policies and guidelines for community participation [1]. In line with this, headteachers in the various public basic schools at the Abakrampa traditional area

are to administer and manage their respective schools with the School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs).

The Abakrampa traditional area has scores of public basic schools to serve the basic educational needs of all. However, my experience in the area and anecdotal reports from circuit supervisors seem to suggest that parents and the communities in general do not participate meaningfully in the delivery of basic education in the area (Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District [13]. Also, reports by both the District Directorate of Education and the traditional council continuously reveal that governance of the public basic schools and overall educational delivery has become problematic [14]. Among other factors, it surmised the low level of community participation, as it relates to the roles of PTAs and SMCs in the area. This situation has apparently led to the poor state of affairs of basic education in the area. Also, it seems there is less cooperation between basic school authorities and community members in the area [13]. The area is one of the major traditional areas in the Central Region of Ghana with paramountcy. The area hosts the seat of the Abura Omanhene of Abura conventional gathering.

The indicated state of affairs cut across virtually most traditional areas in Ghana and other developing countries [15,10,16]. Consequently, despite various interventions by the Government of Ghana through sensitisation programmes, the problem of community participation in basic education appears to remain unabated in the Abakrampa traditional area [13]. It seems that to arrive at a meaningful and lasting solution to the problem, specific local context would have to be understood since there may be variation of the nature of the problem from one traditional area to another. It is in this vein that I set out to investigate the problems confronting community participation in the area in order to determine appropriate interventions that can be put in place to enhance community participation in basic education delivery in the area.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main rationale of this paper was to investigate the problems confronting community participation in the running of public basic schools at Abakrampa traditional area in the Central Region of Ghana. The specific purposes of the study were as follow:

1. Examine the nature of community participation in education delivery in terms of cooperation between school authorities and community members at Abakrampa traditional area.
2. Determine the problems confronting the participation of community groups in education delivery at Abakrampa traditional area.
3. Determined the interventional strategies put forth by educational authorities to enhance community participation in education delivery at Abakrampa traditional area.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Partners' contribution in education, especially at the local/community level, has the capability of creating local area responsibility for, a majority rules system in school administration, responsibility, accountability, trust and in general performance of schools in different ways particularly where the degree of support is high. The findings from this paper will give valuable insights into the social roles of parents and other stakeholders in basic education, and the difficulties faced by traditional areas and communities in instructive advancement in Ghana. Besides, the findings will act as reason for local area cooperation and mediation programmes by the government, MoE, GES and other partners in education. Also, the findings will provide useful information to the managers of the various Educational Units and Directorates in Ghana regarding how to improve their community engagement. Ensuring stakeholders' participation and decentralisation of school governance are key phenomenon that could create room for better accountability, transparency, support and ownership on the part of parents and other stakeholders.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many factors that prevent people and other stakeholders in education from participation in the delivery of education at the basic school level. These factors can be social, economic, political and cultural in nature. However, the level of local area cooperation is especially low in socially and financially underestimated districts like Abakrampa traditional area [7]. This is on the grounds that most parents and community members in deprived and local areas are usually non-educogenic, irrespective of their financial or economic status [1]. This shows that one's

orientation largely influence his or her believe towards education.

Writing on community participation, Umura [17] identified two factors that facilitate community participation at the basic level of education. These are: individual factors and group factors. With the individual factors, it was realised that people between the ages of 20 and 50, comprising mostly males, participate more often in basic education issues. Again, a higher proportion of the participants had formal education. The issues concerning groups' involvement in popular education include the economic sustainability of the community, the existence of community organisations, the presence of schools in the country, and faith in financial managers. These factors, especially the one regarding the presence of schools in the country are very vital for the economic and social wellbeing of any country.

The contextual argument of my study, with regard to community involvement in the delivery of education at Abakrampa traditional area is underpinned by Arnstein's [18] ladder of citizen participation theory. Arnstein presents the participation of citizens in a hierarchical order showing the degrees of participation through the ladder of citizen participation. Arnstein observed that participation in education delivery can be categorised into three tiers. The first tier which comprises manipulation and therapy represents the level of non-engagement where educational decisions are made from the highest level for onward transmission to citizens [18]. The second level which consists of informing, consultation and placation shows the degree of tokenism where educational decisions are made through consulting and informing community members without giving the members indications that their inputs will be taken into consideration.

Finally, the third tier of the theory which encompasses partnership, delegated power, and citizen control constitute the degree of citizen power which explains how community members actively take part in the decision-making process to the extent that they become key players in arriving at educational decisions and can greatly shape policy formulation and implementation in education [18]. This shows that at the district and school levels, community members' participation in the delivery of education can be looked at in three forms hierarchically: nonparticipation, tokenism and citizen power.

Most research findings seem to suggest that participation is the cornerstone of good governance and sustainable development [19-22]. This suggests that the extent to which citizens or stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process or participate in the delivery of education determines its quality and effectiveness. Participation can be either directly by the public or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. In their study, Kimani and Kombo [23] also indicated that there is a need to enhance community participation in the development of schools and income-generating projects in rural areas. They added that this can be done through transparency and accountability strategies and effective communication with stakeholders. Agwu also indicated that sustainable development and improved welfare of oil producing communities in the Niger Delta can be enhanced significantly through effective community participation. The findings of Kimani and Kombo and Agwu appear to suggest that community participation can be the panacea for effective education delivery in most traditional communities.

In trying to understand the theory, Sulemana et al. [22] used Arnstein's ladder of participation to explain the level of participation by stakeholders in supervising and appraisal of District Assembly programmes and projects. They contended that the level of participation can best be described as consultation and tokenistic which does not represent deeper levels of participation. They recommended that to ensure effective community participation, the level of participation of key stakeholders must go beyond information giving and consultation.

Masiya et al. [20] also undertook research by employing Arnstein's ladder of participation to explain how the public participates effectively in Municipal service delivery in South Africa at Nyanga Township. They indicated in the study that citizens believe that municipal decisions do not adequately address the needs and values of the communities, especially the deprived and poor sectors. These arguments can be associated with the first and second tiers of the ladder of participation where citizens have a low level of engagement in decision-making processes. This resulted in citizen disillusionment and poor service delivery. The highest level on the ladder of participation which is intended to enhance service delivery and promote effective citizen participation was abandoned. The empirical evidence of the use of Arnstein ladder

theory suggests that when stakeholders participate in the delivery of education it enhances the quality of education /schooling decisions that are taken at the local level and also leads to good governance.

There are many factors that affect community participation in education delivery. However, these factors are largely predetermined by the attitudes of community members and how the members value education. For a community, the interest is to solve local problems, it is important to note that problems are usually localised, that is, community perceptions of problems differ. For example, a big problem in one community may not be a problem in another community. Thus, communities have their own perception of problems and methods of prioritising them. Efforts to develop communities will be forthcoming if they are seen as helping to solve the community's problems [22]. The local government's willingness to participate in a project is a function of whether the project falls within its perspective or plans. District assemblies and other aid agencies with their scarce resources can also come in to assist when it is realised that there are tangible benefits.

Community involvement in education delivery in Ghana is a recent phenomenon. It has not been easy to use it in most deprived and traditional areas [2]. In the process of using it, some lessons have to be learnt the hard way. Therefore, initiating a new approach means that the District Education Directorate and other stakeholders must be willing to innovate, through the use of past experiences. This means initiating a feedback mechanism to ensure that mistakes and lessons are learnt. Interfacing the school and the local area is in many cases an extreme errand. Notwithstanding the idea that both the school and local area stand to profit from laying out a cosy relationship, it is just as of late that such relationship is genuine [24]. According to Keiths and Girling, such a relationship is described by an impressive level of disquiet and many community members do not get very familiar in school matters, regardless of whether they have children or not.

Kusumaningrum et al. [16] on the other hand identifies lack of focus as a hindrance to community participation. They added that because of defocus, community members who may want to help are unsure of their proper roles, as they participate in the schools' activities.

Kusumaningrum et al. further indicated that through advice giving, support, controlling, and mediation, community members are able to help in improving educational quality in the community. Dzikunu et al. [11] also found that parents' level of formal education, their attitude towards PTA meetings, their perceptions about the literate population among them and the attitude of SMCs and PTAs towards school finance affected local level participation and educational administration. These studies examined the issues from a quantitative perspective, as a result, may not have dealt with the issues from humanistic and subjective perspectives. However, the findings from these studies affirmed that community involvement in education delivery is an effective tool for ensuring quality education and education for all.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design is a blue print, which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analysed [25,26]. It provides procedures for the conduct of any investigation. The research design chosen for the study was the descriptive cross sectional survey. This design was used because there was the need to collect data in order to deal with the specific purposes concerning community involvement in the delivery of basic education. The epistemological and ontological orientations of the study were underpinned by the assumptions of pragmatism with regard to the emerging incidents of community participation and their consequences as the standard for action and thought. As a result, the mixed methods approach was used concurrently.

The study area was Abakrampa traditional area in AAKD of the Central Region of Ghana. It is one of the agroforestry areas in the Central Region. The Chief of the area is the paramount chief of the Abura State. Despite the fact that Abakrampa is the conventional capital of Abura, the district capital is Abura-Dunkwa. The target population for this research comprised circuit supervisors/education officers, headteachers, teachers, parents and other stakeholders of the basic schools in the traditional area. However, the accessible population was the indicated major stakeholders in the four public basic schools in the area namely; Abakrampa Methodist 'A' basic school, Abakrampa Anglican basic school, Roman Catholic basic school and Abakrampa Methodist 'B' basic school. In all, the study population came up to 801, which

comprised of 72 school authorities (circuit supervisors, officers, headteachers and teachers) and 729 stakeholders (parents and other leading members of the community).

3.1 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for the study was 150, made up of 75 school authorities and 75 stakeholders. Most recommended sample formulas show that a sample size of 5 – 15 percent in a cross sectional survey study is appropriate [25,27,28]. Therefore, it was justifiable for me to use 150, which represents 18.7 percent of the accessible population. In relation to sampling procedures, the headteachers, teachers and circuit supervisors were selected using purposive sampling. This sampling technique was used to select elements with requisite information [25].

Also, the lottery method of simple random sampling technique was used to select PTA and SMC members. This technique gives room for equal chances of selection without bias [29]. The process of randomisation was such that the names of PTA and SMC members were placed in a non-translucent box and labelled "A" or "B". The names of all those who were labelled "A" and were picked randomly constituted the selected subjects used. Names labelled "B" that were picked were thrown back into the box for another selection. The random selection process continued until the required number (75) was obtained.

3.2 Instrumentation

The instruments used in data collection were questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire was constructed using both close-and open-ended items. The instruments stressed areas including perceptions about contributions made by the community to the development of the school; the level of the cooperation between the schools and the community; problems that militate against effective school community relations; and strategies that could be put in place to deepen and improve community-school relations in the research area. The instruments were piloted at Ayeldu community, and the reliability coefficient obtained for the questionnaire was .789, indicating that the questionnaire was reliable. Also, the trustworthiness of the qualitative data with regard to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were established through member checking, and validation of participants.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

With the help of four trained field assistants, I was able to visit the schools and the education office of the area to collect the data. Prior to this, the headteachers of the schools organised two separate meetings; the first was a staff meeting and then a joint meeting for opinion leaders, PTA and SMC members. At these separate meetings, introduction was made, the purpose and significance of the study were discussed; their permission and support for the exercise were also sought. After the first meeting, I re-visited the schools, requested a meeting with the staff to establish the needed rapport with them to seek their co-operation and explain items on the questionnaire. The questionnaire print-outs for the headteachers were administered separately at their various offices. Respondents from each school were met at a fixed time to listen to their questions, concerning the completion of the questionnaire. The field assistants helped in distributing and collecting the questionnaire from the respondents the same day. This was to ensure a hundred percent rate.

The administration of questionnaire for the stakeholders was carried out after the introductory meeting held with them in the various schools where the scheduled meetings (PTA & SMC meetings) were held. The administration of the questionnaire covered a period of two (2) months, that is, after September 2021 to November, 2021. With regard to the officers of education, I made contact with each of the selected officers; the purpose and significance of the study were also discussed. I again established the needed rapport with them and also sought their co-operation. The questionnaire print-outs were distributed to them separately in their respective offices. Each of the officers was met at a fixed time to listen to their questions concerning the completion of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to three of the parents as interview schedule because they were not able to read and write in English language.

Key respondents in each of the categories were again subjected to an interview and the sessions were recorded after obtaining participants consent and permission. These key respondents were 12 in total. The administering of the questionnaire print-outs and the interview were done simultaneously. However, the selected key respondents answered the questionnaire before they were subjected to the interview. The

interviews took place after two (2) weeks of answering the questionnaire. Ethical protocols such as voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and right to privacy were observed. Also, the Covid-19 protocols of Ghana and World Health Organisation were adhered to. I was able to collect data from all the sampled respondents, representing 100 percent response rate.

3.4 Data Analysis

With the help of Predictive Analytic Software (PASW) Version 21.0, I was able to use descriptive statistical tools such as frequency count, percentage and chi-square tests to analyse the quantitative data regarding the specific purposes. This was possible because the quantitative data were numerically measured using categorical and discrete scale items. Open, axial and selective coding systems were used for the qualitative data. These techniques were used because I was looking for themes or patterns across the qualitative data set. I first used open coding by breaking down the qualitative data into discrete excerpts. Again, I grouped similarly coded excerpts under one overarching code to describe a pattern. After that I related the codes to one another based on the specific purposes. This created room for me to see the links between the codes. I was able to identify concepts in terms of their properties, make connections between the codes and select the central phenomenon around which all the other codes were integrated.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The rationale for the first specific purpose was to *examine the nature of community participation in education delivery in terms of cooperation between school authorities and community members in the Abakrampa traditional area*. Multiple items were used to collect data on this issue. The results from the quantitative data are presented in Tables 1 and 2. As indicated in Table 1, majority (88.1%) of the respondents, with regard to the school authorities and stakeholders, agreed that community participation in school is necessary. Similarly, majority (85.4%) of the respondents agreed that community-school collaboration is necessary in public basic schools. Also, most (90.7%) of the respondents agreed that community participation in school affairs promote good school administration.

The results from Table 1 show that SMCs and PTAs members, teachers, parents, headteachers and education officers in the Abakrampa traditional area perceived community involvement in education delivery in positive terms. This means, the respondents agreed that with effective community involvement in the activities of public basic schools, stakeholders will be able to help the schools achieve their potential and if possible be able to give the schools incentive to ensure that they perform well. Similarly, the stakeholders will be able to meet school authorities regularly and have productive interaction with them to constantly review their work, understand them and possibly solve their emerging problems.

In order to understand better the reasons why respondents thought community participation in school was necessary and why it fosters good school administration, key respondents were interviewed on same issue and also asked to give reasons for their earlier answers. Most of the participants were of the view that community participation in schools enables community to appreciate school problems better and make them willing to help. One of the school authorities (HCS) and two stakeholders (PCS & PAS) simultaneously stated that *community participation brings community closer to schools and this makes for effective collaboration*. One of the school authorities, HMS said: *community participation in schools actually impacts on students' academic success in school*.

Also, EdO said: *community participation actually reinforces parents and pupils/students beliefs in education*. Furthermore, TAS said: *effective community involvement helps the positive development of schools and effective education delivery as a whole*. In support of these assertions, PMS also said: *community participation in school brings about home-school co-operation and understanding, and to a large extent help in educogenising parents. However, officers of the school do not communicate to me on-time when there is a scheduled SMC or PTA meeting. In some cases, when I go to the school unannounced to find out what is happening with regard to teachers' punctuality and regularity, the headteacher and the teachers are usually hostile to me. Even when I report some negative attitude of teachers to the District Education Office, they do not do anything about it; rather the Office end-up telling the headteacher and the teachers that I was the one that report them*.

The results show that most school authorities and stakeholders in Abakrampa traditional area and Ghana as a whole are now developing strong interest in the role of communities in school affairs to help decentralised school governance. The findings are consistent with the assertion that community involvement in the delivery of education promotes good school administration and governance [20-22]. Also, the views of the respondents support the assumption of Arnstein's ladder theory which suggests that when stakeholders participate in the delivery of education it enhances the quality of schooling decisions that are taken at the local level and also leads to good governance. Indeed, greater understanding and cooperation which promotes participation of community members and groups in schools is very vital [22]. According to Masiya et al., such collective effort yield greater dividends and general organisational growth and prosperity.

Further analysis was performed on the dichotomous response items that were also used to collect data on the importance of community participation from both the school authorities and the stakeholders. The results are presented in Table 2. The result of the Chi-square (X^2), as indicated in the table, shows that the calculated values of 40.333 school authorities and 27.000 stakeholders were all greater than the table values of 3.841, respectively at 1.0 degree of freedom (df) at the probability of $p \leq .05$. Deductions from the results appear to suggest that effective community participation is important factor in ensuring effective management of schools. This finding is consistent with the assertion that effective community participation in municipal service delivery is a vital ingredient in administration and management of public services such as schooling [20].

Results from Table 2 further show that the calculated values in both categories are greater than the table (critical) values; the decision is to retain or accept the research items for school authorities (X^2 Cal 40.333 > X^2 tab. 3.841) and stakeholders (X^2 Cal 27.000 > X^2 tab. 3.841). This means, the Chi-square results are significant. The results are congruent with those of Dzikunu et al. [11] who posit that community participation helps in school management and it is an effective tool for ensuring quality education delivery. Ideally, community involvement in school governance is a good idea. However it should be carefully planned, implemented and

monitored for it to be successful. Besides, communities and educators must see each another as partners. Therefore, as partners they must work in harmony in order achieved effective education delivery.

Most of the stakeholders further indicated that that community participation in school affairs helps in building an atmosphere of trust, and also it aids school management to solve problems. However, one of the participants, TMS, said: *parents' involvement in school programmes so far has been minimal in this community, particularly among fathers. In most cases, when the school organises PTA meeting, most of the fathers of the students do not come, it is only the mothers who usually come. Also, in most cases, the parents are not punctual. Two of my pupils' parents, for example, have not participated in any of our PTA meetings for this year. However, their fathers are always punctual and regular at a particular spot in the community where people, usually men, go to drink and play games.*

Another participant, TCS further lamented: *parents and community members show continuing concern about the lack of understanding of school programmes. However, I think they generally show apathy towards participation in school activities and committees because they do not value the education of their children/ward. I ponder if parents appreciate the need to educate their children and also see education as an engineering tool to help narrow or eliminate the gap of generational poverty.*

However, the views of school authority participants are inconsistent with some of the stakeholders. For example, PAS said: *I do not trust the headteacher and teachers of this school. I think parents on PTA executive committees connive and condone to cheat other non PTA executives. When capitation grant is release to our school, the headteacher, teachers and chairpersons of SMC and PTA predetermine what to buy and where to buy it before tabling it in our meetings. However, because they are able to influence most of the mothers in our meetings,*

when members disagree, they end up calling for vote which they no they will get their way because most fathers do not attend PTA meetings. So, therefore, I do not see the need to go to a meeting which the leaders have already predetermine the decisions and will ensure that those predetermined decisions are approved.

The findings show that community participation and involvement actually helps schools in diverse ways. However, they are some challenges that stakeholders are facing. Majority of the school authorities considered community-school relations as cordial and welcoming; that it promotes good school management and augments work of school management. Most of the school authorities and stakeholders further indicated that parents and other stakeholders' attendance at meetings to deliberate on school issues helped in no small measure to improve school administration and management. The results show that traditionally parents' involvement in school activities has been limited to activities such as PTA meetings and conferences. What this means is that in most instances decision-making itself is limited to the school authorities. Parents are just summoned to ratify such decisions arrived at by school authorities.

However, a few others felt that such community-school relation unnecessary interferes in school affairs and goes some way in demeaning school management. Most of the headteachers specifically, were dissatisfied with the current school-community relations that prevail in the traditional area. However, most parents were of the view that sometimes decisions are taken without consultation and that school authorities force certain school decisions on them unnecessarily. These findings corroborate with the assertion that attendance at SMC and PTA meetings lead to greater teacher satisfaction, improved parents' understanding of school issues, promotes more successful school programmes, good parent-teacher communication and improved school-community relations [15,10,11,16,12].

Table 1. Community participation in school affairs

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Community participation in school is necessary	132 (88.1)	8 (5.3)	10 (6.6)
Community-school collaboration was necessary in schools	128 (85.4)	8 (5.3)	14 (9.3)
Community participation in school affairs promote good school administration	136 (90.7)	10 (6.7)	4 (2.6)

Source: Field data, 2021

Table 2. Community participation vital for school management

Category	ON	EN	Res	X ² Cal	X ² tab	Sign
School authorities						
Yes	65	37.5	27.5	40.333	3.841	.000
No	10	37.5	27.5			
Stakeholders						
Yes	60	37.5	22.5	27.000	3.841	.000
No	15	37.5	22.5			

Source: Field data, 2021

Key: ON = Observed frequency; EN = Expected frequency; Res = Residual; X²Cal = Calculated Chi-Square, X²tab = Table value of Chi-Square; df = degree of freedom

Table 3. Problem that militate against community-school relations

Category	ON	EN	Res	X ² Cal	X ² tab	df	Sign
School authorities							
Yes	60	37.5	22.5	27.000	3.841	1	.000
No	15	37.5	22.5				
Stakeholders							
Yes	54	37.5	16.5	14.520	3.841	1	.000
No	21	37.5	16.5				

Source: Field data, 2021

The rationale for the second specific purpose was to assess the problems confronting the participation of community groups in education delivery in the Abakrampa traditional area. Multiple items were formulated to collect data on this issue. Some of the items focused on suspicion, distrust and lack of interest in school programmes as factors that militate against effective community-school relations. Responses to the items were dichotomous. The results are presented in Table 3. The Chi-square test in the table shows that in both cases the calculated values were higher than the table values (i.e. School authorities = $X^2_{Cal} 27.000 > X^2_{tab} 3.841$ and Stakeholders = $X^2_{Cal} 14.520 > X^2_{tab} 3.841$). This shows that suspicion distrust and lack of interest in school programmes by the community all militate against effective community-school relations. These findings are in consonance with those of Afful-Broni [12] who avers that this mistrust or distrust often engenders apathy in school affairs by parents and this slows down school progress.

The study further collected data on the problem of unnecessary demands of school authorities made on parents and children. An examination of the qualitative data shows that both parents and education officers agreed that demands such as fees for extra classes, furniture, maintenance, and building conspired to make parents and other stakeholders uninterested in school affairs. It does not foster effective community – school

relations. One of the school authorities, TCS, contacted said: *unnecessary and unapproved demands do deter parents' interest in school affairs and do not foster effective community-school relations. I think these demands are some of the reasons why few parents do not trust us, as school officials. Last year, for example, a parent told me that she does not see why she should pay for extra class and furniture when the nearby school which is also a public basic school are not asking parents to pay such fees but are offering same services.*

This shows that when school authorities make unnecessary demands it creates tension between them and parents or community members. Most of the headteachers added that PTA, SMC, and School Committee meetings, and parents' interference in school disciplinary matters actually hinders smooth administration, management and is a great disincentive to teachers morale. However, one of the participants, PMS, disagreed with this submission. Specifically, PMS said: *I do not think SMC, PTA and other school meetings can be a stumbling block for smooth running of the school, not to mention the delivery of education in the school. Neither do my regular visits to the school to see whether the headteacher and the teachers are regular and punctual, and also whether the pupils are well taking care of hinder the smooth running of the school.* This shows that there is some level of inconsistency between the views of the teachers and parents.

The finding regarding interference is consistent with the submissions of most researchers. Interferences in school administration come in several forms and these do not only reduce teacher morale, it can also affect discipline of school members [11,24]. Some individual parents demand explanations for certain school demands on the children; some parents demand that their children should be exempted from certain school work. The school community may demand that a particular teacher or the headteacher be removed from the school. Sometimes school authorities fail to find workable solutions some educational conflicts that arise between them and their clients. Such client interference in school matters shows that not only is discipline affected but effective education delivery at the local level is affected in several ways. If parents or the community show interest in school affairs many of these interferences with its many ramifications can be assuaged meaningfully [10,12].

Quantitatively, respondents were further asked to indicate some of the negative consequences of parents' non-attendance at PTA, SMC and school committee meetings and their interference in school matters. The results are presented in Table 4.

As contained in Table 4, preponderance number of the school authorities (92.0%) and stakeholders (88.0%) were of the view that parents' non-attendance at PTA, SMC and school committee meetings and interference in school matters actually makes school management difficult. This may be so because stakeholders may not appreciate the functions of the school as a result may lead to misunderstanding of school intentions and vice versa [1].

Again, majority of the school authorities (76.0%) and stakeholders (80.0%) reasoned that when parents do not attend meetings and turn round to interfere in school matters, teachers become averse to teaching. Also, majority of the school authorities (77.3%) and other stakeholders (78.7%) indicated that parents' non-attendance at school related meetings and interference can lead to teachers' demotivation. Similarly, majority of the school authorities (65.3%) and other stakeholders (72.0%) indicated that parents' non-attendance at the meetings and their interference in school matters encourages indiscipline in the schools. All these negative effects make it difficult to attain good school governance. This is because it becomes rather misunderstandings to

concentrate on the more important mission and goals of the school with regard to teaching and learning [12].

The aim of the last substantive purpose was to *determine the interventional strategies that can be put forth by educational authorities to enhance community participation in education delivery in the Abakrampa traditional area*. Again, multiple items were used to collect data on this issue. The results of the quantitative data are presented in Table 5. As depicted in Table 5, respondents agreed that the adoption of open-door policy (90.7%), regular organisation of durbars and fora (93.3%), allowing for stakeholders collaboration at the local level (93.3%), effective use of PTA and SMC members (92.7%), use of community resource persons (93.3%), and use of standing committees comprising parents and teachers (90.0%) are some of the effective strategies that can be used to improve community participation in school activities within Abakrampa traditional area.

The findings from Table 5 are in line with the assertions of some of the participants (EdO, PCS and HAS) who indicated that maintaining open-door policy through effective collaboration of PTAs provide a veritable avenue for stakeholders to air their views on school matters. EdO further said: *PTAs act as veritable link between the home and the school for the upbringing of the child. Therefore, PTAs play crucial role in the process of improving the standard of education*. The use of the open-door policy to foster and improve community participation tallies with the views of Afful-Broni [4] who advocates the establishment of open-door policy to foster community participation in schools. Also, the findings support the submission of Dzikunu et al. [11] who found that parents' attitude towards PTA meetings and school finance affected local level participation and educational administration. Therefore, employing an open-door system through effective communication, engagement and collaboration of stakeholders it will help in improving education delivery as a whole.

One of the participants, HAS, said: *PTAs role in basic schools includes fund raising activities, involvement in school decision-making and information dissemination. Among other things, I think PTAs provide an effective link between the school and the home. They show intimate interest in and concern for the affairs of the school and ensure that the schools achieve high*

Table 4. Effects of parents non-attendance at meetings and school interference

Negative effects	SA (N = 75)		OS (N = 75)	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Makes school management difficult	69 (92.0)	6 (8.0)	66 (88.0)	9 (12.0)
Teachers become averse to teaching	57 (76.0)	18 (24.0)	60 (80.0)	15 (20.0)
Teachers are demotivated	58 (77.3)	17 (22.7)	59 (78.7)	16 (21.3)
Encourages indiscipline in school	49 (65.3)	26 (34.7)	54 (72.0)	21 (28.0)

Source: Field data, 2021 Where School Authorities = SA and Other Stakeholders (OS)

Table 5. Strategies for improving community participation in school activities

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Open-door policy	136 (90.7)	4 (2.7)	10 (6.6)
Regular organisation of durbars and for a	140 (93.3)	4 (2.7)	6 (4.0)
Allow for stakeholder collaboration at the local level	140 (93.3)	3 (2.0)	7 (4.7)
Effective use of PTA and SMC members	139 (92.7)	2 (1.3)	9 (6.0)
Use of community resource persons	140 (93.3)	4 (2.7)	6 (4.0)
Use of standing committees comprising parents and teachers	135 (90.0)	1 (0.7)	14 (9.3)

Source: Field data, 2021

moral standards and academic excellence. Also, HCS said: *PTAs give moral and financial supports to the school, encourages cooperation and understanding among teachers, parents and pupils for the progress of children.*

Furthermore, in relation to some of the interventional strategies that can be put forth by educational authorities to enhance community participation in education delivery in the traditional area, PMS said: *there is the need for the schools, in collaboration with the District Education Directorate, to increase their community sensitisation and outreach programmes to make the schools more visible for stakeholders to understand and appreciate their administrative and management procedures. Through these interventions, I contemplate they can increase the awareness of community members and also their responsibility and advocacy for education. This dynamics, in the long run, may lead to effective delivery of education in the traditional area.*

In addition, HCS said: *management of the Education Directorate and the schools could use the school system and teachers to build trust in the community through effective customer relationship management strategies. The schools can be responsive to the needs of stakeholders at both the local and national levels, provide complementary services to the community on special occasions, create visible and clear-cut channels of resolution to manage parents and students complaints, and involve all stakeholders equitably. I think these strategies will make the*

schools get closer to the parents and the communities as a whole, understand their expectations and needs regarding basic education, and deliver to meet these expectations and needs. This will boost their involvement of stakeholders since the schools will be serving them better and they will also be responding to interests/concerns of the schools.

Also, PAS said: *The Education Directorate and the schools should begin to provide culturally sensitive approach to education. As Fantes, we have certain cultural practices and taboos in this traditional areas that I think the school management do not respect. Even though they are not to belief in these practices, but I assume they should respect them. I expect the schools to socialise our children with these basic customs and practices so they could take over from us when we join our ancestors. Some of these cultural elements I am talking about have to do with our lifestyle, religion, eating habits, occupation, music and dress code. I will not go further because you know what I am talking about!*

Correspondingly, PMS also said: *To ensure effective community participation of parents and community leaders, I expect the government through the various directorates of education to strengthen their community school support organisations by empowering the local people to act, define our roles and responsibilities as community leaders and communicate same to us. Also, we should be given some level of authority to monitor the performance, finances*

and assets of the schools under our traditional area. I think this will enhance community leadership and ownership in the delivery of education in the area. Similarly, when buying commodities, that is goods and services, the schools must consider commodities from the traditional area before elsewhere to help boost the economy of the area. For example, most of the caterers that cook for the learners in the various public basic schools in this area hardly buy their foodstuff at our market or from our farmers. Even though our farm products are cheaper and quality, they do not purchase them. I assume this is happening because these caterers are not from this traditional area that is why we are facing this problem. I suppose the government through the district should ensure that all caterers cooking for the school feeding programme in our traditional area will be residence of the area.

Deductions from the findings seem to suggest that the extent to which citizens or stakeholders are involved in the delivery of education determines its quality and effectiveness. These findings agree with the assertion that a diverse group of community folks must get involved in school affairs positively to enhance purposeful school community relationship [2,11,12]. Also, these findings are in line with the assumption of the third tier of Arnstein's [18] ladder of participation theory which constitute the degree of citizen power which explains how community members actively take part in the decision-making process to the extent that they become key players in arriving at educational decisions and can greatly shape policy formulation and implementation in education. Most research findings seem to suggest that participation is the cornerstone of good governance [20,21,22].

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study was carried out to find out community participation in the educational delivery in the study area. The findings of this study aligned with previous researches on community participation in schools. The results suggest the need to foster community-school participation in order to enhance educational delivery, management and development in basic schools. In conclusion, one can say that community-school participation is necessary for orderly development of schools, aside from engendering trust and help to solve school problems so that academic work can flourish in an atmosphere of peace and orderliness. It could also be concluded from the

study that the level to which parents participated in school management and issues enabled the community to be actively involved in the school. This makes for orderly development of the school, which invariably leads to an increase in the performance of the students and the school in general.

In addition, the active involvement of the community is commendable. Sometimes certain interferences do make school management and development difficult. Such interference includes those on disciplinary, finance and management matters. When such situations arise, it demoralises headteachers and teachers alike, thus jeopardising school work. The community must, therefore desist from such practices. The setting up school committees, whether standing or ad hoc, comprising parents and teachers goes a long way in finding solutions to school problems, fostering mutuality understanding and consensus building, quite apart from building esprit de corps and teamwork.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are made to help guide policy and education delivery in Ghana and beyond as a whole:

1. On the bases of the findings that community members' involvement, particularly through PTAs, in school administration is a significant factor in achieving success in the implementation of quality education delivery at public basic schools, it is recommended to the MoE and GES to consider given some level of authority to PTAs when appointing a headteacher to a public school. This will create room for these groups to have some level of authority to monitor and supervise school activities, particularly regarding professional behaviours of headteachers and teachers, including their regularity and punctuality.
2. Also, it is recommended to headteachers to constantly communicate with community leaders and PTAs regarding the activities of the schools, including their challenges and success. The school could also organise biannual fora and public hearings at the school premises or the community meeting place to let parents and other stakeholders appreciate the challenges the schools are facing and also for the school

authorities to understand and appreciate the expectations and needs of the stakeholders regarding education delivery in the community. This will reduce the level of anxiety by some community members that they are not fully made part of community decision-making on education.

3. In addition, it is recommended to school authorities and executives of PTAs and SMCs who are at the forefront of financial obligations of the schools and on behalf of parents to make it a point to publish financial reports regularly and publicly during PTA and SMC meetings. This will help to address issues of mistrust that the parents are having toward school authorities and also ensure transparency and accountability.
4. It is recommended to MoE, GES and the district education directorates to regularly organise training workshops for newly elected executives of PTAs and SMCs on financial control systems, educational decentralisation, budgeting, fund raising, and resources management and improvisation so they can effectively functional well as expected. This intervention to a large extent would address lacunas in school transparency and accountability.
5. Lastly, it is recommended to the directors of the various district education directorates and school authorities to draft constitution for the various PTAs that will clearly define various motivational and sanction packages for parents who do or do not participate or attend school meetings. This intervention would encourage participation and also deter parents from absenting themselves from school meetings.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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