



School Management Committees and Secondary Schools Students Learning Outcomes in Rural Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined and extensively investigated the role of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in the improvement of schools and students learning outcomes in rural areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. It adopted a descriptive design. With a population of 1,038 teachers in rural secondary schools in three out of the (23) local government areas of Rivers State. Its sample comprised 150 respondents drawn through stratified. An instrument titled, Role of School-Based Management Questionnaire of a modified (4) point Likert ratings scale was constructed as used for data collection. The respondents were demanded to choose from the four options of very high extent (VHE) - 4, high extent (HE) - 3, moderate extent (ME) - 2, and low extent (LE) - 1. Colleagues in the department of educational management and psychology, guidance and counseling validated the instrument. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined through a test re-test method, with reliability index of 0.82, obtained through Cronbach Alpha statistic. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviations, while the hypotheses were tested with z-test at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that the role of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) is critical in the improvement of schools and students learning outcomes in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study therefore, recommended among others, that government should monitor and enforce the existence and operations of School-Based Management Committees in all primary and secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Keywords: School-based Management Committee, Improvement, Secondary Schools, Rural Areas, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

A major preoccupation of the education sector as well as stakeholders of education remains school improvement and better students learning outcomes. The importance attached to school improvement and learning outcomes derives from the fact that education is regarded and accepted as the instrument for national development through the development of the capacity of the citizens. Inclusive and equitable quality education is therefore what is required to actualize the dream of having education as the basis for national development (FRN, 2014). While using education as a tool for national development, education and achievement of sustainable development through goals #4, a number of issues and challenges are identified as facing education. Oluwatayo et al. (2023) named poor budgeting or poor budgeting allocation, poor evaluation of the efficiency of schools, poor measure of service delivery, poor staff welfare, quality of available human resource in education sector, and decrease in investment in education.

This is the general situation of education in Nigeria. However, this difference between education in urban and rural schools might be tangible enough to require consideration. Comparing education in the urban and rural areas has implications for a number of things. Most schools in the urban areas of Rivers state directly reflect the urban characteristics of having library or access to state library, facilities, amenities, interact facilities, qualified and committed teachers, regular supervision, fiscal capacity, average per-pupil attendance of public schools, on education Onyekwena et al. (n.d) and Hassan et al.(2022). On the other hand most schools in rural areas or setting are characterized by dilapidated structures and classrooms, poor internet connection, poor resources, little access to social services agencies, development partners, philanthropist, alumni leverage, fewer and uncommitted teachers, poor school attendance, declining students populations lack of state funds, poor learning facilities and corruption (Olawale, 2016), Griffiths(1968), Okeowhor et al. (2019), Preston (2021), Kim (2021) and Brenner (2021).

Comparatively, the presence of essential facilities for education in schools in urban centres are germane to continuous schools improvement where the absence of those facilities in the rural axis are likely to create challenges to school performance and improvement (Hassan et al., 2022). Performance of students in schools in the rural areas, like those in the urban circle is dependent on improved school, Mekhlafi and Osima (2019) indicated funding, facilities, policy, administration, teacher quality and innovation parents participation, closer supervision, interest of alumni and governance structures are noticeable factors for school improvement germane to student learning outcomes. However, secondary schools in Nigeria have faced some challenges in recent times just as it is at the other levels of education, Enaug (2023) identified wide population, poor maintenance, inadequate facilities, problem of institutional capacity gap, lack of accurate and timely information, problem of discipline, lack of funding, lack of community participation as some of the challenges bedeviling school administration. Jacob et al. (2020) identified weak administration institutional corruption and insecurity. To a very large extent, the availability of the required conditions and ingredients for school improvement does not guarantee improvement and students outcomes or performance. It is well acknowledged fact that administration and leadership are critical factors to managing school resources and to produce school improvement and students performance. However, in the face of glaring challenges, secondary education like the other levels face, the government of Nigeria, initiated several policies in the bid for continuous quality learning and teaching. Among some of these initiatives are:

- Education is a joint responsibility of Federal, State/FCT and Local Governments and the private sector;
- Strengthening of governance frameworks and the skills of administrators at all levels with a view to entrenching and providing the culture of accountability, effectiveness and efficiency in the management of public investment in education;
- Encouragement of formal participation of alumni bodies in the funding of secondary and tertiary education in Nigerian.
- Developing and managing an efficient local education management information system.
- Introduction of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and Local Government Education Authorities which shall be responsible for the management of schools at the appropriate levels. SBMCs and LGAEs are charged with the special responsibilities of communicating the Federal, State, LGA and Board the formation relating to curriculum, enrolment, quality of educational facilities and other matters relating to education (FRN, 2014).

The initiatives to turn secondary education around to achieve improvement and promote better learning outcomes as it is evident in the National Policy on Education (2014) is predicated on planning and administration of education in Nigeria. To this end, government at all levels placed the responsibilities of relating the conduct of school governance to relevant authorities to the school-based management committees found in all secondary and primary schools in the country.

Statement of the Problem

Often schools in the rural communities are left to cater for themselves to some extent, following the policies that entrust administration of schools to the different organs officially endorsed to manage schools especially at the primary and secondary schools and without composite instrumentality of resources. At the rural areas, the consequence are many. Lack of facilities, lack of teachers' commitment to attendance, lack of funds to purchase equipment, high rate of teachers' attrition, high dropout rate, etc. All these have often led to poor school performance leading to low learning outcomes for students in schools rural areas which are also blamed on poor leadership and administration of rural schools.

Many stakeholders have rather shifted the blame of the poor performance of schools and low outcomes for students on stakeholders, such as community based organization, Parent Teacher Association and School Based Management Committees that seem to be aloof from school administration. However, the School-Based Management committees being the closest to the government, with more than a cursory role in the schools are suspected to not commit to the improvement of school and students outcomes. The study therefore is focused on critically examining the strategic role of SBMCs in the improvement of schools and learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State.

Aim/Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at investigating the perspective of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in the improvement of schools and students learning outcomes in schools in rural areas of Rivers River State, Nigerian. Specifically the study:

- Investigate the strategies of SBMCs in domiciliation of the curriculum to addressing the goals of the schools in rural areas of Rivers State.
- Examine the strategies of SBMCs in improving facilities for learning in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State.
- Analyse the potency of the SBMCs communication strategies for improving teaching and learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- To what extent does SBMCs strategies for the domiciliation of the curriculum improve learning outcomes of students in secondary school in rural areas of Rivers State?
- To what extent does SBMCs strategies for the provision of facilities for improvement of learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State?
- To what extent does the SBMCs communication strategies among stakeholders improve learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

- There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on their perception of SBMCs domiciliation of the curriculum to improve the learning outcomes of students of secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on the SBMCs strategies in the provision of facilities to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in the secondary schools in the rural areas of Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers on SBMCs communication strategies to improve schools and learning outcomes of student in secondary schools in Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework (Participative Leadership)

This research work finds anchor on participative leadership as presented by an American Psychologist, Rensis Likert in 1961. According to Likert (1961), the concept of participative leadership is a chip of democratic leadership style and with emphasis on:

- Mutual support which specified that leaders and subordinates (employees) have confidence in themselves as colleagues in pursuing the goals of the organization;
- Committed to group decision-making;
- Setting high standards in their collective responsibilities to attaining organizational goals

Participative leadership style as the term suggests is a principle of leadership that encourages and accepts the involvement of members of an organisation in decision-making, responsibilities in

the pursuit of goals. The participative leadership in many ways benefits the School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in that it is required that the stakeholders in education in a given school are expected to actively participate in the governance of their school with the goal of improving the school performance to leverage learning outcomes of students.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

School-Based Management Committee

This is a committee made of parents, teachers, retirees of students around a school established within a given vicinity or geographical area giving the responsibility to serve as a link between the school and community, where the school is found with a view to enhancing and strengthening community participation in improving school and pupils/students learning outcomes (Oando Foundation, 2021). Contributing to school development planning and decision-making at the school-level are parts of the larger responsibility of the School-Based Management Committees. Among other responsibilities of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) are efficiency in managing school funds, facilities, resources and management as well as advocacy for reduction of drop-outs and girl child education (Rivers State Ministry of Education, 2012, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

In Rivers State, Nigeria, Policy on School-Based Management Committees (SMBCS, 2012) indicates that it (SBMCS) are to:

- Support and facilitate government drive on the development and improvement of education;
- Ensure good relationship between the community and the school for qualitative education;
- Enlighten the government and the community on the specific educational needs and development in the community;
- Ensure proper and adequate usage and security of education equipment and materials provided by government and community;
- Serve as a bridge between the community, LGEAS, State University Basic Education Board and State Ministry of Education; and
- Ensure respect for cultural and social values within the school environment (RSSBMC, 2012; Ayeni & Bamire, 2022).

School-Based Management Committees include the representatives of teachers, pupils, school heads, community chiefs and parents. Most representatives are key persons from the community who will include retirees or serving government officers. In all, every School-Based Management Committee consists of 17 members. At least there should be 8 women for fair representation.

Collaboration

The School-Based Management Committee does not work in isolation. Other stakeholders in education that SBMCs collaborate with to achieve results are Parent Teacher Association, Nigeria Union of Teachers, All Nigerian Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools, Old

Students Association, Civil Society Action Coalitions on Education for all Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government (Rivers State Ministry of Education, 2012).

School Improvement

School improvement is basically linked to changing features and fortunes of school which provide for effectiveness, quality and high standards in the school. It is a continuous process aimed at ensuring that outcomes for students remain at the highest level over time. It is a systematic approach by the school to identify, highlight and tackle areas of weakness to make the school improve or executing its responsibilities needed for effective learning and better students' outcomes (Escobar, 2019).

School improvement as a continuous process targets students' outcomes and teachers' effectiveness. The school is able to achieve all these through well understood plans and programmes. According to OECD (nd), strategies for improving school in Mexico, lasting improvements in school will emanate from:

- Clear goals which are related to students' outcomes not only focused on quality but also on equity.
- A strong focus on recruiting, developing and retaining teachers and leaders of excellence in the school.
- Institutions and infrastructure to support educational improvement.
- There must be accountability and reporting system that report objectively on goals and outcomes.
- Strong attraction to school work.

School improvement therefore focuses on changes or reforms that strengthen and raises the quality of learning and learning outcomes for students, teachers' contributions, leadership process in the schools and provision of facilities that create enabling environment in school totally (FME, 2012, Baines, 2019).

Domiciliation and School Improvement and Learning Outcomes

Education for any given society remains meaningful, sustainable and functional when it addresses their peculiar needs, while also preparing its people for living in a bigger nation and wider world of today. The National Curriculum of secondary school education, as it is now emphasized at all levels of education, encapsulate learning experiences that prepare learners for living in their society. However, the determination of domiciliation of curriculum results from incorporating the needs of the learners and the immediate community where schools are located especially in rural settings. Ziwira (2016) agreed that society becomes the ultimate beneficiary when education or learning has addressed local, national and international functions. Leat and Thomas (2019) argued that United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on:

- Affordable and green energy;
- Sustainable cities and communities;
- Good health and well-being;
- Climate action.

These are pressing issues for which curriculum must prepare the youth. Their opinion is that community curriculum-making to reflect project based learning was necessary. The question of ‘conceptual glue’ to community “experiences”, “prior knowledge” relationships at home and community, are necessary for building communities, preserve cultures and sustain values.

The School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) has as part of its responsibilities to ensure schools develop and implement plans to have learners learn to respect their culture, preserve their environments, acquire meaningful living skills to service in their immediate environment (RSMBE, 2012). It is to be noted that in many countries of the world such as Japan, Chile, Ireland, New Zealand, Brazil, Hungary, among others, there has been increasing calls and pressure to do curriculum that address social change in society (OECD, n.d).

Facilities and Improved Learning Outcomes

Infrastructures for schools are as critical as other elements. Workshops, power, internet facilities, computers, laboratories, buildings, sporting facilities, clean water, conveniences, security are all very essential to learning outcomes in school. Oluguwon et al. (2022) and Akanolafe and Adesu agreed that students’ academic achievement, motivation to stay in school to learn are related to the presence of facilities in the schools where they carry out their learning. The SBMCs in public secondary schools in Rivers State are charged with the responsibility to link up with relevant stakeholders to ensure the availability, maintenance and sustainability of facilities that engender students learning outcomes and teacher productivity (RSMOE, 2012).

Communication and School Improvement and Learning Outcomes

The essence of introducing agencies and organs in the education sector is for thorough management and administration of schools especially primary and secondary schools in Rivers State. This is done by handing down functions that link such agencies directly with communities. The stakeholder’s government accepted as ones that can partner with SBMCs to facilitate and promote school development and improvement in Nigeria. It is important that SBMCs develop effective communication with them in terms of approaches and strategies of achieving school improvement learning outcomes (RBMOE, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The design for the study is a descriptive survey. The population of the study consist of 1,038 teachers in rural secondary schools in three local government areas of Rivers State. Sample was 150 respondents, using stratified random sampling techniques was used. For the purpose of gathering information for the research work, a questionnaire titled Role of school based management committee questionnaire of a modified four (4) point Likert rating scale was constructed.

The respondents were demanded to choose from the four options of very high extent (VHE)- 4, high extent (HE)- 3, moderate extent (ME)- 2, and low extent (LE)- 1, colleagues in the departments of educational management and psychology, guidance and counselling validated the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was determined by the test-retest method. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using z-test.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does SBMC strategies for the domiciliation of the curriculum improve learning outcomes of students in secondary school in rural areas of Rivers State?

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics on the extent SBMC strategies for the domiciliation of the curriculum improve learning outcomes of students in secondary school in rural areas of Rivers State. n=146

S/N	Curriculum adaption and improved learning outcomes	Mean	SD	Remark
1	School-based management committees(SBMCs) ensurethat curriculum emphasizes the cultural and social values of the school environment	3.10	0.82	*
2	SBMC ensures local/improvised aids, instructional materials are used to create better understanding of curriculum contents that improve learning outcomes and school performance	2.86	0.91	*
3	SBMC emphasises the implementation of the curriculum contents that are relevant to the needs/goals of learners in the given environment that improve schools and learning outcomes	3.04	0.90	*
4	SBMC monitors and evaluates students' performance based on the curriculum contents and sets goals that improve schools and learning outcomes	2.81	1.03	*
5	SBMC implements state monitoring and evaluation policies	2.63	1.05	*
6	SBMC manages school development plans that target school improvement and improves student learning outcomes	2.58	1.09	*
7	SBMC emphasizes improved quality of service delivery	2.82	1.01	*
Grand mean		2.83	0.66	*

Key: *=High extent

The result from Table 1 shows summary of descriptive statistics on the extent SBMC strategies for the domiciliation of the curriculum improve learning outcomes of students in secondary school in rural areas of Rivers State. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over extent SBMC strategies for the domiciliation of the curriculum improve learning outcomes of students in secondary school in rural areas of Rivers State was 2.83, SD=0.66. Specifically, the respondents strongly opined that school-based management committees (SBMC) ensures that curriculum emphasizes the cultural and social values of the school environment(M=3.10, SD=0.82). This was followed by the fact that SBMC emphasises the implementation of the curriculum contents that are relevant to the needs/goals of leaders in the given environment that improve schools and learning outcomes (M=3.02, SD=0.90). SBMC ensures local/improved aids, instructional materials are used to create better understanding of curriculum contents that improve learning outcomes and school performance (M=2.86, SD=0.91) and the least was that SBMC manages school development plans that target school improvement and improves student learning outcomes (M=2.58, SD=1.09).

Research Question 2: To what extent does SMBC strategies for the provision of facilities improve of learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State?

Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics on the extent SBMC strategies for the provision of facilities improve of learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State

SN	School-based management committees(SBMC) and facilities management	Mean	SD	Remark
8	SBMC ensures adequate access to water and sanitation for learners	2.62	0.98	*
9	SBMC ensures safe classrooms and buildings for learners	2.49	1.02	
10	SBMC emphasises the building of structures and facilities that ensures inclusivity for all learners	2.71	1.03	*
11	SBMC emphasises the construction of buildings with effective security measures	2.62	1.08	*
12	SBMC lays strong emphasis on maintenance and preservation of school facilities, vehicles, mechanics, etc	2.47	1.11	
13	SBMC ensures the availability and access to library, science laboratories, technical workshops, technology workshops, etc	2.38	1.03	
Grand mean		2.55	0.78	*

Key: *=High extent

The result from Table 2 shows the summary of descriptive statistics on the extent SBMC strategies for the provision of facilities improve of learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State. The grand mean rating on the extent SBMC strategies for the provision of facilities to improve learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State was below average (M=2.55, SD=0.78). Specifically, the respondents strongly indicated that SBMC emphasises the building of structures and facilities that ensures inclusivity for all learners(M=2.71, SD=1.03). This was followed by the fact that SBMC emphasises the construction of buildings with effective security measures (M=2.62, SD=1.08) and SBMC ensures adequate access to water and sanitation for learners (M=2.62, SD=0.98) respectively.

Research Question 3: To what extent does the SBMC’s communication strategies among stakeholders improve learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State?

Table 3: Summary of descriptive statistics on the extent SBMC communication strategies among stakeholders improve learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State. n=146

S/N	SBMC and communication	Mean	SD	Remark
14	SBMC creates awareness and provides feedback to the school community on issues of school management that impact learners outcomes	2.92	0.93	*
15	SBMC provides communication on school improvement strategies and learning outcomes to stakeholders	2.77	0.97	*
16	SBMC communicates stakeholders on the sources of funds for facilities for school improvement	2.89	1.01	*
17	SBMC develops and communicates school development plan to stakeholders	2.88	1.02	*
18	SBMC communicates stakeholders on the representation strategies that bring about quicker school improvement	2.93	0.97	*
Grand mean		2.88	0.71	*

Key: *=High extent

The results from Table 3 shows Summary of descriptive statistics on the extent SBMC communication strategies among stakeholders improve learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State. The grand mean rating on the extent SBMC communication strategies among stakeholders improve learning outcomes of students in

secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State was 2.88, SD=0.71. Specifically, the respondents strongly indicated that SBMC communicates stakeholders on the representation strategies that bring about quicker school improvement (M=2.93, SD=0.97). This was followed by the fact that SBMC creates awareness and provides feedback to the school community on issues of school management that impact learners outcomes (M=2.92, SD=0.93). SBMC communicates stakeholders on the sources of funds for facilities for school improvement (M=2.89, SD=1.01). SBMC develops and communicates school development plan to stakeholders (M=2.88, SD=1.02) and the least was that SBMC provides communication on school improvement strategies and learning outcomes to stakeholders (M=2.77, SD=0.97).

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in their perception of SBMC’s domiciliation of the curriculum to improve the learning outcomes of students of secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of z-test on the difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in their perception of SBMC’s domiciliation of the curriculum to improve the learning outcomes of students of secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	z-cal	df	p-value	z-crit	Decision
Male	93	2.82	0.71	-.273	144	.785	1.960	NS
Female	53	2.85	0.57					

NS=Not significant

The result from Table 4 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in their perception of SBMC’s domiciliation of the curriculum to improve the learning outcomes of students of secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State (t=0.273, df=144, p=0.785). The null hypothesis one was retained at a 0.05 level of significance. **H₀₂:** There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in perception of the SBMC’s strategies in the provision of facilities to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in the secondary schools in the rural areas of Rivers State.

Table 5: Summary of z-test on the difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in perception of the SBMC’s strategies in the provision of facilities to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in the secondary schools in the rural areas of Rivers State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	z-cal	df	p-value	z-crit	Decision
Male	93	2.55	0.80	.069	144	.945	1.960	NS
Female	53	2.54	0.73					

The result from Table 5 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in perception of the SBMC’s strategies in the provision of facilities to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in the secondary schools in the rural areas of Rivers State (t=0.069, df=144, p=0.945). The null hypothesis two was retained at a 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in their perception of SBMC's communication strategies to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: Summary of z-test on the difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in their perception of SBMC's communication strategies to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in Rivers State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	z-cal	df	p-value	z-crit	Decision
Male	93	2.86	0.74	-.373	144	.710	1.960	NS
Female	53	2.91	0.65					

The result from Table 6 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in their perception of SBMC's communication strategies to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in Rivers State ($t=0.373$, $df=144$, $p=0.710$). The null hypothesis three was retained at a 0.05 level of significance.

DISCUSSION

SBMC Curriculum domiciliation and improved school and learning outcomes

The results from Table 1 showed that the grand mean rating of the respondents over extent SBMC strategies for the domiciliation of the curriculum improve learning outcomes of students in secondary school in rural areas of Rivers State was 2.83, $SD=0.66$. Most of the items were rated above the criterion mean score of 2.50 indicated that the respondents opined that the extent that SBMC strategies for the domiciliation of the curriculum improve learning outcomes of students in secondary school in rural areas of Rivers State was high. When put to statistical test, the results from Table 4 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in their perception of SBMC's domiciliation of the curriculum to improve the learning outcomes of students of secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State ($t=0.273$, $df=144$, $p=0.785$). The null hypothesis one was retained at a 0.05 level of significance. This finding is in agreement with an earlier study by Ayeni et al. (2022) that School Based Management Committees in secondary schools in Owo local government area of Ondo State are moderately involved in the academic programmes of schools to improve schools and learning outcomes. This finding by Ayeni et al (2022) receives further buttress from Ogwuikwe and Nweke who imply that involvement of parents and local leaders in highly functioning SBMC can improve learning outcomes. The study by Ihedioha (2021) amplifies the role of SBMC in enhancing of teaching and learning in schools by supporting teachers' development and retracing in modern teaching strategies (Ogundele & Adelaba, 2009).

SBMC Provision of Facilities Improve School and Learning Outcomes

The results from Table 2 showed that the grand mean rating on the extent SBMC strategies for the provision of facilities improve of learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State was below average ($M=2.55$, $SD=0.78$). The results showed that three of the items measuring the extent SMBC strategies for the provision of facilities improve of learning outcomes in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State were rated above average. When put

to statistical test the results from Table 5 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in perception of the SBMC's strategies in the provision of facilities to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in the secondary schools in the rural areas of Rivers State ($t=0.069$, $df=144$, $p=0.945$). The null hypothesis two was retained at a 0.05 level of significance. This finding is in agreement with an earlier studies by Ayeni et al. (2022), Ogwuiké and Nweke (2021), Ihedioha (2021), Odundele and Adelabu (2019), and Ayeni and Adelabu (2012) that provision and maintenance of school plants, facilities and infrastructure are critical factors in improving schools and learning outcomes in secondary schools in Nigeria. The conclusion by Ayeni and Adelabu (2012) that stakeholders in education collaborate and contribute towards the development of learning infrastructure and environment for conducive learning environment and quality education underlines SBMCS functions in providing facilities for improved schools.

SBMC's Communication Strategies to Improve Schools and Learning Outcomes

The results from Table 3 showed that the grand mean rating on the extent SBMC communication strategies among stakeholders improve learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State was 2.88, $SD=0.71$. The results specifically showed that all the items measuring the extent SBMC communication strategies among stakeholders improve learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State were rated above the criterion mean score of 2.50. When put to statistical test the results from Table 6 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female teachers in their perception of SBMC's communication strategies to improve schools and learning outcomes of students in secondary schools in Rivers State ($t=0.373$, $df=144$, $p=0.710$). The null hypothesis three was retained at a 0.05 level of significance. This finding is in agreement with an earlier findings by Ayeni, et al (2022), Oduwaiye, et. al (2015), and Kwashabawa (2017) that one of the strategies for achieving the goals of SBMC is communication. Communication remains critical in organising all the stakeholders linked to SBMCS. The finding is consonant with the position of Rivers Ministry of Education guide on communication of SBMCS. The SBMCS are to communicate with the community, NGOs, CBOS, CSOS, LGEA, SUBEB over issues of advocacy, finance, facilities, curriculum, decision making, school statistics, enrolment and some matters.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was established that the role of School Based Management Committees (SBMC) is critical in the management of schools and students learning outcomes secondary schools in rural areas of Rivers State

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, and the discussions that followed, the following recommendations are made:

- Government should monitor and enforce the existence and operations of School Based Management Committees (SBMC) in all primary and secondary schools in Rivers State.

- Government must demand accountability from School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) of various schools and establish a front desk in the ministry to deal with issues emanating from SBMC.
- Government must integrate SBMCS in its annual education report.

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