Exploring Community Participation in Managing the Colleges of Education in Ashanti Region

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ABSTRACT: This research examined the extent of community participation in managing the Colleges of Education(CoE) in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, with Epstein (2006) framework on community participation in education being the theoretical lense for the study. To accomplish this, the study was rooted in the pragmatist paradigm where mixed methods approach was adopted and the Concurrent Triangulation design was utilized in the study. Questionnaire and interview were the main instruments used to collect the primary data for the study. A total of 349 questionnaires were distributed comprising 319 CoE students and 30 opinion leaders in the Ashanti Region and these were all retrieved and returned for analysis. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages), whereas qualitative data were analysed using themes. The results from the study suggest that largely, to some extent, communities do not really participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. Though community participation was found beneficial, it was also greeted with some challenges such as ineffective medium of communication at meeting, confusion over the roles of school administrators and community leaders. It was recommended among others that MMDAs in the region should create a strong awareness on the role of the communities and their indigenous knowledge systems in ensuring effective and efficient community participation. in managing CoE in the Ashanti Region

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing interest in involving communities in improving education delivery in poor countries (Stiglitz 2002; Mansuri & Rao, 2012). To manage this, many countries have established local institutions such as school committees and Parent Teacher Associations. According to Sumarsono, Imron, Wiyono, and Arifin (2016), education is a joint responsibility of the government, parents, and community. The functions of these three factors are crucial in the execution of education, particularly in terms of graduate development. Rifa'l (2013) claims that community participation has a good impact on pupils' psychosocial development in his study.

The educational programme, which is coordinated by the principal, teachers, and community, has the potential to improve students' learning outcomes. Hughes and MacNaughton (2002) discovered in their research that good communication between the community, parents, and teachers, as well as among teachers, is a prerequisite for high-quality parenting and education for children, affects learners' cognitive and social development, and improves educational success. Participation in the community has been linked to crucial components of work or school activities (Kim, Yoo, Jung, Park, Lee, and Lee, 2016). The community has many opportunities to contribute in numerous ways thanks to the policy of implementing education utilizing the decentralisation concept. A Participatory Approach for education planning at all levels of education was recommended in conjunction with Ghana's decentralization process, the Education for All/Fast Track Initiative, and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Addae-Boahene, 2007). Stakeholders such as Unit Committees (UCs), School Management Committees/Parent Teacher Associations (SMC/PTAs), and Community and Religious Leaders (CRLs) were invited to participate in the formulation and execution of various educational decentralization projects as a result (Ministry of Education, 2003). The Ghanaian government incorporated a provision in Section 9 and Subsection 2 of the Ghana Education Service Act of 1994 to ensure community engagement in the creation, management, and governance of schools. The Act mandates the formation of a District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) in each district, among other things. These committees are in charge of constructing school buildings and ensuring that teaching and learning are properly supervised. It also suggested that teaching and learning materials be closely monitored.

Parents had long been involved in some school activities, such as raising cash for their schools, even if they were not given the opportunity to participate in decision-making. However, it was not until the mid-1980s that the concept of parents as partners in school governance, on par with the school's professional staff, began to gain traction. Parents and local community leaders have

long been active in the operation of particular schools in the United Kingdom (Hill, Hwang & Kim, 1990). In British dependencies and former territories such as Australia, New Zealand, and the tiny colony city of Hong Kong, parental engagement in school councils and school boards was therefore frequent. It was no coincidence that the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and a few Australian states elected to reform their education boards and councils.

In Ghana, the training of the teachers has been the responsibility of government with support from key stakeholders. The community has been identified as a major stakeholder and thus has been given some of managerial role to ensure the smooth running of Colleges of Education. The relationship between the Basic Schools which is more community owned and Colleges of Education that train teachers for this level of education has become so thin that, the communities are recently making significant input especially in the out segment of the in-in-out programmeme. The in-in-out programmeme is a situation whereby students spend their first two years on compus and spend their third or final year in the coomunity for their teaching practice. It is against this background that a study to investigate the extent to which the community participate in the management of Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region has become necessary.

The participation of parents and the community in school management increases the community's positive interest in the school, fosters a sense of friendliness and goodwill toward the staff, ensures enough financial support, and fosters a sense of responsibility for the school's improvement (Bagin & Donald, 2001). The participation of the community in the school's management fosters positive relationships that encourage people to contribute to the school. The more involved the community is in the school's management, the easier it is for the school to adapt to changes both inside and outside the school. Despite the favorable influence of community participation in college administration, some college administrators are unwilling to allow communities to participate in their management decisions. According to the researchers 'experiences with several college tutors and mentees in the Ashanti Region, there appears to be little or no community participation in the management of educational colleges. That is, when it comes to admissions, teaching practice programmes, and postings, the communities have little or no say.

While many studies have been conducted to examine community participation, majority of these studies were conducted in the western context (Ecclesm & Harrold, 2009, Goldring, 1994, Honda & Kato, 2013), there is therefore the need to get local empirical evidence on community participation in the management of our schools. Again, most of these studies were largely quantitative (Goldring, 1994, Honda & Kato, 2013). Most studies from the Ghanaian perspective to examine community participation in the management of schools were conducted at the Basic and Senior High School level (Bekoe, Quartey & Teye, 2013) leaving a doubt as to the situation at the tertiary level. Drawing on mixed method approach, the study explored the extent to which communities participate in managing colleges of education in Ghana's Ashanti region.

The following research questions guided the study.

1 To what extent do communities participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region?
2 What inherent challenges do the College Administrators encounter in involving the communities in the management of the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region?

The outcome of the study would have theoretical, policy and practical significance. Theoretically, the findings of the study would provide contextual information or knowledge on community participation in the management of Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region, thereby expanding the frontirers in this field. Again, the findings from this study would either validate or confirm Epstein (2006) framework for community participation in education within the context of Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Besides, the outcome of the study would go a long way to review the state of affairs at the Colleges of Education and assess the success or otherwise of the out-segment programmeme. The study would without doubt come up with a framework towards the improvement and sustenance of the new curriculum at the Colleges of Education level towards an improved Basic Education. The outcome of the study would inform the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service and the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) etc. to strengthen already existing policies for effective implementation and also enact new policy on the current trend on community participation so as to realise educational goals and objectives. The study's findings would be useful to parents, students, teachers, traditional rulers, and other stakeholders as a source of information. NGOs, parents, and other community-based organizations would be well aware of the level of support needed to ensure that education is delivered successfully. The study would contribute to current national and international research into the quality of management in teaching and learning and more importantly, on what teachers know and value in terms of quality teaching practices.

In this study, community participation in education refers to the level or extent of community participation in the decision-making process, management, activities, or operation of colleges of education. That is the extent to which parents and other recognized community groups contribute to the creation of a learning and teaching environment that is efficient and successful. In other words, it refers to community participation in education programmes within the context of a national development plan. From the foregoing considerations, community participation in education can be defined as the numerous actions that parents/guardians and other stakeholders engage in in order to improve students' comfort, performance, and achievement in schools

This study on community participation in managing the colleges of education in the Ashanti Region was grounded on Epstein's theoretical framework "the overlapping spheres of influence" which focuses on interaction and communication, or partnerships

among families, schools, and the community to bring the three closer together. It is therefore, believed that this theory is appropriate and has some associations with this study. A number of educational scholars suggest that community participation in education improves students' academic achievement and serves as a motivator for students to move on to tertiary education (Epstein, 2006; Griffin & Steen, 2010; UNESCO, 2013). Children, parents, community members, local governments, teachers, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders all agree that community participation in education refers to the processes by which children, parents, community members, local governments, teachers, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders participate in school programmes or education-related institutions. It is claimed that involving parents and communities in schooling has significant educational benefits (Epstein, 2006; Bryan & Henry, 2012). These studies claim that involving families and communities in schools, especially when they collaborate, improves students' academic progress. Epstein (2006) established a school-family-community partnership framework for schools and education institutions to increase participation and foster collaborative work between schools, communities, and families for learners' learning (Epstein, 2006). Several educational institutions and academics in both developing and rich countries have used this paradigm (Epstein, 2006; Griffin & Steen, 2010; Bryan & Henry, 2012). Epstein felt that when teachers, families, and the community work together to meet children's learning and development goals, they can achieve greater results (Epstein, 2006). As a result, Epstein's framework is not prescriptive because the concept of participation can vary depending on the environment, sorts of involvement, and level of commitment of the implementers. This framework can be used at all levels of schooling and in a variety of settings.

According to Berger (2007), community participation in management is a process of continually seeking to understand assumptions and sharing meanings and expectations in order to develop and maintain a true partnership with the community. Mutual trust and respect for the other's values, viewpoints, and experiences are the only ways for a partnership to thrive. However, it is not uncommon for communities to feel cut off from the school. Similarly, according to Comer (2009), a minority of community members may be unaware of school procedure and may feel inadequate or unwelcome because of inequalities in money, education, or ethnicity with school personnel. This disparity may give the impression that the school is uninterested or even chilly. As a result, the school views the community as uninterested in school participation. Furthermore, when school staff do not regard themselves or the school as a member of the surrounding community and families, the psychological gap between the community and teachers is exacerbated (Gwendolyn, 2014). This assumption further alienates parents and community members who believe they are less fortunate. Community members are not given the opportunity to engage in school management in such cases since it is assumed that they will not offer much value to decision-making.

There are inherent challenges to community participation. Harriet, Anin, and Yussif, (2013) on their part submit that factors that affect achieving higher level of participation in participator approach to development in general and in education in particular has to do with low knowledge level and poor flow of information. Furthermore, local government authorities saw the empowerment of the local steering committee as a danger, accusing them of being political party agents, preventing full commitment and engagement from the local people. Similarly, Addae-Boahene (2007) discovered that the kind and quality of stakeholders' participation inside a service delivery organization is influenced by a number of factors. Participation style, relationship, knowledge exchange, and engagement are some of these elements. Stakeholders with a reactive approach to planning processes are thought to indicate a strained connection between the community and the implementing agency. Their findings are similar to those of Guillaume (2011), who found that African teachers do not appear to accommodate or entice parents to become more involved in school management, so teachers give fewer instructions to parents, change meeting times for parents, find less effective communication mechanisms, and do not trust their involvement. In most situations, communities are not given an opportunity to participate in the education process for fear of increased accountability and control, as well as a loss of freedom if the community acquires authority over school decisions. Because there is no motivation for coordinating community engagement, community members are more prone to acquire apathy, lose commitment, and/or become half-hearted over time.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in accordance with the pragmatist research philosophy. As a research paradigm, pragmatism avoids debating difficult metaphysical concepts like truth and reality. Instead, it acknowledges that there may be a single or several realities that can be investigated empirically (Creswell & Plano-Clark 2011). Some philosophers believe that neither the scientific procedures proposed by the positivist paradigm nor the socially constructed reality proposed by the interpretivism paradigm are sufficient to comprehend the reality of the universe (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Pragmatism is the primary philosophy of Mixed Method Research, according to Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007), since it considers "many viewpoints, perspectives, stances, and standpoints" of the topic under investigation. This paradigm accepts ontology and epistemology in tandem (Wahyuni, 2012). The study adopted mixed method research, according to Johnson, Onwueegbuzie and Turner (2007), mixed method approach "is a type of research in which a researcher or a group of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration." (See p. 123). This study adopted the mixed methods approach to research and specifically used the Concurrent Triangulation Design. Concurrent Triangulation design consists of both qualitative and quantitative (mixed)

methods (Creswell, 2014). This design uses concurrently and simultaneously the qualitative and quantitative approach. Creswell (2014) posits that this design consists of qualitative and quantitative research design to confirm, cross- validate or corroborate findings within a study.

The eight Colleges of Education within the Ashanti Region constituted the population for the study. The colleges have male segregated, female segregated and mixed student population. Some of the Colleges are missionary schools and others do not have missionary affiliation. Each of the college serves not less than ten communities where teacher trainees (mentees) are posted for the practicum as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Colleges of Education in Ashanti Region of Ghana

Name of College of Education	Type	Region
Agogo Presbyterian College of Education	Segregated (Female)	Ashanti
Agona SDA College of Education	Mixed	Ashanti
Akrokerri College of Education	Mixed	Ashanti
Mampong Technical College of Education	Segregated (Male)	Ashanti
Offinso College of Education	Mixed	Ashanti
St. Louis College of Education	Segregated (Female))	Ashanti
St. Monica's College of Education	Segregated (Female)	Ashanti
Wesley College of Education	Mixed	Ashanti

Source: Field Data

The opinion leaders in these communities are involved in the management of the colleges. The researchers concentrated on two mixed public colleges (Offinso College of Education, Wesley College of Education) and two of the single sex colleges (St. Louis College of Education (Female segregated) and Mampong Technical College of Education (male segregated) in order to have fair representation of respondents for the study. The target population included all final year students of two mixed public colleges (Offinso College of Education, Wesley College of Education) and two of the single sex colleges (St. Louis College of Education (Female segregated) and Mampong Technical College of Education (male segregated) totaling one thousand five hundred and ninety-three (1593), in addition to four (4) principals, four (4) teaching practice coordinators and thirty (30) opinion leaders in communities where these colleges of education are located.

The sample population for this study was three hundred and nineteen (319) final year students from the selected colleges in the Ashanti Region, thirty (30) opinion leaders (assembly members and chiefs) from the communities where selected Colleges of Education are situated, four (4) principals and four (4) teaching practice coordinators of the selected colleges. The census sampling technique was used to select the four (4) principals and the four (4) teaching practice coordinators of each College of Education selected because of their position and access to key information that was relevant to the study. Thirty (30) opinion leaders (assembly members and chiefs) of the communities where the Colleges of Education are situated were conveniently selected. Convenience sampling was adopted because the respondents were accessible and willing to participate and give adequate information on community participation in the management of Colleges of Education in the study area. The sample size for the teacher trainees (mentees) on teaching practice programme (practicum) was obtained using Yamane's (1967) sample formula which suggest that the appropriate sample size could vary for various large population sizes. According to Yamane, the sampling size can be calculated at 95% confidence level using the formula below.

$n = N/1 + N(e)2$

Where n = sample size

N= number of statistical populations

E = margin of error (0.05). Thus

$1593/1 + 1593(0.05)2 = 319$

Through substitution of the population of 1,593 students in the selected colleges, the sample size of 319 was arrived at. Samples of mentees from the four colleges selected for the study were chosen using simple proportion according to the total number. This was done in order to have fair representation of respondents for the study. This is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Proportionate sample Distribution of Respondents

Name of Colleges	Actual Population	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Mampong Technical	449	90	28.2
Offinso	345	69	21.6
St. Louis	399	80	25.1

Wesley	400	80	25.1
Total	**1593**	**319**	**100**

Source: Field Data

Table 2 gives a tabular view of proportion of sample selected from each college with their corresponding percentage for the study. On a whole a total of three hundred and fifty-seven (357) sample size comprising three hundred and nineteen (319) mentees, thirty (30) opinion leaders (assembly members and chiefs), four (4) principals and four (4) teaching practice coordinators were selected for the study.

The study's data was acquired through the use of a questionnaire and the conduct of interviews. These instruments were used by the researchers to triangulate the data and ensure that the findings were consistent. There were four sections to the questionnaire (A, B, C and D). Respondents' personal information (demographic data) was covered in Section A. These factors include the respondents' gender, educational level, and job title. Section B focused on the extent of communities' participation in college administration and section C on the inherent challenges to community participation in college management. Questionnaire's items were graded on a four-point likert scale. The scales were given numerical weights of 1–Strongly Disagree, 2–Disagree, 3–Agree, and 4–Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was chosen because it allowed for secrecy, collecting of a big amount of data in a short amount of time, and the participation of a large number of respondents from different parts of the world. The questionnaire was utilized again since it assured that the data generated from the respondents was consistent. In addition, the questionnaire aided in the quantitative analysis of the data collected. The researchers met with four (4) principals and four (4) teaching practice coordinators from the Ashanti Region's designated colleges of education for a face-to-face interview. To ensure that respondents express themselves and provide the researchers with detailed information for the study, an interview guide with open-ended questions was employed. The interview method was chosen because it allowed for the examination and clarification of topics, broadening the content scope and providing new insights into the amount of community participation in the management of Ashanti Region colleges of education.

The researchers' colleagues determined the validity of the questionnaire for this study, notably the face and content validity, because content and construct validity are determined by expert judgment, according to Amin (2005). This was accomplished by building the items in accordance with the study questions and having them reviewed by the researcher's supervisors. Following that, the questionnaire's flaws were addressed.

The primary goal of pilot testing is to determine the item's reliability when employed in the main study. To establish the internal consistency of each concept in the questionnaire, a reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha was done.

Table 3: Reliability Test Results of the Measured Variables

Constructs	Number of Items	Reliability Value
Community Participation Level	19	r=0.854
Challenges of CP	05	r=0.798

Source: Field Data

Reliability of data from the semi-structured interview of this study was guaranteed by playing back the recorded interview to each interviewee for them to authenticate the reliability of the earlier interview proceedings. The researchers read out the transcript in the presence of each interviewee to be sure of its transcription. The interview session went through these processes to ensure trustworthiness. Following Gray's (2011) guidance, participants were ensured of their anonymity and confidentiality, both in terms of their names and the information they had submitted, during the actual data collection.

In entering the data, all the 349 questionnaires (319 for mentees, 30 for opinion leaders) were numbered. Before the data was analyzed, data cleaning was done. Data was screened for accuracy and all missing cases identified were replaced with dummy variables. The researchers used descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages, the mean and standard deviation to analyse data on all the research questions using the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) software version 22. Qualitative data generated from interviews was analyzed thematically (Braun & Clark, 2006). Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed (nvivo). The researchers began analyzing data following the first interview to begin identifying patterns, and to facilitate subsequent data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Qualitative data was analyzed thematically (Braun *et al.,* 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

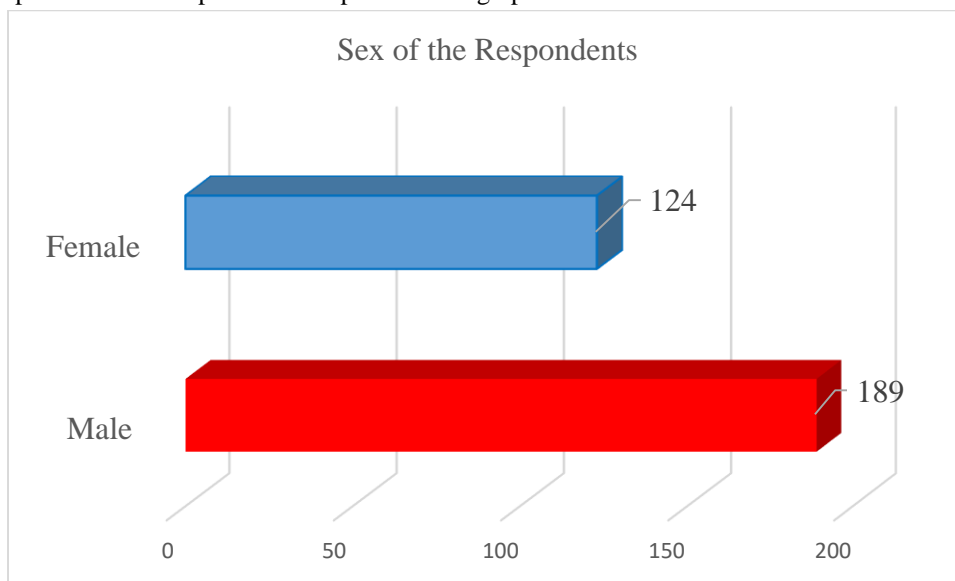The results on biographical data of respondents are presented in graphs.
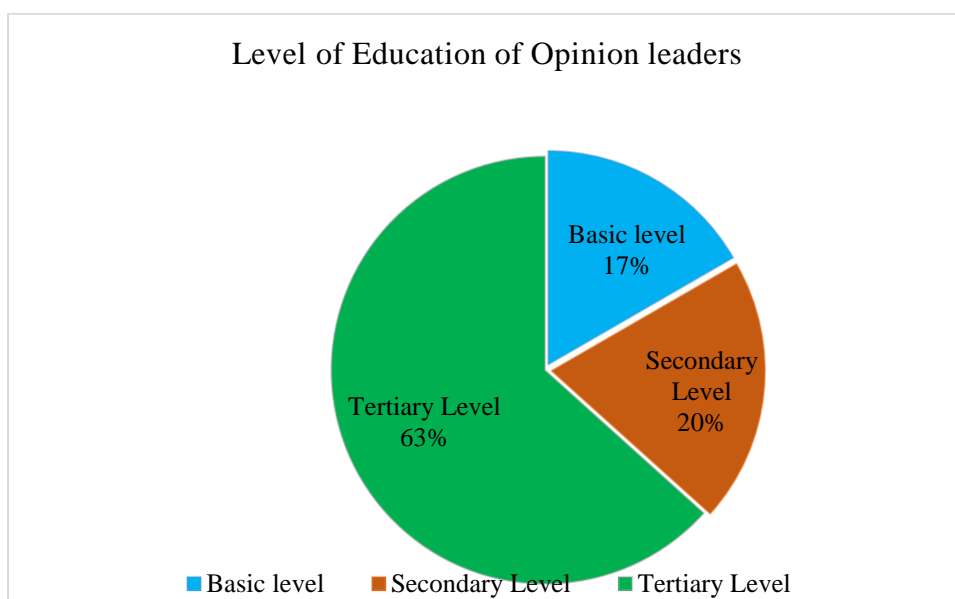

Fig 1: Sex of Respondents

As illustrated in Figure 1, the results show that majority of the students in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana were males (n=189, 60.4%). The females were the least (n=124, 39.6%).

The results of educational level of the opinion leaders are depicted in Figure 2. The results suggest that most of the opinion leaders had tertiary education (n=19, 63%).

RQ1 :To what extent do communities participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region?

Table 4 offers the results of the extent to which communities participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. The results from the study suggest that largely, to some extent, communities do not really participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. This was apparent after the mean of means/average mean score was below the criterion value of 2.50 (students: MM=2.40, SD=.578; opinion leaders: MM=2.46, SD=.324).

Table 4: Descriptve Results on the extent to which communities participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region

Statements	Students CV=2.50		Opinion leaders CV=2.50		Ske. CV=±2	Kur.
	M	SD	M	SD	Stat.	Stat.
The community is involved in the selection of teacher trainees (protocol)	2.25	.243	2.15	.345	.323	.224
The community is involved in sponsoring teacher trainees	2.46	.643	2.76	.843	.243	.343
The community is involved in the posting of the newly trained teachers	2.38	.946	2.68	.946	.233	.324
The community liaises with the education directorate to ensure that qualified teachers are posted to the community	2.13	.498	2.19	.401	.123	.432
Some community members serve as resource persons for some programmes organized in the colleges	2.57	.564	2.47	.244	.453	.423
Community members make accommodation arrangement for teachers and teacher trainees	3.14	.842	2.74	.124	.232	.429
Community members take part in decisions about school infrastructure	2.58	.120	2.76	.103	.454	.401
Community provides land for the construction of school infrastructure	2.60	.534	2.70	.134	.123	.349
Community visits the colleges to ensure efficient utilization of school resources	2.53	.353	2.73	.323	.323	.443
The community supplies infrastructure for colleges within the area	2.52	.643	2.65	.193	.373	.629
Community holds regular meetings with staff to know the problems facing the colleges	2.30	.946	2.41	.109	.133	.383
The community holds regular meetings with the college on matters to ensure progress.	2.15	.498	2.55	.148	.643	.328
Community visits colleges to assess the progress of projects undertaken	2.54	.564	2.57	.134	.393	.472
The community decides on which projects to be carried out in the college	2.34	.842	2.12	.449	.933	.483
The community imposes special levies on members to finance some college projects	2.37	.120	2.07	.190	.974	.479
The community is consulted on matters of teaching practice (out segment programme)	2.38	.534	2.18	.149	.459	.491
The community provides accommodation for the mentees	2.32	.643	2.38	.234	.243	.749
There is a better partnership between the college and the community on governance of the college	2.28	.946	2.48	.946	.927	.249
There are existing structures to ensure the participation of the community in managing the college.	2.36	.498	2.19	.138	.343	.294
Mean of means/ Average mean	**2.40**	**.578**	**2.46**	**.324**		

Max.=4.00, Min. 1.0, Students (n=319), Opinion Leaders (n=30)
Key: (Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree =2, Agree = 3, Strongly Agree =4).
Source: Field Data, (2021).

Specifically, it was found that the community was not involved in the selection of teacher trainees (protocol) (students: M=2.25, SD=.243; opinion leaders: M=2.15, SD=.345, Sk=.323, Kur.=.224). In another related results, it was found the community is involved in sponsoring teacher trainees (students: M=2.46, SD=.643; opinion leaders: M=2.76, SD=.843, Sk=.243, Kur.=.343).

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Relatedly, it was found that to a large extent, the community was involved in the posting of the newly trained teachers (students: M=2.38, SD=.946; opinion leaders: M=2.68, SD=.946, Sk.=233, Kur.=.324). In another clear results, it was found that to a large extent, the community do not liaise with the education directorate to ensure that qualified teachers are posted to the community (students: M=2.13, SD=.498; opinion leaders: M=2.19, SD=.401, Sk=.123, Kur.=.432).

Expounding further, it was asserted by both students and opinion leaders that some community members serve as resource persons for some programmes organized in the colleges (students: M=2.57, SD=.564; opinion leaders: M=2.47, SD=.244, Sk=.453, Kur.=.423). Similar to the above, it was found that community members make accommodation arrangement for teachers and teacher trainees (students: M=3.14, SD=.842; opinion leaders: M=2.74, SD=.124, Sk=.232, Kur.=.429).

Also the results show that, community members take part in decisions about school infrastructure (students: M=2.58, SD=.120; opinion leaders: M=2.76, SD=.103, Sk=.454, Kur.=.401). Again, both the students and the opinion leaders confirmed that community provides land for the construction of school infrastructure (students: M=2.60, SD=.534; opinion leaders: M=2.70, SD=.134, Sk=.123, Kur.=.349).

To expound evidence on the extent to which communities participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region, some interview data were collated.

The sub-theme, participation describes extent to which communities participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. Three sub-themes emerged; provision of accomodation for mentees and other infrastructures, meetings and advice. The results from the interview data were not quite variance with respect to the quantitative data. For example, in one of the interviews, We gather the following from one of the respondents who indicated that, he is not involved in the decision making of the college.

> *Hmmmm…for me, I think that communities participation in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region has been very abysmal. For example, in most cases, the community is not really involved in the selection of teacher trainees. Most of the selections are reserved for the college and its authorities. It is only in some few cases that some key members in the community such as the chiefs have the opportunity meetings are not regularly held to discuss issues bordering the institution. (KI 002).*

Another key informants had this to recount to us………………..

> *They somehow do participate in the management decision making of the Colleges in the sense that. When it comes to helping the students to have a better place to stay to enable them have comfort to teach, they provide them with accommodation. They do this by either give our rooms out for free to the students or take some little amount of money from them to pay for utilities. They actually make teaching practice easy for the students. Some even go to the extent of building bungalows specially for mentees which is financed by the community leaders. I mean they build houses purposely for mentees to have a good stay in their communities. There is this I don't want to mention its name which the chief there has done something like that to help the Colleges. So every year, the management of the College send a number of mentees to the community to do their teaching practice without paying for accommodation (KI 006).*

The extent to which communities participate in the management decisions has earlier been explored in the literature by other authors in different geographical context and settings. According to Berger (2007), community participation in management is a process of continually seeking to understand assumptions and sharing meanings and expectations in order to develop and maintain a true partnership with the community. Mutual trust and respect for the other's values, viewpoints, and xperiences are the only ways for a partnership to thrive. However, it is not uncommon for communities to feel cut off from the school.

Similarly, according to Comer (2009), a minority of community members may be unaware of school procedure and may feel inadequate or unwelcome because of inequalities in money, education, or ethnicity with school personnel. This disparity may give the impression that the school is uninterested or even chilly. As a result, the school views the community as uninterested in school participation. Furthermore, when school staff do not regard themselves or the school as a member of the surrounding community and families, the psychological gap between the community and teachers is exacerbated (Gwendolyn, 2014). This assumption further alienates parents and community members who believe they are less fortunate. Community members are not given the opportunity to engage in school management in such cases since it is assumed that they will not offer much value to decision-making.

Gaitan (2007) came to the conclusion that including communities in management decisions allows schools to interact with other institutions and agencies, which opens up a wide range of possibilities and realities. Collaboration with communities, while using their resources and skills, also helps children's social and emotional development. This fosters parent, family, and community empowerment and well-being at the same time. Sharma (2013) agrees, arguing that effective parent-school collaborations must include opportunities for parents to recognize and value their skills and knowledge, utilize the strengths and resources available among parents and the community, and provide multiple opportunities for parents to expand their abilities. Collaboratively improving the student's and family's well-being builds human and social capital, which strengthens families and communities.

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RQ2: What inherent challenges do the College Administrators encounter in involving the communities in the management of the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region?

This research question was anchored on fishing out the inherent challenges College Administrators encounter with regureds to community participation in managing Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. To accomplish this, means and standard deviations were used for the analysis and the results are deplayaed in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptve Results on the inherent challenges College Administrators encounter in involving the communities in managing Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region

Inherent Challenges	Students CV=2.50		Opinion leaders CV=2.50		Sk. CV=±2	Kur.
	M	SD	M	SD	Stat	Stat
Poor understanding of educational issues by community members	3.93	.433	3.45	.672	.863	.546
Ineffective medium of communication at meeting	3.86	.940	3.46	.653	.563	.345
Lack of trust between school authorities and the community members	3.59	.826	3.80	.169	.863	.396
Confusion over the roles of school administrators and community leaders	3.43	.928	3.58	.750	.639	.482
School administrators may not wish to have community members interfere their schedules	3.45	.730	3.59	.619	.543	.380
Mean of means/ Average mean Score	**3.65**	**.771**	**3.58**	**.573**		

Max.=4.00, Min. 1.0, Students (n=319), Opinion Leaders (n=30)
Key: (Strongly Disagree =1, Disagree =2, Agree = 3, Strongly Agree =4).
Source: Field Data, (2021).

Table 5 depicts the results of some inherent challenges College Administrators encounter in involving the communities in managing Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region. The results from the study suggest that though the community participation programme is very beneficial however, it is met with some challenges. This was clear after the mean of means/average mean score was more than the criterion value of 2.50 (students: MM=3.65, SD=.771; opinion leaders: MM=3.58, SD=.573).

In specific terms, it was found that one of the challenges of the community particpation is that there is poor understanding of educational issues by community members (students: M=3.93, SD=.433; opinion leaders: M=3.45, SD=.672, Sk.=.863, Kur.=.546). In another challenge, it was found that ineffective medium of communication at meeting affect the community particpation programme (students: M=3.86, SD=.940; opinion leaders: M=3.46, SD=.653, Sk.=.563, Kur.=.345).

Another noticeable challenge was lack of trust between school authorities and the community members (students: M=3.59, SD=.826; opinion leaders: M=3.80, SD=.169, Sk.=.863, Kur.=.396). Confusion over the roles of school administrators and community leaders was found to be another challenge (students: M=3.43, SD=.928; opinion leaders: M=3.58, SD=.750, Sk.=.639, Kur.=.482). Finally, it was found that School administrators may not wish to have community members interfere their schedules and this one of the challenges (students: M=3.45, SD=.730; opinion leaders: M=3.59, SD=.619, Sk.=.543, Kur.=.380).

To establish more rigorous and robust findings, We elicited from some key informants on the inherent challenges that College Administrators encounter in involving the communities in the management of the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region.

Five sub-themes emerged; perception, lack of trust, lack of knowledge, skills, and confusion over roles. From the interviews, it can be inferred that indeed the programme (community participation) has met some challenges. One of the respondents vividly recounted her experiences on the challenges of the programme. She had this to say…………..

> *The perception of the community members has been a bigger challenge. This is to say that the perception that local people lack sufficient knowledge and skills to take control of projects is a major challenge affecting local people's participation in the education planning process in the programme (KI 004).*

Another inherent challenge that College Administrators encounter with respect to community partipation was that ……

> *"In my view, I think that lack of trust between school authorities and the community members create and pose a lot of challenges. Again, I think that the confusion over the roles of school administrators and community leaders has always been a problem. This has really affected the progress of the programme for some time now" (KI 006).*

The issues of factors that affect community participation in education have been extensively discussed in the literature. The study closely lends support to some of these issues on the inherent challenges College Administrators encounter in involving the communities in managing schools.

For example, Harriet, Anin, and Yussif, (2013) on their part submit that factors that affect achieving higher level of participation in participator approach to development in general and in education in particular has to do with low knowledge level and poor flow of information. Furthermore, local government authorities saw the empowerment of the local steering committee as a danger, accusing them of being political party agents, preventing full commitment and engagement from the local people. Similarly, Addae-Boahene (2007) discovered that the kind and quality of stakeholders' participation inside a service delivery organization is influenced by a number of factors. Participation style, relationship, knowledge exchange, and engagement are some of these elements. Stakeholders with a reactive approach to planning processes are thought to indicate a strained connection between the community and the implementing agency. Our findings are similar to those of Guillaume (2011), who found that African teachers do not appear to accommodate or entice parents to become more involved in school management, so teachers give fewer instructions to parents, change meeting times for parents, find less effective communication mechanisms, and do not trust their involvement. In most situations, communities are not given an opportunity to participate in the education process for fear of increased accountability and control, as well as a loss of freedom if the community acquires authority over school decisions. Because there is no motivation for coordinating community engagement, community members are more prone to acquire apathy, lose commitment, and/or become half-hearted over time.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn, the results from research suggests that largely, to some extent, the communities do not really participate in the management decisions in the Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, for example, the communities were not really involved in the selection of teacher trainees as most of the selections are reserved for the colleges and its authorities. Even though the community participation programme was found beneficial, however, it is met with some challenges such as ineffective medium of communication at meeting, confusion over the roles of school administrators and community leaders. Some of these accrued challenges retire the progress of the community participation programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following:

1. Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies (MMDAs) in the region should create strong awareness on the role of the communities and their indigenous knowledge systems in ensuring community participation. They should help to establish community-based information technological centres (ITC) for the display, storage and dissemination of community participation related knowledge to communities. Local government and NGOs should strengthen community awareness on the value of the role of the locals in sustainable development in colleges of education in Ashanti Region.

2. MMDAs and communities in the region should provide fora for meetings, workshops, and conferences to discuss and debate pertinent issues. Thus, creating platforms where community members will be able to express their views without fear. This will help mitigate against some challenges of the community participation programmes in colleges of education.

3. Finally, the government should initiate integrated development plan meetings which should be effectively publicized in order to allow the communities to have an opportunity to identify their needs and problems and device mechanisms to meet such needs in colleges of education.

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