



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring the Roles of Parent-Teachers Association toward Administration of Primary Education in Biu, Local Government Area of Borno State

^{a,*}Adamu Bappah

^aFaculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundations, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Abuja, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: abappah@noun.edu.ng

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Abstract

This study explored the roles, effectiveness, and challenges of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in the administration of primary education in the Biu Local Government Area (LGA) of Borno State, Nigeria. Guided by Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Participatory Governance Theory, the research employed a descriptive survey design and sampled 260 respondents, including PTA executives and head teachers, across eight educational zones. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire (Role of PTA in the Administration of Primary Schools Questionnaire (ROPAPSQ)). Descriptive measures (mean and standard deviation) were used to summarize sample characteristics, and inferential statistics (one-sample t-tests) were used to test whether sample means differed from the neutral midpoint (2.50) of the four-point Likert scale. Findings revealed that PTAs play crucial roles in supporting teaching and learning, mobilizing resources, and fostering communication between parents and schools; however, their effectiveness in improving school administration is limited by weak oversight, inadequate training, and irregular engagement. PTAs also face challenges such as poor attendance, insufficient funding, lack of administrative capacity, and political interference. The study concludes that although PTAs hold significant potential for enhancing school governance, their impact is constrained by systemic and structural barriers. Policy institutionalization, targeted training, and stronger inclusion of PTAs in decision-making are recommended to strengthen their functionality and influence. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and educational

stakeholders seeking to promote community-driven governance in conflict-affected and resource-constrained contexts.

Keywords: *Parent–Teacher Association; School Administration; Community Participation; Primary Education; Borno State.*

1. Introduction

Primary education serves as the bedrock of a nation's educational system, imparting foundational knowledge and life skills essential for the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of children. Research shows that higher-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) experiences are associated with better academic competences (language and mathematics) in the early years of primary school, demonstrating sustained benefits of ECCE quality on later academic development. (Rademacher et al., 2025). In countries such as Nigeria, where socio-economic disparities, infrastructural limitations, and governance challenges persist, the administration of primary education becomes central to national development and educational equity. Strong foundational education is also closely tied to national productivity, social stability, and long-term human capital development, making effective governance of this level an urgent priority for policymakers and educators.

Effective administration of primary education involves core management functions such as planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating school activities to ensure conducive learning environments (Certo & Certo, 2019; Odukoya, 2022). These functions require the deliberate mobilization of human and material resources, strong accountability systems, and inclusive governance structures that are capable of responding to the evolving needs of learners and communities. Global frameworks like Sustainable Development Goal 4 emphasize that improving educational quality and access involves collective responsibility and coordination across governments, communities, educators, and other stakeholders to fulfill the inclusive, equitable quality education agenda (Boeren, 2019). Consequently, evidence shows that Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) play a crucial role in sustaining educational quality and responsiveness at the primary-school level, helping with infrastructure, school maintenance, discipline, and overall administration, functions that may otherwise be beyond the capacity of government alone (Nnebedum & Akinfolarin, 2018).

In Nigeria, the PTA remains the most structured platform for strengthening collaboration between families and schools. Evidence suggests that PTAs offer a formal channel for communication, foster accountability, and promote parental involvement in school governance. PTA intervention strategies have been empirically linked to enhanced school effectiveness and goal attainment in Nigerian secondary schools (Olaifa et al., 2024). In many rural or under-resourced communities, the interventions of PTAs determine whether schools remain functional or deteriorate, particularly in contexts where government funding is insufficient or irregular. The expanding responsibilities placed on PTAs in Nigeria and other developing countries reflect broader global trends in decentralization and community-led governance, where citizens increasingly share responsibility for school improvement (Wanjiru & Ndungu, 2021).

However, the effectiveness of PTAs varies widely due to differences in socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, leadership capacity, and political dynamics. Urban PTAs often have stronger financial bases and more educated memberships, enabling them to exert greater influence on school decision-making. In contrast, PTAs in rural or conflict-affected areas struggle with low literacy levels among parents, financial hardship, limited leadership training, and weak administrative support structures. As a result, their involvement in school administration may be minimal or symbolic rather than transformative. These disparities highlight the need for localized studies that examine PTA operations within specific socio-political and economic contexts, rather than assuming homogeneity across regions.

Biu Local Government Area (LGA) in Borno State presents a compelling context for examining the functionality of PTA. Although relatively more stable than other parts of Northeast Nigeria, Biu continues to face the lingering effects of over a decade of insurgency, internal displacement, and underfunding of public services. The LGA hosts 73 public primary schools, in addition to secondary and tertiary institutions such as the College of Education Waka-Biu and the Nigerian Army University Biu. Despite this educational presence, primary schools in Biu depend heavily on community initiatives due to insufficient government funding (Biu LGEA, 2024). PTAs in the area often support schools through infrastructural repairs, provision of instructional materials, informal supervision, and community-driven incentives for teachers, roles documented in various Nigerian and African contexts (Eze & Nwogu, 2020)

Yet the operational realities of PTAs in Biu remain underexplored in scholarly literature. Despite the strategic role of PTAs in advancing school governance, empirical research on PTA functionality in fragile, insecure, or underserved regions such as Biu LGA is scarce. Existing studies on PTAs in Nigeria tend to focus on urban or relatively stable settings (Chijioke & Deshi, 2025), leaving critical knowledge gaps regarding how PTAs operate where insecurity, poverty, and institutional fragility intersect. Without localized and context-sensitive evidence, policy-making and intervention strategies risk being superficial or misaligned with the lived realities of schools in conflict-affected or resource-poor environments.

To frame the investigation, three guiding theories are introduced here and elaborated in the literature review. Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory posits that student achievement improves when families, schools, and communities collaborate through shared responsibilities. Freeman's Stakeholder Theory emphasizes the importance of incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives, particularly those of parents, into organizational governance and decision-making. Participatory Governance Theory (Fung & Wright, 2003) emphasizes inclusive decision-making, transparency, and collective responsibility as cornerstones of effective governance in the public sector. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive analytical foundation for understanding how PTAs function and the structural, cultural, and institutional limitations they encounter within the governance systems of primary schools in Biu.

Based on the identified research gap, this study investigates the roles played by PTAs in the administration of primary schools in Biu LGA, examines the extent to which their activities enhance school management, and analyzes the challenges that limit their effectiveness. In doing so, the discussion examines the administrative responsibilities that PTAs undertake, assesses the impact of their contributions on school governance, and highlights the key obstacles that hinder PTA performance within the primary education system in Biu LGA.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: the literature review synthesizes theoretical and empirical studies on PTAs and participatory school governance; the methodology section outlines the research design, participants, instrument development, validation, pilot testing, and data analysis procedures; the results section presents the statistical findings; the discussion interprets these findings in relation to existing scholarship; and the conclusion integrates implications,

limitations, and recommendations for enhancing PTA engagement in similar contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Theoretical Foundations of the Study*

The theoretical foundation of this study is built on three complementary perspectives: Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory, Freeman's Stakeholder Theory, and Participatory Governance Theory. Together, these provide a multidimensional lens for understanding how Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs) function within the governance structures of public primary schools. They also offer conceptual pathways for explaining variations in PTA effectiveness across socio-economic, cultural, and conflict-affected contexts such as the Biu Local Government Area (LGA).

The primary theoretical foundation of this paper is Joyce Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory, originally conceptualized in 1987 and subsequently revised in 2018 (Epstein, 1987, 2018). The theory emphasizes that the family, school, and community operate as three distinct yet intersecting environments that shape children's learning and development. Effective schooling depends on the degree to which these spheres overlap through collaboration, communication, shared expectations, and joint responsibility.

In relation to PTAs, this theory positions them as the central institutional platform where these spheres formally converge. By encouraging communication between teachers and parents, PTAs help align expectations, enhance resource allocation, and improve the monitoring of school processes. The overlap becomes especially critical in environments with weak institutional support. In resource-poor contexts, such as Biu LGA, where insecurity, poverty, and poor infrastructure undermine formal governance, the PTA often becomes the primary mechanism for maintaining school functionality.

Recent research indicates that collaborative school–community partnerships enhance teacher motivation and strengthen student engagement by establishing clearer communication channels and shared expectations, thereby further reinforcing the contemporary relevance of Epstein's model. Sanders (2001) demonstrated that when schools and communities work together through structured partnership frameworks, teachers report improved support and communication, and students

benefit from more cohesive and consistent learning environments. In Ghana, Okodoko and Egrenfa (2025) reported that Parent–Teacher Associations made significant contributions to school infrastructure and strengthened administrative effectiveness, indicating improved accountability where community participation was strong: Olaifa et al. (2024) found that active PTA involvement contributes to stronger school management practices and improved achievement of institutional goals.

Another theory that supports the objectives of this paper is Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), which asserts that organizations achieve better outcomes when they integrate the interests of all stakeholders into their decision-making processes. In the context of education, key stakeholders include teachers, parents, learners, school administrators, policymakers, community leaders, NGOs, and civil society organizations. Where schools actively engage these stakeholders, governance becomes more transparent, accountable, and responsive.

In environments with weak state capacity, such as conflict-affected Biu LGA, the PTA becomes a critical stakeholder platform through which community voices influence school administration. Parents in these communities often play expanded governance roles, including monitoring teacher attendance, maintaining infrastructure, and providing security for school facilities. Stakeholder Theory explains why PTAs are particularly important in Biu: their involvement helps mitigate institutional gaps created by insecurity and limited government funding.

Recent empirical work strengthens this argument. Olaifa et al., (2024) shows that active Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) involvement enhances school administration, accountability, and the achievement of educational goals. Similarly Oni and Soji-Oni, (2024) indicates that active parental involvement in school governance enhances school management and fosters positive outcomes in administration and discipline. Stakeholder Theory therefore provides a compelling justification for examining PTA operations in Biu, where stakeholder engagement is vital for sustaining school operations.

The final theoretical underpinning is Participatory Governance Theory (Fung & Wright, 2003), which posits that governance is most effective when decision-making is inclusive, transparent, and grounded in community participation. Within education, participatory governance emphasizes that parents and community groups must be actively involved in planning, budgeting, policy-making, monitoring, and evaluation of school activities.

PTAs embody these principles by serving as platforms through which communities can share governance responsibilities. This includes resolving disputes, participating in school improvement planning, mobilizing resources, and overseeing the allocation of funds. In Biu LGA, PTAs frequently step in to fill governance gaps created by insecurity or administrative turnover, assuming monitoring functions that would ordinarily belong to formal government structures.

Empirical studies provide evidence in support of participatory governance in education. Olaifa et al. (2023) demonstrate that participatory decision-making in schools is positively correlated with improved teacher job performance, a key indicator of enhanced school effectiveness. Participatory communication strategies have been shown to increase community support for girls' education. Underwood et al. (2001) found that community-driven communication initiatives significantly improved parental attitudes and community involvement in promoting girls' participation in schooling. However, in conflict-affected areas such as Biu, the participatory governance process encounters unique challenges, including parental illiteracy, cultural barriers, weak institutional frameworks, and limited financial capacity. These constraints limit the potential for participatory mechanisms, such as PTAs, to achieve their optimal impact.

2.2 Empirical and Conceptual Insights on PTAs and School Governance

Conceptually, Parent–Teacher Associations serve as critical institutional mechanisms that connect schools with the communities they serve. Their core functions include promoting communication between parents and teachers, supporting the mobilization of material and financial resources, fostering transparency, reinforcing discipline, enhancing school monitoring, and facilitating participatory decision-making. PTAs also help create a sense of shared responsibility by promoting parental awareness of instructional processes, infrastructural needs, and governance challenges.

PTAs also serve a bridging function, helping align community expectations with school priorities. They can enhance trust, promote accountability, and serve as watchdogs to prevent the misuse of funds or poor administrative practices. In rural or marginalized communities, PTAs often serve as the primary governance body supporting school survival and continuity.

Empirical research across Nigeria demonstrates the importance of PTAs in school administration, though effectiveness varies considerably

across regions. Studies consistently show that PTAs contribute to infrastructure development, teacher motivation, and the improvement of monitoring systems. For instance, Ekundayo and Alonge (2012) found that PTAs across Nigerian secondary schools frequently support school improvement by providing desks, furniture, instructional materials, and funding for basic repairs, thereby enhancing the learning environment. Ssenkasi and Hassan (2023) found that pupils whose parents regularly attend school meetings tend to exhibit better academic outcomes and lower dropout tendencies.

Evidence from Cross River State indicates that PTA oversight of school financial management reduces corruption and enhances accountability (Eze & Nwogu, 2020). In many rural Nigerian communities, PTAs frequently fill gaps left by poor government funding by supplying instructional materials, organizing community labor, and supporting school feeding initiatives.

Despite these successes, PTAs face numerous challenges, including low financial contributions, irregular attendance at meetings, weak leadership structures, and inadequate training. Illiteracy among parents further reduces their ability to participate effectively in administrative processes. These constraints particularly affect rural and underserved communities such as Biu LGA.

Research consistently shows that in conflict-affected environments, including parts of northern Nigeria, communities often assume expanded responsibilities in sustaining school operations when state structures are weakened (Burde et al., 2015; Winthrop & Kirk, 2008). Such contexts rely heavily on community-based mechanisms to maintain access, ensure informal supervision, and support continuity of learning, making parental and community engagement even more critical than in stable settings (Zuilkowski et al., 2019).

In Biu LGA, PTAs often organize community security volunteers, support school maintenance, and provide critical infrastructural repairs where government support is inconsistent. However, insecurity affects meeting frequency, disrupts leadership stability, and discourages parent involvement. Limited funding, poverty, and high turnover of school administrators further hinder PTA effectiveness. Studies from various African countries demonstrate that strong PTAs can significantly improve school governance when formal policy frameworks support them. Leithwood et al (2008) found that shared leadership and participatory decision-making strengthen instructional quality and contribute to measurable gains in student achievement. In Ghana, PTA-

led community mobilization and resource provision by well-functioning PTAs have been associated with school improvements, including infrastructure and school-community cooperation (Agyekum et al., 2025). Kenya's Basic Education Act granted PTAs legal authority through their integration into Boards of Management, thereby improving transparency in school decision-making (Wanjiru & Ndungu, 2021).

These experiences highlight the importance of institutional support, capacity building, and formal recognition for effective PTA functioning. The effectiveness of Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs) varies substantially across schools and regions due to a complex interaction of socio-economic, cultural, institutional, and environmental conditions. These contextual elements significantly influence how PTAs operate, particularly in fragile and resource-constrained settings, such as Biu LGA, where structural limitations often hinder parental involvement and school governance (Epstein, 2018). Socio-economic realities are particularly influential. In low-income communities, parents frequently face unstable livelihoods, unemployment, and competing household priorities, which limit their ability to support school activities financially or even attend PTA meetings. Similar patterns have been documented in other resource-poor regions, where economic hardship is associated with diminished parental engagement and less effective collaboration in educational decision-making (Adelabu & Mncube, 2023). Consequently, PTAs in poorer areas are generally less capable of mobilizing resources and often depend more heavily on government or donor support than those in affluent or urban environments.

Cultural norms further shape PTA participation and leadership dynamics. In many northern Nigerian communities, longstanding patriarchal structures tend to restrict women's involvement in public decision-making despite their central role in children's upbringing. This mirrors findings across Africa showing that gendered expectations and cultural hierarchies can limit parental engagement and inhibit open dialogue with school personnel (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). In such contexts, cultural views on authority, seniority, and deference may limit parents, especially mothers, from fully contributing during PTA meetings, thereby narrowing the diversity of perspectives that could enhance school governance.

Leadership quality within schools also plays a significant role in shaping the performance of the PTA. School heads who value community engagement typically foster a culture of transparency, share information openly, and encourage parents to participate in planning and monitoring school activities. Such leadership enhances trust and strengthens PTA functionality. A systematic review of global and regional studies indicates that inclusive school leadership practices, particularly openness, clear communication, and actively involving parents and community members, significantly enhance stakeholder participation and school–community collaboration (Jutara & De Jesus, 2024). In contrast, authoritarian or indifferent school heads may marginalize PTAs or restrict their roles to symbolic tasks, reducing their relevance. In insecure regions, disruptions to educational leadership and school administration due to insecurity, including staff displacement and instability weaken school governance and community support structures such as Parent–Teacher Associations (Nathaniel & Pawa, 2025).

Institutional structures also determine how effectively PTAs operate. Associations with clear constitutions, well-defined roles, transparent financial procedures, and scheduled meetings are generally more effective than those functioning informally. Strong governance frameworks not only regulate leadership transitions but also prevent elite capture and support continuity, aligning with broader theories emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement and participatory governance (Fung & Wright, 2003; Freeman, 1984). However, many public secondary schools in Nigeria, including Biu, have a poor record-keeping and weak records-management practices, which undermine effective administration and could limit stakeholder influence (e.g., parent/teacher) over administrative decisions. (Olalere, Ladoba, & Oladapo, 2021)

Security and environmental stability also significantly influence the extent of PTA participation. In conflict-affected regions, insecurity restricts parents' mobility, limits attendance at meetings, and discourages involvement in school monitoring activities. The persistent threat of violence, displacement, and insurgent presence in nearby communities undermines parental confidence and reduces engagement. These challenges align with findings from other emergency-prone regions, where insecurity disrupts school governance processes and weakens community participation (BusinessDay, 2024). Frequent displacement and teacher turnover in such areas also disrupt collaboration between schools and PTAs.

Ultimately, the level of social cohesion within communities has a significant impact on PTA effectiveness. Where trust, shared norms, and collective responsibility are strong, PTAs tend to function more collaboratively, with parents more willing to contribute resources, attend meetings, and support school projects (Agyekum et al., 2025). Conversely, communities divided along ethnic, religious, or political lines often experience conflict, mistrust, or factionalism, all of which undermine PTA coordination and reduce effectiveness. Empirical evidence shows that strong social ties and cooperative relationships enhance PTA performance and reduce internal disputes (Ekundayo & Alonge, 2012).

Taken together, these contextual factors help explain the substantial differences in PTA performance across Nigeria. PTAs in affluent, cohesive, and secure communities are more likely to exhibit strong participation, confident leadership, and effective resource mobilization. In contrast, PTAs in rural, insecure, or socio-economically disadvantaged contexts such as Biu LGA face persistent structural challenges that constrain their ability to function effectively. Recognizing these contextual determinants is crucial for designing effective interventions that aim to strengthen PTA operations, promote participatory governance, and support improved educational outcomes in fragile settings. Localized research such as the present study is therefore critical for understanding how these dynamics shape PTA operations and for tailoring solutions to the unique circumstances of each community (Epstein, 2018).

Overall, the literature suggests that PTAs have significant potential for enhancing school administration, but contextual realities influence their effectiveness. In conflict-affected areas such as Biu LGA, PTAs serve as essential governance mechanisms that sustain educational services when government support is weak. Yet empirical evidence specifically focusing on PTAs in fragile northeastern Nigeria remains limited.

This study, therefore, fills a critical research gap by providing localized empirical insights into the roles, effectiveness, and challenges of PTAs in the administration of primary education in Biu LGA.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the roles, effectiveness, and challenges of Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs) in the administration of primary schools in the Biu Local Government Area (LGA). This design is widely recognized as appropriate for studies that aim to collect data on attitudes, perceptions, and administrative practices from a large population without manipulating variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Fraenkel et al., 2019). Its suitability lies in its ability to capture prevailing conditions and generate generalizable insights based on respondents' perspectives.

3.2 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all PTA executive members and head teachers of public primary schools in Biu LGA. There are 73 public primary schools in Biu LGA, each with an average of 11 PTA executives, resulting in an estimated population of 803 respondents. From this population, a sample of 260 respondents was drawn using a multi-stage sampling procedure to ensure representativeness and methodological rigor. At the first stage, the LGA was stratified into eight educational zones: Buratai, Central, Dugja, Galdimare, Garubula Sabo, Gunda, Mandira Girau, and Miringa to reflect geographical and administrative diversity. At the second stage, proportional allocation was used to distribute the sample size across the zones in proportion to the number of schools. Finally, at the third stage, schools within each zone were selected through simple random sampling, and from these schools, individual PTA executives and head teachers were chosen using the same method, as shown in the table below. This rigorous procedure reduced bias and improved the representativeness of the sample.

Table 1

Distribution of Sample by Educational Zone

Zone	Number of Schools	Allocated Sample Size	Number of Schools Sampled	Estimated Respondents per School
Buratai	9	32	5	~7
Central	8	28	4	~7
Dugja	10	36	5	~7
Galdimare	9	32	5	~7

Garubula Sabo	9	32	5	~7
Gunda	9	32	4	~8
Mandira Girau	11	39	5	~8
Miringa	8	29	4	~7

3.3 Instrumentation

The study employed a structured questionnaire titled **Role of PTA in the Administration of Primary Schools Questionnaire (ROPAPSQ)** as the research instrument. The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

- **Section A:** demographic information of respondents
- **Section B:** items measuring PTA roles, effectiveness, and challenges

The instrument used a **four-point Likert scale** scored as follows:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Agree

4 = Strongly Agree

This scaling approach aligns with established measurement conventions where a midpoint or neutral threshold is used to interpret participants' level of agreement. In four-point scales with no true neutral response, researchers frequently adopt the median value, in this case 2.50, as the theoretical criterion for determining direction and strength of respondent perceptions (Ary et al., 2019). This scholarly practice supports the use of the 2.50 midpoint as the benchmark for interpreting the mean scores in this study.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Content validity of the questionnaire was established by three experts in Educational Administration and Measurement & Evaluation, who reviewed the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Their recommendations led to the refinement of ambiguous items and the reorganization of related components.

To ensure reliability, a pilot study was conducted using a sample of 30 PTA members and Head teachers drawn from two primary schools outside the main study area but with similar characteristics. Responses from the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83, indicating good internal consistency and suitability for the main study.

3.5 Pilot Testing

The pilot study involved a total of 30 participants, comprising 22 PTA members and eight head teachers, selected from two primary schools outside the main study area. These participants shared similar demographic and operational characteristics with those in the main study. Feedback from the pilot led to refinement of item wording and sequencing, and the reliability coefficient obtained ($\alpha = 0.83$) indicated strong internal consistency.

To ensure the construct validity of the questionnaire, a combination of expert review and statistical item diagnostics was applied. Beyond content validation by specialists, additional statistical checks were performed to ensure that questionnaire items did not cross-load on unintended constructs. After the pilot test, item–total correlations were computed to determine the degree to which each item aligned with its respective subscale (roles, effectiveness, or challenges). Items with weak or ambiguous correlations were revised for clarity.

Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal component extraction and varimax rotation was conducted during the pilot phase to detect potential cross-loadings. Items that loaded above 0.40 on more than one factor were flagged and revised to improve specificity and conceptual alignment. Although no items were removed, wording refinements were made to ensure unidimensionality of each construct. This process strengthened the structural validity of the instrument before its full deployment.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted with the assistance of trained research assistants who visited the sampled schools. Permission was obtained from the Local Government Education Authority and school head teachers before administering the instrument. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire in a non-coercive environment.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive measures (mean and standard deviation) to summarize respondents' characteristics and to examine general patterns in their perceptions. Because the study was based on sample data, inferential statistics were used to draw inferences about the population. A one-sample t-test was used to test the null hypothesis by comparing the sample mean against the test value of 2.50, which served

as the theoretical midpoint of the Likert scale. This analytical approach enabled the study to determine whether respondents' perceptions differed significantly from the expected neutral point.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. No identifying information was collected, and data were used solely for academic purposes. Approval for the study was obtained from the Local Government Education Authority, and verbal consent was secured from all participants.

3.9 Results

Data were analyzed using descriptive measures (means and standard deviations) to summarize respondents' perceptions. Because the study drew a sample ($n = 260$), inferential statistics (one-sample t-tests) were used to determine whether sample means differed from the theoretical midpoint of the four-point Likert scale (test value = 2.50). Degrees of freedom for the t-tests are $df = 259$. Cohen's d for one-sample tests is reported as a measure of effect size ($d = (M - \mu) / SD$). Significance was assessed at an α level of .05.

Table 2

Role of PTA in the Administration of Primary Education in Biu LGA (N = 260)

S/N	Item description	Mean (M)	SD
1	PTA supports teaching and learning by linking parents and school staff	3.00	1.70
2	Mobilizes local resources	3.45	1.87
3	Participates in sensitization activities	3.36	1.67
4	PTA meetings held occasionally	3.38	1.37
5	Offers informal feedback	3.22	1.30
6	Acts as communication link	3.04	1.19
7	Faces challenges in leadership	3.45	1.87
8	Involved in supervision (limited)	3.22	1.30
9	Empowers parental involvement	3.00	1.76
10	Monitors enrolment and projects	3.04	1.19
11	Limited innovation due to training	3.38	1.37

S/N	Item description	Mean (M)	SD
12	Contributes to accountability	3.36	1.67
Grand mean (Roles)		3.24	1.52

The grand mean for PTA roles was $M = 3.24$ ($SD = 1.52$), which is above the neutral midpoint (2.50), indicating that respondents generally *agree* that PTAs perform substantive roles in school administration (e.g., resource mobilization, communication, monitoring). Item-level means show the highest agreement for items such as resource mobilization and leadership-related challenges ($M = 3.45$), and somewhat lower (but still above midpoint) agreement on monitoring and communication ($M \approx 3.00$ – 3.22). These descriptive results summarize the sample's perception of PTA involvement in administrative functions.

Table 3

Effectiveness of PTA in Improving School Administration in Biu LGA (N = 260)

S/N	Item description	Mean (M)	SD
13	Fosters collaboration with school staff	2.46	1.97
14	Provides minor support and clean-up	2.45	2.00
15	Reports on issues but weak mechanisms	2.15	2.37
16	Encourages school attendance	2.48	1.38
17	Irregular meetings	2.02	0.95
18	Lacks governance training	2.03	0.86
19	Limited evaluation of performance	2.04	0.87
20	Relies heavily on head teacher	1.82	2.32
Grand mean (Effectiveness)		2.20	1.68

The grand mean for PTA effectiveness was $M = 2.20$ ($SD = 1.68$), which falls below the neutral midpoint (2.50). This suggests that respondents generally perceive PTA activities as inconsistent in their effectiveness in producing improvements in school administration. Several items (e.g., reliance on the head teacher, lack of governance training, irregular meetings) have particularly low means ($M \approx 1.82$ – 2.15), indicating specific operational weaknesses that limit the effectiveness of the PTA.

Research Question 3: What are the Behavioral Attitudes of Students towards the use of ICT in Some Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe Metropolis?

Table 4

Challenges of PTA in Improving School Administration in Biu LGA (N = 260)

S/N	Item description	Mean (M)	SD
21	Irregular attendance at meetings	2.40	0.82
22	Lack of training	2.27	1.51
23	Inadequate financial contributions	2.28	1.62
24	Poor communication	2.26	1.14
25	Limited involvement in decision-making	2.40	0.55
26	Dependence on head teacher	2.43	1.12
27	Lack of awareness of roles	2.45	2.00
28	Cultural/language barriers	2.27	1.51
29	Low motivation	2.40	0.82
30	Lack of government support	2.28	1.62
31	Political interference	2.26	1.14
32	Poor monitoring of projects	2.43	1.12
33	Poor record keeping	2.26	1.14
34	Lack of innovative problem-solving	2.45	2.00
35	Resistance from staff	2.40	0.55
Grand mean (Challenges)		2.35	1.28

The grand mean for challenges was $M = 2.35$ ($SD = 1.28$) slightly below the neutral midpoint. This pattern indicates that respondents perceive multiple barriers (funding, training, communication, political interference, limited decision-making) as constraining PTA functionality, though these barriers are not, on average, perceived as strongly above the neutral threshold.

Table 5*One-Sample t-Test Results (Comparison to test value = 2.50) (Test value = 2.50; df = 259)*

Variable	Mean (M)	SD	t	df	p (two-tailed)	Cohen's d
Role of PTA	3.24	1.52	7.85	259	< .001 (0.0000)	0.49
Effectiveness of PTA	2.20	1.68	-2.88	259	.004 (0.0043)	-0.18
Challenges of PTA	2.35	1.28	-1.89	259	.060 (0.0599)	-0.12

Notes. Cohen's d computed as $(M - 2.50) / SD$ —effect-size interpretation (conventional): small ≈ 0.2 , medium ≈ 0.5 , large ≈ 0.8 .

- **Role of PTA:** The mean rating for PTA roles ($M = 3.24$) is significantly higher than the neutral midpoint ($t(259) = 7.85$, $p < .001$). Cohen's $d = 0.49$ suggests a practical effect; respondents clearly perceive PTAs small-to-moderate as performing substantive roles in school administration.
- **Effectiveness of PTA:** The mean rating for effectiveness ($M = 2.20$) is significantly lower than the neutral midpoint ($t(259) = -2.88$, $p = .004$). Cohen's $d = -0.18$ indicates a small negative effect size; although PTAs are perceived as active, their effectiveness is judged to be limited relative to the neutral expectation.
- **Challenges of PTA:** The mean rating for challenges ($M = 2.35$) is lower than the midpoint but not statistically different at $\alpha = .05$ ($t(259) = -1.89$, $p = .0599$). Cohen's $d = -0.12$ (small) suggests that while respondents report problems, the aggregate perception of these challenges does not differ strongly from the neutral benchmark. This finding suggests variability in how challenges are experienced across schools.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study offer detailed insights into the roles, effectiveness, and challenges faced by Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs) in the administration of primary schools in the Bui Local Government Area (LGA). The results confirm that PTAs continue to play meaningful roles in supporting school operations; however, their overall effectiveness is significantly constrained by structural limitations, contextual pressures, and persistent capacity gaps.

The prominence of PTA roles identified in this study aligns with Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theory, which emphasizes the value of collaborative relationships among families, schools, and

communities (Epstein, 2018). The high mean scores related to communication facilitation, informal monitoring, and resource mobilization demonstrate that families in Biu LGA are willing to engage in school administration when opportunities are accessible. Similar observations have been made in related studies, where PTAs in low-resource settings contributed notably to school improvement through volunteerism, monitoring, and material support (Olaifa et al., 2024). These findings underscore the ongoing significance of PTAs in supplementing limited government provisions, particularly in underserved educational environments (Eze & Nwogu, 2020).

Despite these contributions, the study also reveals considerable limitations in PTA effectiveness. Low ratings relating to governance capacity, consistency of meetings, and participation in decision-making processes suggest that PTAs lack the authority and technical competence required to influence school governance meaningfully. This aligns with Stakeholder Theory, which argues that stakeholder involvement produces meaningful outcomes only when those stakeholders possess adequate knowledge, skills, and empowerment to contribute effectively (Freeman, 1984). Existing literature similarly reports that PTAs in Nigerian schools often face challenges, including inadequate resources, limited parental engagement, and weak oversight, which can constrain their effectiveness in school administration (Ekundayo & Alonge, 2012). These limitations create a structural imbalance where parents participate actively but exert minimal influence on administrative decisions.

The challenges identified in this study, including weak leadership, poor record-keeping, cultural barriers, inadequate training, and financial constraints, reflect systemic weaknesses that affect participatory governance. Participatory Governance Theory emphasizes the need for inclusive decision-making structures supported by transparency, clear role definitions, and accountability mechanisms (Fung & Wright, 2003). The weak institutional structures observed in many schools in Biu LGA undermine PTA autonomy and increase dependence on head teachers. This pattern is consistent with findings from conflict-affected regions where school governance structures are weakened, administrative continuity is frequently disrupted, and community participation mechanisms remain underdeveloped (Burde et al., 2015).

A significant contribution of this study is its examination of PTA performance in a conflict-affected and socio-economically fragile locality, a context rarely represented in Nigerian PTA research. Evidence from conflict-affected zones in Nigeria shows that insecurity frequently

disrupts school administration, undermining enrollment, retention, and institutional functioning, which casts doubt on the relevance of earlier studies conducted in more stable regions (Mohammed & Ogunode, 2022). This study reveals a distinctive pattern in Biu LGA: PTAs demonstrate high levels of involvement but retain low administrative influence. This "high involvement but low influence" dynamic marks a unique governance constraint shaped by insecurity, social fragility, and inconsistent leadership deployment. These factors are not commonly observed in studies from less volatile environments (Chijioke & Deshi, 2025). These findings extend existing theoretical discussions by illustrating how environmental instability and structural deficiencies limit the potential of participatory school governance even when parental willingness is high.

The variability in PTA challenges and effectiveness across schools, as shown by the t-test, suggests that contextual differences, particularly leadership style, community cohesion, and historical relationships between schools and families, play a mediating role. Research has shown that effective school leadership enhances parental engagement by promoting transparency, shared responsibility, and inclusive decision-making (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Conversely, authoritarian or indifferent leadership restricts parental input and weakens the PTA's capacity to function as a genuine governance partner. The findings from Biu LGA support this position and underscore the crucial role of leadership quality in fragile educational environments.

Overall, the study demonstrates that while PTAs in Biu LGA remain central to supporting school functions, their effectiveness is undermined by contextual instability, weak institutional frameworks, and limited governance capacity. Strengthening PTA involvement, therefore, requires targeted training, more explicit role definitions, stronger policy frameworks, and improved communication between schools and communities. These interventions are essential for enhancing participatory governance and improving educational outcomes in regions facing persistent socio-economic and security challenges.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the roles, effectiveness, and challenges of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in the administration of primary schools in the Biu Local Government Area (LGA). The findings show that PTAs are visible contributors to school administration, particularly in the areas of communication, informal monitoring, and resource

mobilization. These roles remain essential in a locality where government resources are limited, and community involvement has a direct impact on the functioning of schools. The study therefore confirms that parents in Biu LGA are willing to participate in governance processes when opportunities for involvement exist.

However, the results also reveal substantial limitations in the effectiveness of PTA. Low mean scores on governance-related activities, such as decision-making influence, leadership capacity, and regular meeting attendance, suggest that PTAs lack the authority and technical competence necessary to function as effective governance partners. These weaknesses reflect broader structural issues: limited training, unclear role definitions, financial constraints, gendered participation barriers, and leadership practices that centralize power in the hands of head teachers. Collectively, these factors create an environment where PTAs are active but not empowered, involved but not influential.

Interpreted through the study's theoretical frameworks, these findings point to mismatches between expected and actual governance dynamics. Epstein's Overlapping Spheres Theory suggests that school and family collaboration thrive when communication and shared responsibilities are institutionalized; however, such synergy remains uneven and fragile in Biu LGA. Stakeholder Theory argues that meaningful participation depends on knowledge, empowerment, and institutional space, conditions that PTAs in this study have only partially met. Similarly, the principles of Participatory Governance Theory are constrained by weak institutional structures, irregular participation, and limited administrative transparency.

A distinctive contribution of this study lies in its contextual focus. Much of the existing Nigerian literature examines PTAs in relatively stable school environments. By contrast, this study provides empirical evidence from a region affected by insecurity, economic fragility, and administrative disruptions. The findings highlight a unique governance dilemma: PTAs demonstrate high willingness to participate but operate within a structurally fragile system that limits their influence. This "involved yet ineffective" pattern broadens current understandings of participatory school governance by demonstrating how insecurity, turnover of school leadership, weak institutional records, and social fragility intersect to constrain the impact of the PTA.

These insights underscore the need for systemic reforms. PTAs in Biu LGA require targeted capacity-building in school management, monitoring, budgeting, and leadership. Clear policy guidelines defining

PTA roles, meeting schedules, financial procedures, and accountability structures are essential for strengthening their autonomy. Improving communication between schools and communities, fostering inclusive participation, particularly for women, and ensuring stable school leadership will further enhance the PTA's governance role. Given the variability in challenges across schools, interventions must be tailored to the specific context rather than being uniform.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that PTAs in Biu LGA play important administrative roles but remain limited in effectiveness due to systemic, socio-cultural, and environmental constraints. Strengthening PTAs is therefore critical for advancing participatory governance in primary schools, especially in fragile and resource-constrained settings. Future studies should extend this analysis to other LGAs, compare PTA performance across conflict-affected and stable regions, and explore strategies for institutionalizing community participation in school governance across Nigeria.

Declaration of Interest and AI Use

The author declares no known interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the findings, interpretation, or reporting of this study; no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors was received, and Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) was used to improve language fluency and readability. All content generated with the assistance of the tool was subsequently reviewed and edited by the author, who assumes full responsibility for the final version of the published article.

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