Investigating How Teachers and Students of Secondary Schools in Nigeria Describe and Understand Participation in Their Educational Institution

Hauwa Imam*

Author information

*   Department of Educational Management, University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria. Email: hauwa.imam@uniabuja.edu.ng

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Abstract: The National Policy Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) in Nigeria, is driven by the philosophy of education, which is based on amongst others the full integration of the individual into the community and the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen. Consequently, the policy recognizes the importance of involvement of all key stakeholders in school improvement process. The purpose of this secondary school pilot case-study is to establish if the research design for the cross boundary study addresses the symposium questions about teachers' and students' participation. The justification is that, where schools are the focus of studies, most quantitative approaches produce accounts of what is going on within and across contexts, but do not give insights into in-school cultures and practices that centre on students' and teachers' participation in school processes. The concern is that schools are similar in structure, but may vary significantly in education community participation in school processes. The study's findings indicate an absence of a culture of participation within the schools that facilitate building relationships between teachers and students, and the school administration. Based on the findings less opportunities and time spent on developing relationships in schools, can have serious consequences on the quality of learning and preparation of students for active participation in democracy when they transition into the real society.

Keyword: educational policy, students' voice, participation in school process

Introduction

The Nigerian society has socially constructed roles and responsibilities based on variables such as gender, and age. Thus boys and girls grow up learning through the process of socialisation that their places and roles in society are differentiated along gender lines while the children and youth are expected to obey and respect their elders (Onyene, Mbah & Oluwole, 1999). The traditional culture seems repressive in the light of the Nigerian Constitution (FRN, 1999), which recognizes the fundamental human rights of its citizens including the dignity and worth of all persons, and advocates for the rights of males and females as well as children. Education too has been recognised as an instrument of social change and development with the school as the springboard for action. It is for this reason that the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) advocates equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens both within and outside the formal school system. The national policy recognises that no educational system can rise above its teachers, and that is why teacher training has been given prominence (FRN, 2004). Also, gender equality in the issue of access to education has been given attention by the Federal Government. Every child, irrespective of sex, ethnicity, background, parentage, or any variable, has an entitlement in terms of equality and equity to the benefits of growing up in a modern, democratic and affluent society (Chapman & WestBurnham, 2010).

Schools are similar in structure, but may vary significantly in education community participation in school processes due to cultural differences, and this is of concern to school leaders and managers. There are three objectives for this study. First, to understand the cultures, practices and leadership and management systems influencing the participation of different stakeholders in decision making. Second, to understand how teachers and students engage with different participatory processes. Third, to reveal institutional characteristics that teachers and students place value in. The evidence here presented is the first phase of a cross boundary action research project with nation states represented in this journal. The research facilitates the academy and professional researchers to work in partnership with school leaders, managers and the school community. The focus is to learn more about community participation in school processes and practices, and the relationship such engagement might have with enhancing relationships, healthy communication and the development of students' identities as learners.

The Nigerian national policy context is crucial to understand the structures that shape what school leaders, managers, teachers and students can and cannot think and do. Nigeria's education policy has experienced meta-

morphosis through two significant stages: the British colonial period when formal education was introduced; and post colonial era beginning at independence of Nigeria in 1960. According to Imam (2012, p. 181) the impact of educational policy on education in Nigeria since independence has been significant. The relationship between education and national development continues to be a question of critical concern. This reflects the dynamic process of nation building that is continually being modified by new conditions. The building of "a just and egalitarian society" and "a democratic and free society" form part of the philosophy of Nigerian education amongst others (FRN, 2004). The presence of a well-trained public is essential for the success of democracy (Dundar, 2013) and that formal schooling cannot facilitate participation in democracy unless the principles of democracy are reflected in the aims of education, curriculum, methods of teaching, administration and organisation, in discipline, in the atmosphere of the school, and in the outlook of the teacher (Kalyalya, 2006). A key objective of the national policy (FRN, 2004) on education is the full integration of the individual into the community and the development of an individual into a sound and effective citizen (FRN, 2004). The policy recognizes the importance of involvement of all key stakeholders including students in the school improvement process. It is the students who are most affected by changes in education policy and systems.

Therefore, a culture of participation within the schools that facilitate building relationships between teachers and students is very important. An effective education is one that is intended to promote democratic ideals and practices in the daily life of an individual and that of the school community (Kalyalya, 2006). To shed new light on these issues, a pilot study was implemented with a view to informing a fuller study. The pilot study took a quantitative and qualitative approach using mixed methods. The findings of pilot interviews with teachers and students provided a basis for the design of the cross boundary studies questionnaire, which was adapted to suit the Nigerian situation. Responses to questionnaire items were on a four-point scale: rarely, sometimes, often and nearly always. A total of thirty-two boys and twenty-eight girls aged thirteen to fourteen years old who were in the second year class of the Junior Secondary School; and twenty-one inexperienced teachers and eight experienced teachers chosen by stratified random sampling participated in the study. To address the objectives of the research the following three questions emerged. First, what cultures practices and leadership systems influence the participation of different stake-holders in decision making in the institution? Second, how do teachers and students engage with different participatory processes? Third, in which institutional characteristics do institutional stake-holders place value?

The conceptual framework

At the secondary school level, teachers' skills in establishing a positive emotional climate, their sensitivity to student needs, and their structuring of their classroom and lessons in ways that recognize adolescents' needs for a sense of autonomy and control, for an active role in their learning, and for opportunities for peer interaction were all associated with higher relative student gains in achievement (Allen et al., 2011). Also, teachers and students in the secondary school value relationships based on trust, respect, and being treated fairly, or with an ethic of care (Nodding, 2004; Taysum, 2013). Important life skills are developed when working together in the school, and beyond when the students become civically engaged in society and make a cultural contribution to their community as well as economic contribution within the labour market. Amongst other things it is important to develop: new and more mature relationships with peers of both genders, prepare for making a living or career, and acquiring a set of values, ethics, or an ideology as a guide to developing socially responsible behaviour (Taysum, 2013). A school environment may be enriched twofold: it can provide teachers with insights into learning, teaching, and schooling with students acting as "expert witnesses", and it can empower students to "actively shape their education as citizens" (Bahou, 2011, p. 3).

The educational reason for students' participation rests on the premise that one of the main goals of schools has been to educate students for citizenship and democratic living. In order for young people to learn the democratic process, they must be given every opportunity while in school to be participants in a democratic setting where they are directly involved in making those decisions which affect them most (cambiare in (Kaba, 200, p. 21). This reason seems to be the most prevalent in the literature (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004), and one that school leadership and management needs to focus on. The first years of secondary school represent an exciting and pivotal time to reach students and to build their skills in this area. It allows for a sophisticated and developmentally and culturally sensitive view of "life skills." (Elias & Kress, 1994). The goal is to provide students with the skills, attitudes and confidence they need in order to actively transform the world (Sapon-Shevin, 2010). Listening and learning from student voices has necessitated a shift from the ways in which teachers engaged with students and how they perceived their own practices. Teachers and students reported that when their relationships, and communication improved, their learning noticeably improved (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004) which may inform school leadership and management strategies to improve learning in Europe, Africa and beyond. Also, in the main it was found that students expressed a stronger commitment to learning, and developed a sense of

identity as learners when they participated in school and classroom decision making processes. However, Kaba (2000, p. 21) observes that many studies have not actually looked at secondary school students' individual perceptions of their participation once they have actually been given a role in the process. Addressing this gap in the knowledge may be useful to leaders and managers of schools when developing strategies to improve students' identities as learners. Flutter and Rudduck (2004, p. 135) assert that 'the pupil voice movement represents a new departure because it is based on the premise that schools should reflect the democratic structures of society at large'. Under this conception, the school becomes a community of participants engaged in the common endeavour of learning. The qualitative impact of consultation on students' learning enhanced and improved their motivation, attendance, positive attitudes towards learning, capacity for responsibility and new roles, and perceptions of teachers (Bahou, 2011). Also, teachers felt that they benefited because they positively changed their perceptions of students' capacities, gained new perspectives on their teaching and enhanced their pedagogies (Rudduck & McIntyre, 2007). Three key elements support the conceptualisation of student voice and, participation: authenticity, inclusion and power (Taysum, 2013).

These elements may be read in tandem with Ruddock and McIntyre (2007, p. 176) who present five values which provide the framework for the study: "that are to do (1) with openness, attentiveness to the views of others, mutual respect and support through advocacy by institutional leaders; (2) enabling structures and practices; (3) a school culture that values and listens to all staff; (4) a culture of enquiry and research among teachers; (5) a tradition of pupil involvement in decision-making". Arguably the first value of advocacy by institutional leaders is going to be crucial to realise the other values.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative and qualitative approach (Bryman, 2004). A pilot semi-structured interview was conducted with four students, and a pilot semistructured interview was administered to two teachers in two junior secondary schools set in a semi urban suburb in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria with diverse ethnic groups (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001). The interviews asked similar questions under particular themes, but were adapted to students and teachers respectively. The findings of the pilot interviews from all of the nation states represented in this journal informed the development of the items for the cross boundary study questionnaires. There was a questionnaire for students and a questionnaire for teachers, that was used to test the findings from the inter-

views. Responses to questionnaire items used a likert scale: rarely, sometimes, often and nearly always (Newby, 2010). A total of thirty-two boys and twenty-eight girls aged thirteen to fourteen years old who were in the second year class of the Junior Secondary School took part in the study. In addition, twenty-one inexperienced teachers and eight experienced teachers completed the questionnaires.

The sample was selected using random stratified sampling of the population of students and teachers of two schools (Denscombe, 2003). The data from the questionnaires was keyed into Microsoft excel spread sheets to enable analysis of the larger data sets that would make for across countries comparison using factor analysis and to compare graphs. First, the points on the response scale were given numerical values graphically presented.

For ease of interpretation of results of the data analysis, two statistical methods were employed: the mean and standard deviation (SD), so that inference can be drawn about teacher and student participation in the educational institutional process. The decision rule for interpreting the mean was that a score of 2.5 and above was regarded as positive response while below 2.5 was termed a negative response. The SD indicated the variability of the distribution of the responses around the mean. The research complied with the project's ethical framework and all participants gave informed consent to take part in the research, and were assured they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time (BERA, 2011; AERA, 2011). Further, participants were assured all responses would be anonymised, and remain confidential (BERA, 2011; AERA, 2011).

Results

Cultures practices and leadership systems that influence participation

The students and teachers were asked of the roles and responsibilities available for them to get involved in decision making at school. Specifically, whether they participate in decision making about things that happen in school and if they could participate as much as they want to and whether they have opportunities to contribute to decision making about problems and possibilities in school. The answers to these questions were clustered together and graphically presented in figure 1 and 2 while the calculated mean score and SD are presented immediately after in tables 1 and 2.

Figure 1 - Students' involvement in decision making at school level
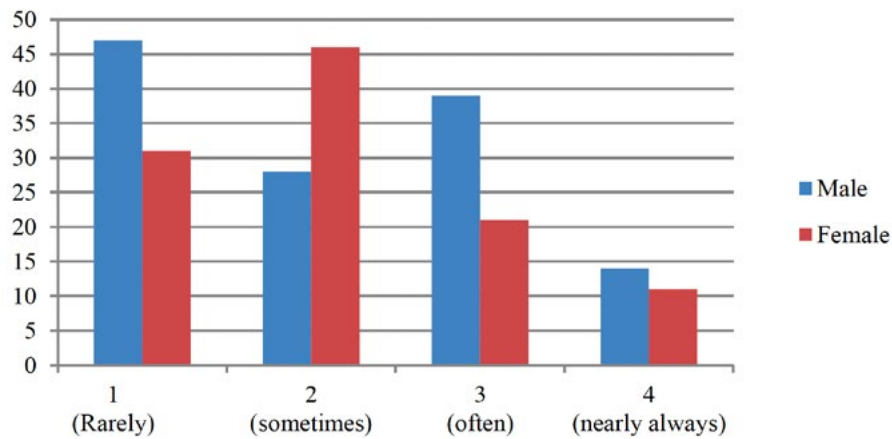
The figure 1 reveals that largely students rarely and sometimes participate in the decision making at the school level. Table 1 presents the results of data analysis for inference.

Table 1 - Students' involvement in decision making at school level

Students	Mean	SD
Male	2.16	1.09
Female	2.11	0.94

Results of the data analysis on table 1 indicate that majority of the students perceive that they do not participate in decision making at the school level with a mean score of 2.16 for male students and 2.11 for female students, which are below the 2.5 minimum positive response margin. The SD indicated slightly more variability in the responses of male students than female students (SD: male=1.09, female=0.94) and is 0 10 20 30 40 50 1 (Rarely) 2 (sometimes) 3 (often) 4 (nearly always) Male Female less than the mean score. Therefore it can be concluded that generally, students do not participate in decision making at the school level. The open ended questions below provide some insights regarding how students might like to participate:

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How student like to participate

1. I would like more Interaction with my teachers.
2. I would like to be involved in how my general education is handled by the school.
3. The school authority should listen to students' comments on issues affecting them.
4. The principal should involve students in decision making when sporting activities are discussed in the school.
5. I want to be more involved in social clubs and activities that will bring my school recognition in the community.
6. I want to have a say in the type of religious activities that I participate in during school hours.
7. Students' participation in decision making concerning the maintenance of school buildings and other facilities should not be restricted to cleaning only.
8. I would like to be involved in how the school caters for my general education.

Figure 2 - Teachers' involvement in decision making at school level
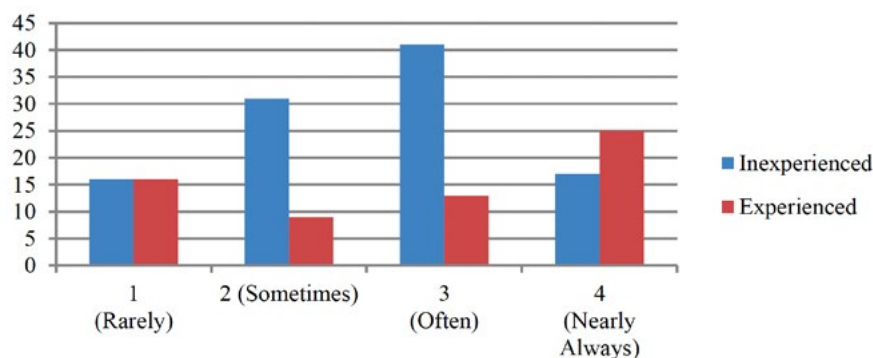

Figure 2 shows that largely, the inexperienced teachers perceive that they often participate in the school decision making while more of the experienced teachers perceive that they nearly always participate in the school decision making process.

Table 2 - Ways in which teachers get involved in decision making at school level

Teachers	Mean	SD
In-experienced	2.62	0.93
Experienced	3.06	1.20

The results of the data analysis in table 2 indicate that experienced teachers participate in school decision making with a mean score of 3.06 which is well above the minimum mean for positive response which is 2.5. In the case of the inexperienced teachers the mean score of their responses is slightly above the minimum margin of positive response. There are variations in the responses of both sets of teachers with the more experienced teachers showing more variability. This is captured by the SD (0.93 for inexperienced teachers and 1.20 for experienced teachers). Since the SD is lower than the mean scores by more than 50 percent, it can be concluded that generally the more experienced teachers are more involved in school decision making processes than the inexperienced teachers.

The following answers to the open ended questions provided some insights regarding how teachers might like to participate in decision making at the school level. The teachers would like to participate as follows:

Experienced teachers:

1. Students' welfare and general disciplinary matters in school.

Inexperienced teachers:

1. Decision making during staff meetings.
2. Involvement in school committees.
3. Collaboration with school leaders and in team work.
4. Staff motivation and welfare matters.
5. School community relationship.

Teachers and students engagement with different participatory processes

Teachers and students were asked if they participated in decision making at the classroom level about what is learned, and how it is learned, Also, if they wanted to contribute more to what is learned, and how it is learned. The answers to the structured questions were clustered and the findings are graphically presented in figures 3 and 4, while the results of the data analysis are presented in tables 3 and 4 immediately afterwards. In addition, an insight was given as to the level of participation in classroom decision making that teachers and students would want to be involved in.

Figure 3 - Students' involvement in decision making at the classroom level
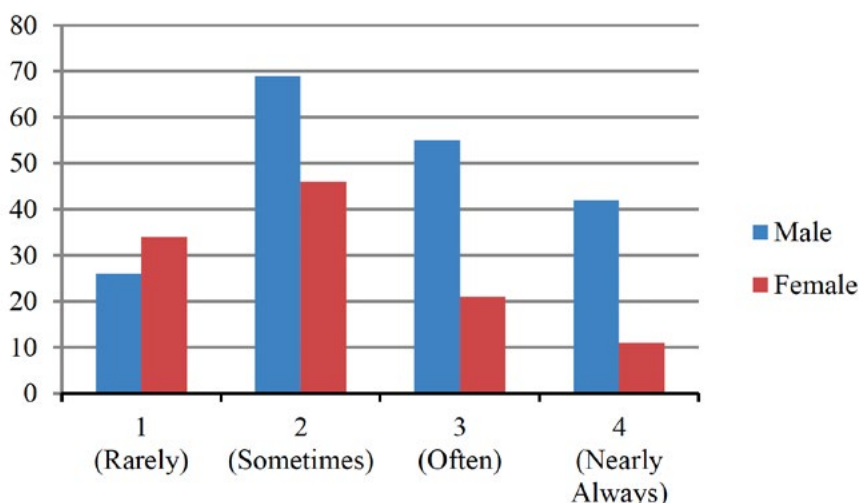

Figure 3 gives a graphic representation of students' views by their gender. More male students say they 'sometimes' and 'often' contribute in the learning process in the classroom as compared to female students who do so 'sometimes' and 'rarely'.

Table 3 - Students'involvement in decision making at classroom level.

Students	Mean	SD
Male	2.62	0.93
Female	3.06	1.20

The mean score of the students' responses indicate that largely male students participate in the class room learning process with a mean score of 2.59 which is above the minimum positive value of 2.50. The female students on the other hand do not perceive that they are being involved in the learning process with a mean score of 2.08, which is below the minimum positive level. The SD indicated some variability in the responses of both male and female students regarding their involvement in the learning process in the classroom (SD: male= 0.98, female=0.94). However, these are low. Overall, the male students participate more in the classroom learning process, while female students largely do not.

The open ended questions provided some insights regarding how students might like to participate in their learning process. The students would like to participate in decision making as follows:

Male students:

1. I want to be able to let teachers know how I am motivated to learn.
2. The way I am graded for continuous assessment, because I do better when I take home assignments as I get to learn and work.
3. We should be the ones to elect our class prefects rather than our teacher appointing someone whom we do not like.
4. Opportunity should be given to students to offer opinions on students' discipline in the classroom.
5. My teachers should support us to develop our confidence in class and expose us to new ideas rather than shouting one down if he does not answer a question well because he does not understand the question.

Female students:

1. Decision making on the way teachers interact with the students in the classroom or discipline us.
2. Asking a girl to kneel down is degrading no matter the offence.
3. Tests to me should not be used for our continuous assessment but assignments, which are a true test of what we know.
4. How we are taught computer so that we can understand and learn better. We have very few computers in the school.
5. I would like to contest for the position of class captain but I am not given the opportunity. Instead a boy is appointed. I will have felt better if we both contested and I lost.
6. I want the teachers to make room for students' contribution in the teaching/learning process.
7. The teachers should treat students equally and stop being partial.

Figure 4 below shows how teachers get involved in decision making in the classroom. The mean score and SD of the teachers' responses are presented in table 4.

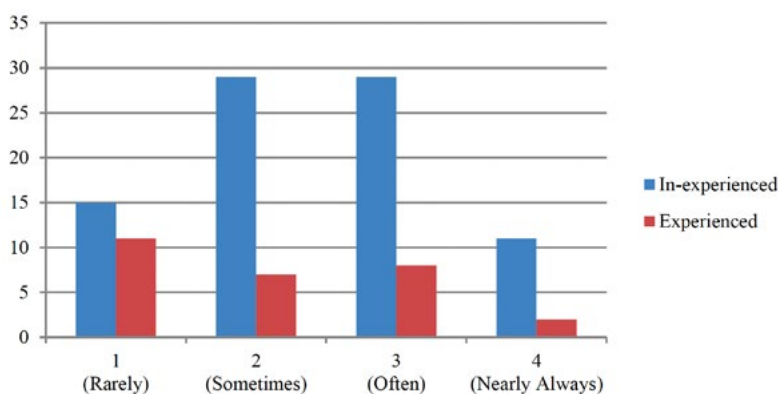Figure 4 - Teacher's involvement in decision making at classroom level.

Figure 4 shows that there are some inexperienced teachers who do consider they sometimes and often make decisions on what is learned in the classroom and how it is learned. The experienced teachers largely say they do not.

Table 4 - Teacher's involvement in decision making at classroom level.

Teachers	Mean	SD
In-experienced	2.47	0.91
Experienced	2.04	1.00

The results of the analysis of data in table 4 reveal the mean scores of the responses of both inexperienced and experienced teachers: 2.47 and 2.04 respectively, which are lower than the 2.50 minimum positive response margin. This is an indication that largely both sets of teachers do not perceive that they contribute in what is learnt in the classroom and how it is learnt. The SD shows the variability of their responses (SD: inexperienced teachers, 0.91 and experienced teachers, 1.00). Experienced teachers show more variability in their responses. Teachers largely do not have a say in what is taught in the classroom and how it is taught. The open ended questions provided some insights regarding how teachers might like to participate. Teachers would like to participate in decision making in the following areas:

Experienced teachers:

1. Determining content that is taught in class Selecting the mode of assessment of students' performance.
2. Determining class size because large class sizes hinder effective participation in what students learn and how they learn in the classroom
3. Selection of necessary teaching learning resources Infrastructural provisions for teaching- learning.
4. Teacher capacity building and continuous professional development.

In-experienced teachers:

1. Determining content that is taught in class.
2. Selection of teaching resources Availability of adequate computers with access to internet facilities for knowledge and skills sharing with other teachers.
3. Teacher capacity building and continuous professional development.

The students and teachers were also asked if they participated in discussions about how students' learning would help them realize their dreams, how it will help them get qualifications to go for further education, and get

the job they want. The findings are graphically presented in figures 5 and 6, while the results of the data analysis are provided in tables 5 and 6.

Figure 5 - Students' perception of how their learning
connects with their career aspirations
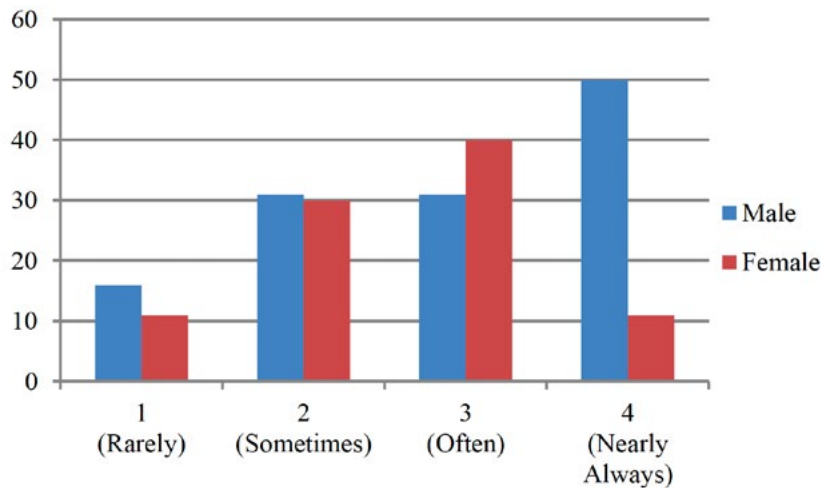
The findings in figure 5 reveal mixed responses. More male students consider that their learning nearly always connects with their career aspirations, while more female students perceive the connection as often. Again the data was analysed to draw an inference from the general responses in table 5.

Table 5 - How students' learning connects with their career aspirations

Students	Mean	SD
Male	2.90	0.86
Female	2.55	1.06

From the table both male and female students generally perceive that their studies connect with their career aspirations with mean scores of 2.90 and 2.55 respectively. However, the male students perceive the connection more positively than the female students. In terms of variability the SD for female students is 1.06 which is higher than that of the male SD=0.86. Whereas, both male and female students largely consider that their studies connect with their career aspirations, an appreciable number of female students do not.

Figure 6 and table 6 below reveal the teachers' responses about how they participate in discussions about how students learning would help them re-

alize their dreams, how it will help them get qualifications to go to further education, and or engage meaningfully in the jobs they want.

Figure 6 - How Teachers consider that students' learning connects with their career aspirations
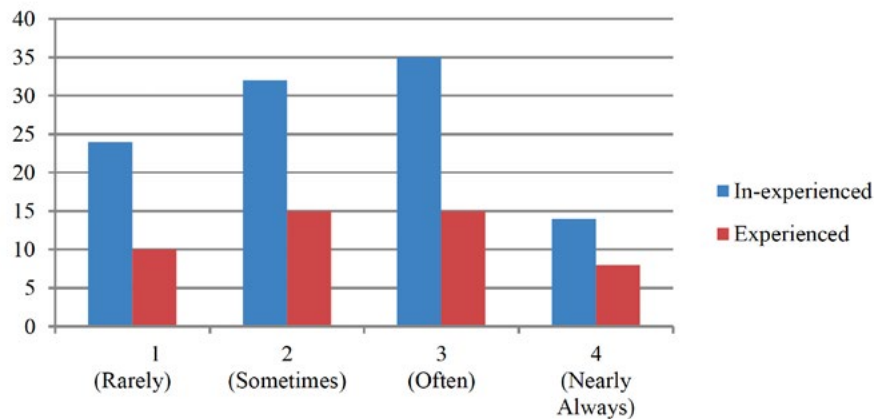

Figure 6 indicates mixed responses by both inexperienced and experienced teachers. Many inexperienced teachers perceive that students learning often, sometimes and rarely connects with their career aspirations. The experienced teachers largely perceive that students' learning connects with their career aspirations often and sometimes. The data was analysed to draw an inference from the general responses in table 6.

Table 6 - How Teachers consider that students' learning connects with their career aspirations

Teachers	Mean	SD
In-experienced	2.37	0.98
Experienced	2.44	1.01

Table 6 indicates that many teachers do not perceive how students learning connects with their career aspirations. The mean score for inexperienced teachers is 2.37 and that of experienced teachers is 2.44, which are below the minimum level of positive response. The SD of 0.98 for inexperienced teachers and 1.01 for experienced teachers indicates the degree of variability in their views. Experienced teachers show more variability, because there are experienced teachers who perceive the connection between students' learning and their career aspirations but these are in the minority. Overall, the teachers largely do not perceive the connection between students' learning and their career aspirations at the junior secondary school level.

Institutional characteristics institutional stake-holders place value

The students were asked what they find helpful in their learning and the teachers what they find helpful in facilitating learning. The literature review focused on building one to one relationships between student and teacher based on mutual positive regard (like) respect, trust, and treating people fairly. These questions were to test the theories of participation that connected with participation in relationships. Figures 7 and 8 present graphically students' and teachers' responses while the results of the data analysis are presented in tables 7 and 8.

Figure 7 - How students consider learning is helped when they like and trust teachers
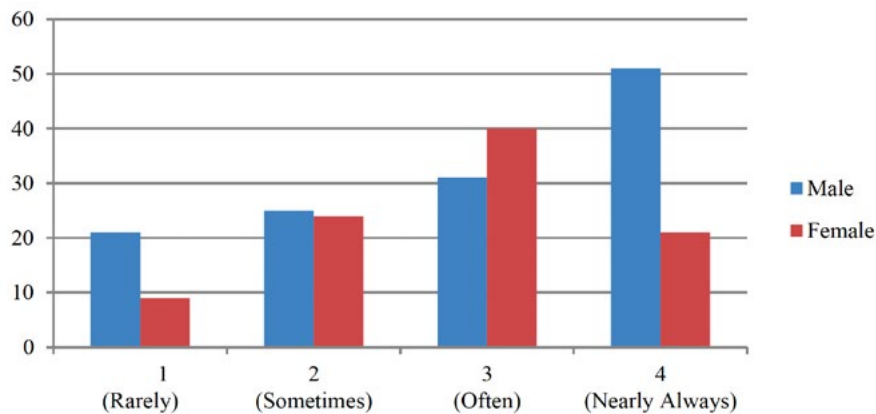
The figure above indicates mixed responses with more male students being of the view that nearly always learning is helped when students like and trust teachers. There are also an appreciable number of male students who perceive this as often. More females consider that often when students like and trust the teacher learning is facilitated even though an appreciable number say this is sometimes. The result of the data analysis in table 7 helps us draw an inference.

Table 7 - How students consider learning is helped when they like and trust teachers

Students	Mean	SD
Male	2.88	1.12
Female	2.79	0.88

Table 7 indicates that both male and female students largely perceive that learning is helped when students like and trust teachers. The mean scores of

their perception is 2.988 for males and 2.79 for females which is above the minimum value of 2.50 for positive perception. The SD of 1.12 for male students is higher than that of the females which is 0.88. These show the degree of variability in their perception. Generally majority of the students consider that learning is helped when they like and trust teachers. Figure 8 and table 8 below presents the results of teacher views.

Figure 8 - How teachers consider learning is helped
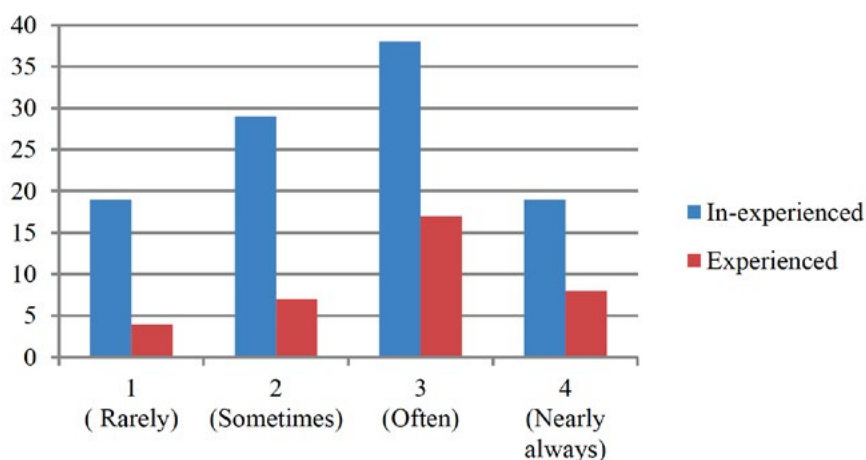when students like and trust teachers

Figure 8 shows mixed responses. More inexperienced and experienced teachers consider that learning is helped when students like and trust teachers. However an appreciable number of inexperienced teachers say this is sometimes while the experienced say its nearly always.

Table 8 - How Teachers consider learning is helped
when students like and trust teachers

Teachers	Mean	SD
In-experienced	2.55	0.99
Experienced	3.04	0.97

Table 8 reveals that both inexperienced and experienced teachers consider that learning is helped when students like and trust teachers with mean scores of 2.55 and 3.04 respectively. However, many experienced teachers are more positive in their views. What these indicate is that there is an appreciable number of inexperienced teachers who do not perceive that learning is helped when students like and trust teachers. The SD of the views of the inexperienced teachers is 0.99 as against that of the experienced teachers

which is 9.7. Since the variability is low the results can be accepted as applicable to the groups. More experienced teachers consider that learning is helped when students like and trust teachers.

Figure 9 - How students consider learning is helped when
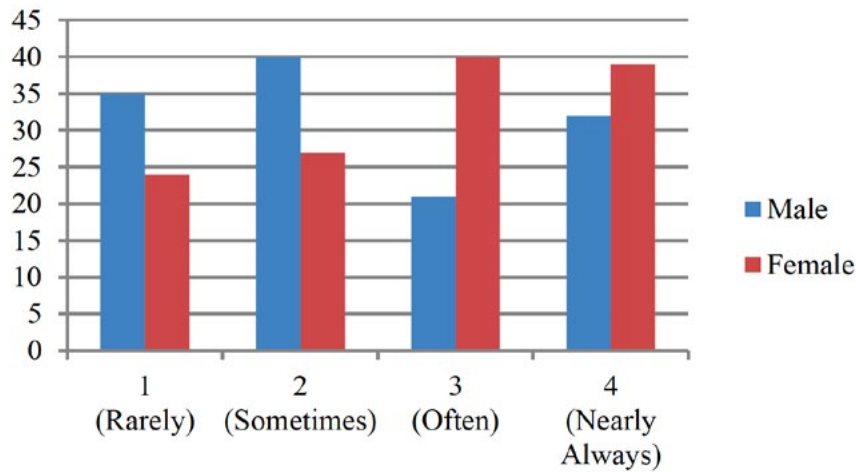teachers respect and treat them fairly

Figure 9 shows that many male students consider that learning is rarely and sometimes helped when teachers respect and treat students fairly while majority of the female students perceive this as often and nearly always. To enable us draw inference, the results of the data analysis are presented in table 9.

Table 9 - How students consider learning is helped when
teachers respect and treat them fairly

Students	Mean	SD
Male	2.39	1.14
Female	2.71	1.09

Table 9 reveals an interesting dichotomy between male and female students views on the extent to which learning is helped when teachers respect and treat students fairly. The male students do not consider that learning is helped when teachers respect the students and treat them fairly with a mean score of 2.39 which is below the minimum value of positive perception which is 2.50. In contrast, the female students consider that learning is helped when teachers respect the students and treat them fairly with a mean score of 2.71! Also, in terms of variability, the SD of 1.14 for male is slightly

higher than that of the females which is 1.09. What this indicates is that there is an appreciable number of male students who consider that learning is helped when teachers respect the students and treat them fairly as against females who do not. However, these numbers are in not in the majority. Therefore, we can conclude that female students largely perceive that learning is helped when teachers respect the students and treat them fairly while male students do to a little extent.

Figure 10 - Teachers' views of how learning is helped when students respect them and are treated fairly
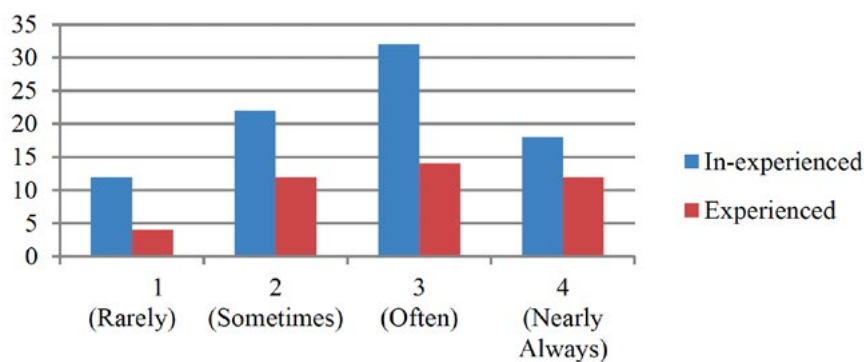
The responses in figure 10 are mixed. Many inexperienced teachers perceive that learning is helped when teachers respect the students and treat them fairly, while an appreciable number say it is sometimes. The experienced teachers largely consider this as often and nearly always. The results of the data analysis are presented in table 10.

Table 10 - Teachers' views of how learning is helped when students respect them and are treated fairly

Teachers	Mean	SD
Inexperienced	2.67	0.97
Experienced	2.81	0.96

Largely teachers consider that learning is helped when students respect teachers and are treated fairly with mean scores of 2.67 for inexperienced teachers and 2.81 for experienced teachers. The experienced teachers were more positive in their views. In terms of variability in the teachers responses, the SD for inexperienced teachers is 0.97 while that of experienced teachers is 0.96.Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers consider learning as helpful when students respect teachers and are treated fairly.

Discussions

The findings of the study indicate that overall students do not partici-
pate in decision making at the junior secondary school level in the Nige-
rian schools. In addition, only the more experienced teachers are involved
in school decision-making processes. The cultures, practices and leadership
systems that influence participation in the Nigerian schools are not uncon-
nected with the traditional cultures which is repressive (Onyene, Mbah &
Oluwole, 1999). This development is in congruence with the philosophy of
Nigerian education as contained in the national policy (FRN, 2004).

The students would like to interact more with their teachers, have a voice
in matters affecting them, such as the handling of their general education,
welfare, participation in sporting activities, clubs and societies. In addition,
they would like a voice on the type of religious activities that they participate
in during school hours and want to be more involved in decision-making
concerning the maintenance of school buildings and other facilities, which
is presently restricted to cleaning. The less experienced teachers want in-
volvement in school committees, decision making on students' welfare and
general disciplinary matters in school as well as during staff meetings. They
also want collaboration with school leaders and team work as well as par-
ticipation in decision making on staff motivation and welfare matters. This
finding agrees with previous studies on students voice by Flutter and Rud-
duck (2004) which state that the voice movement represents a new departure
because it is based on the premise that schools should reflect the democratic
structures of society at large by becoming a community of participants en-
gaged in the common endeavour of learning.

Teachers and students' engagement with different participatory processes

The findings that male students participate more in the classroom learn-
ing process to some extent in contrast with female students who largely
do not, again ties in with the variable of gender discrimination in Nigerian
society. Gender discrimination ensures that boys and girls grow up learning
through the process of socialisation that their places and roles in society are
differentiated along gender lines (Onyene, Mbah & Oluwole,1999).

The female students would like to participate in decision-making on the
way teachers interact with the students in the classroom, in matters con-
cerning students or discipline which they perceives as discriminatory to the
female, and also in exercising their rights to contest for the position of class
captain. Furthermore, the females want the teachers to make room for stu-
dents' contribution in the teaching/learning process. They want teachers to
treat all students equally. This wish is in tandem with the national policy on
education's objectives of a just and egalitarian society and equal educational

opportunities for all citizens (FRN, 2004). Nigerian Constitution (1999) recognizes the fundamental human rights of its citizens including the dignity and worth of all persons, and advocates for the rights of males and females as well as children.

The teachers largely do not have a say in what is taught in the classroom and how it is taught. The teachers want to determine content that is taught in class, select teaching and learning resources and the mode of continuous assessment of students' performance. In addition, they consider that large class sizes may hinder effective participation in the teaching-learning process. The teachers want access to computers with internet facilities for enhancing their knowledge and skills and for sharing professional experiences with other teachers.

The findings indicate that students generally perceive that their studies connect with their career aspirations. On the other hand, the teachers largely do not perceive the connection between students' learning and their career aspirations at the junior secondary school level. The national policy on education (FRN, 2004) notes that 'no society can rise above the quality of its teachers'. If teachers cannot perceive the connection between students' learning at the Junior secondary school level, how can preparation of the youths for 'useful living in the society and for higher education' as identified by the policy be assured? Taysum (2013) argues that it is important for the

secondary school students to, amongst other things, prepare for making a living or career, and acquiring a set of ethics as a guide to developing socially responsible behaviour.

Institutional characteristics institutional stake-holders place value

The findings of the study indicate that students value an ethics of care, respect and fairness in teachers dealings with them which agrees with Noddings (2003). Students perceive when teachers respect them and treat them fairly and when they respect teachers and treat them fairly, their identities as learners are affirmed and learning improves. The study supports previous findings that teachers and students in the secondary school value relationships based on trust, respect, and being treated fairly (Taysum, 2013). Teachers' skills in establishing a positive emotional climate at this level is associated with higher relative student gains in achievement (Allen et al., 2011). Further research is recommended here because these tentative findings from the pilot study in Nigeria begin to address the gap in the knowledge that Kaba (2000, p. 21) identifies with regard to how learning improves once students' roles in participation in school processes and practices begin to develop. Research of this nature is required by school leaders and managers so that they can think about processes and practices of participation in their schools and colleges. These findings are also significant because a key

objective of the national policy on education is the full integration of the individual into the community (FRN, 2004). The policy recognizes the importance of involvement of all key stakeholders including students in the school improvement process, because it is the students who are most affected by changes in education policy and systems.

Conclusion

The study has drawn attention to the importance of conducting researches into developing cultures of participation within schools and colleges that facilitate building relationships between teachers and students. Such researches will be arguably of import to education leaders and managers' development of strategies to work for participation in school processes and practices. Based on the tentative evidence here presented of the pilot study, it can be concluded that less opportunities and time spent on developing relationships in schools, can have serious consequences on the quality of learning, which may adversely affect the preparation of students their transition into democratic citizens who actively participate in real society.

The impact of consultation on students' learning is in enhancing and improving their motivation, positive attitudes towards learning, capacity for responsibility and new roles, and perceptions of teachers (Bahou, 2011). The pilot study supports the conceptualization of student voice and, participation in line with authenticity, inclusion and power (Taysum, 2013). The study also recognizes the importance of all stakeholder participation in the school improvement process. The next phase of the research is to understand how school leaders and managers respond to evidence of participation in their school, the strategies they develop to improve participation, and the impact of these strategies. The findings from the second phase are intended to be presented at the European Conference For Educational Research, Portugal, 2014. These findings will be key to informing further research that aims at understanding how to develop effective schools committed to learner experience, achievement within the context of the national policy on education and the legislative participatory framework.

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