

Application of education law in the administration of public junior secondary schools in rivers state

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ABSTRACT

The study was on application of education law in the administration of public junior secondary schools in Rivers State. Some literatures that are relevant to the study were reviewed. Three research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study, and three null hypotheses were postulated statistically tested at 0.05 level of significance. In a rank order, the mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the three research questions and the z-test statistic was used to analyse or test the hypotheses of the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire that was structured on 4 point scaling Patern of Likert. The instrument was validated by some experts in educational management. The result of the study show that the principals knows the principles of in-low parentis, rules and regulations are used to regulate the behaviour of both teachers and students. A significant difference existed between the urban and rural schools in their mean rating of the knowledge of education law, there was no significant difference between the urban and rural schools in their mean rating of the ways principals utilize education law in the administration of secondary schools, a significant difference existed between urban and rural schools on the constraints to the application of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools. It was concluded that the principals knows the principles of in-low parentis, rules and regulations are used to regulate behaviour in school. It was recommended among the other that parents should assist to discipline their children at home, there should be regular training programmes for principals on education law, finally, there should be close and cordial relationship between the school and the community.

Introduction

Education provides a platform through which development acquires it meaning. Education can be seen as the most fundamental tool for development. Elekwa, Okai and Bright (2014) sees education is that process by which children born into a society are made to understand the environment they find themselves.

Education is a veritable tool for development; this is because it has the capacity to transform the society to an appreciable position in Okai (2013). The Nigeria education system in the recent times has in no small measure witnessed numerous changes and innovations. Such changes includes the introduction of universal education in which the junior secondary school system. The junior secondary school system as part of the universal basic education programme has some specific goals to achieve. The achievement of the goals and objectives of junior secondary will largely depend on the administration of the junior secondary school organization.

For the junior secondary school programme to be successful:

1. There is need to apply education law, and the application of education law need to be given serious consideration for effective implementation of the policy and programme of the junior secondary schools. This is to ensure the effective implementation and achievement of its set goals. The pertinent question is that what is the application of education law in the administration of junior secondary. It is

interesting to state that the law plays some significant roles in the administration of junior secondary, therefore, it is essentially necessary that the school administrator should understand the legal aspects of school administration. Maduagu (1997) posited that school administration borders on many areas that touch on the activities of teachers, students and stakeholders to junior secondary school education.

The junior secondary school principals are the educational managers of the system, it is pertinent to state that the school administrator work with people such as the teachers, nonacademic staff, students, visitors from the schools board and Ministry of Education, parents and stakeholders to junior secondary school education. Okai (2013), it is very likely that the actions or activities of the principal may infringe on the rights of others. Furthermore, it is also likely that the members of the school community may be functioning in their different capacities as people, they may infringe on the rights of others without knowing the legal implications of their action. In other words, they may break the laws without being conscious that they are interfering with human rights.

Generally speaking, the term law in its broadest sense presupposes the observance of rules and regulation. Okai (2013), posited that law is a blueprint or framework that regulates behaviour. This suggest that law is a guide to action. The administrator of the junior secondary system is constantly dealing with issues that are bordered on the violation of human rights, therefore the knowledge of education law and consequently the application of education law in the administration of the school system will enhance orderliness in the school system. Igwe (2003) described education law as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace world over, particularly it relates to the administration of educational institutions.

Igwe, Okai and Amadi-Ali in Igwe and Ogbondah (2018), asserted that since educational administrators deals or relates with teachers and students they are expected to apply education law in the administration of school so as to ensure that people are treated equally.

Babson (2015) was in support of Igwe, Okai and Amadi-Ali when he stated that the school system is complex and large, therefore the complex nature of the school system makes the application of education law inevitable. No wonder, Igwe (2015), stated that the school as an institution is large and complex which makes it expedient and imperative for the school to have rules and regulations to guide and direct the affairs of the school. On this premise the application of education law to regulate the behaviour of every member of the school community will enhance school discipline. Ize (2010) noted that without the application of education law the school system will experience lawless behavior among the staff and students.

The school is a social organisation that has brought people from different backgrounds, cultures and race (Ulumabe, 2010). These people with different cultures are to be checked by the law. The Federal Ministry of Education in its wisdom has provided guidelines for the employment of teachers and other staff and as well as the admission of students into junior secondary school system, this is to ensure orderliness vis-à-vis to attain the noble objectives of junior secondary school programmes.

But unfortunately the ministry of education does not follow these guidelines in the employment of school principals and teachers. Most of them did not have any background in educational administration and as such they could not effectively managed the school system .Sunny (2011), asserted that school rules and regulations are meant to guide and checkmate activities of people if properly applied. In this regard both staff and students are required to obey the school rules and regulations. But most times the staff or students flout the school rules and the administrator does not know the disciplinary action to be taken. Peretomode (2004) posited that school control is a central aspect of school life. To this end the application of education law in the administration of junior

secondary school is very indispensable. This suggests that education law is important hence it ensures the maintenance of law, order and it further ensures peace and perfect tranquility in the school system.

It is not surprising that the school principals and teachers condone with the poor attitude of the students and they could not discipline those that deviated from the norms of the school system. It is also pertinent to state that some principals and teachers did not know how to apply the principles of in-loco parentis when they are dealing with the students. Suffice it to state that most of the school managers and teachers tend to abuse this principle. If education law is properly applied it empowers the school principal and teachers to automatically take the position of parents when the child is in the school premises (Paterson, 2015).

A cursory look at the junior secondary schools in some part of the state shows that some female students have been sexually abused and male students are physically abused by their teachers and fellow students without knowing the implication of their action. In this circumstance the principal and teachers are found wanting. It is possible that they did not receive any form of training on educational administration, no wonder students crises are not properly managed and consequently there has been several demonstration by students. It is against this background that this study seek to investigate the administration of education law in junior secondary school system with a view to proffering solutions.

Statement of the Problem

The school system in which the junior secondary school is inclusive is a citadel of learning. Education law is a range of rules and regulations that guides the programmes of the school system. Both the school principals, teachers and students behaviours are regulated by education law. Parents and stakeholders to education are worried at the rate in which the principal and teachers are being taking to court because of abuse of the principles of in-loco parentis; furthermore the manner in which the students are being handled in the school has led abuse and negligence. It appears that the school administrator does not in any way manage the school with proper knowledge of education law.

In this regard, the poor application of education law in the administration of junior secondary school will pose a serious threat to effective school administration. Most teachers and students does not understand their rights and they inflict injuries on others. This point to the fact that they did not understand the legal implication of their actions and the situation of poor understanding of what constitute the rights of an individual has resulted to poor application of law to checkmate the behaviours of the members of the school system particularly the junior secondary school system.

Research questions: The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the principal's knowledge of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What are the ways principals utilize rules and regulations in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. What are the constraints to the effective application of education laws by principals in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses: The following null hypotheses were statistically tested at 0.05 level of significant:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the principals of urban and rural schools in their mean ratings on the knowledge of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the principals of urban and rural schools in their mean ratings on the ways principals utilize rules and regulations in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the principals of urban and rural schools in their mean ratings of the constraints to effective application of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Theoretical Framework: The theory that propels the searchlight on this study is functionalism theory by Herbert Spencer in 1988 but cited by Egbe (2014). This theory holds that the function of education law is to transmit the norms and values of the society from generation to generation. He maintained that the society can survive when all the departments or units of the society are functioning. In this regard, education law is one of the aspects of law that ensure the society must function so as to enhance the survival of the society.

Methodology: The design that was adopted in this study was a descriptive design. It was adopted because the responses to the research questions were described and explained in line with the demands of the topic. The population of the study is 276 principals of public junior secondary schools drawn from both urban and rural schools of Rivers State. The sample of the study was 276, a purposive sampling technique was adopted, in this regard 140 principals were drawn from the urban schools while 136 principals were drawn from the rural schools. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire that was structured on the modified Likert scaling Pattern; the instrument was validated by some experts in educational management, and the reliability of the instrument was established at 0.94, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

The data from the instrument was collected, the means and standard deviation in a rank order was used to analyze the data, and the z-test was used to test the null hypotheses.

Result

Research question 1: What is the principal's knowledge of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1.1: Descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation of knowledge of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools.

S/N	ITEMS	Urban Schools		Rural Schools		Aggregate $\bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_2$	Rank	REMARKS
		\bar{x}_1	STD	\bar{x}_2	STD			
1.	Principal knows the dos and donts	2.53	.41	2.63	.31	2.58	6 th	Agreed
2.	Principal knows the principles of in-loco parentis	3.11	.48	2.71	.32	2.91	2 nd	Agreed
3.	Principal understand the implication of teachers negligence	2.61	.32	3.01	.41	2.81	4 th	Agreed
4.	Principal knows the legal rights of the students	2.83	0.31	2.91	.32	2.87	3 rd	Agreed

5.	Principal knows the rights of teachers	2.61	2.33	2.58	.31	2.59	5 th	Agreed
6.	Principal understand the legal implication of assaults	3.02	.42	3.11	.43	3.06	1 st	Agreed
7.	Principal understand the legal implication of teachers assaults	2.61	.31	2.58	.31	2.59	5 th	Agreed
Mean set = 2.77								

A critical look at table 1.1 shows the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation of the knowledge of education law. All the items ranging from item 1 to 7 are above the criterion mean of 2.5, this suggest acceptance, and it implies that the principals of junior secondary schools in Rivers State have knowledge of education law in the administration of schools. The mean set of 2.77 shows principals knowledge of education law. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the principal's knowledge of education law in the administration of junior secondary school is high.

Research question 2: What are the ways principals utilize rules and regulations in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1.2: Descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation of utilization of rules and regulations in the administration of junior secondary schools.

S/N	ITEMS	Urban Schools		Rural Schools		Aggregate $\bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_2$	Rank	REMARKS
		\bar{x}_1	STD	\bar{x}_2	STD			
1.	Rules and regulations are used to guide students behaviour	2.51	.42	2.53	.051	2.52	6 th	Agreed
2.	Rules and regulations are used to check the behaviour of teachers	2.72	.32	2.52	.31	2.62	4 th	Agreed
3.	Through rules and regulations facilities are used	2.50	.42	2.62	.32	2.56	5 th	Agreed
4.	Rules and regulations are used to promote the teacher and students relationship	3.01	.33	2.93	.31	2.97	1 st	Agreed
5.	Rules and regulations are used to maintain principal and students relationship	2.93	.31	3.02	.42	2.97	1 st	Agreed
6.	Rules and regulations are used reviewing examination	2.62	.30	3.11	.11	2.86	3 rd	Agreed
7.	Rules and regulations are used in handling	3.02	.43	2.83	.32	2.92	2 nd	Agreed

	disciplinary cases.							
	Mean set = 2.73							

Table 1.2 shows the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation of principals use of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State. A cursory look at the table shows that all indices are in the mean range of 2.50 and 3.11, this suggest that all the variables under investigation are within the mean and above the criterion mean of 2.50 which is the zone of acceptance. Furthermore, the mean set of 2.73 suggest that the principals utilization of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State is high.

Research question 3: What are the constraints to the effective application of education laws by principals in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1.3: Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation of constraints to the effective application of education law.

S/N	ITEMS	Urban Schools		Rural Schools		Aggregate $\bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_2$	Rank	REMARKS
		\bar{x}_1	STD	\bar{x}_2	STD			
1.	Laws instituted by parents are obstacle to effective application of law	2.51	.31	2.53	.32	2.52	6 th	Accepted
2.	The children from undisciplined home is high	2.52	.36	2.56	.34	2.54	5 th	Accepted
3.	Children are influenced negatively by peers	2.71	.41	3.02	.43	2.86	2 nd	Accepted
4.	Poor parents attitude towards the education of their children	2.63	.40	2.53	.31	2.58	3 rd	Accepted
5.	Ignorance of principals in applying education law	2.01	.21	2.07	.20	2.04	7 th	Not Accepted
6.	Lack of cooperation of the host community	2.51	.32	2.61	.31	2.56	4 th	Accepted
7.	Poor attitude of the principal in managing the school	3.01	.42	3.11	.42	3.06	1 st	Accepted
	Mean set = 2.59							

Table 1.3 shows the descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation of constraints to the effective application of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State. A look at the table shows that all the items except one meets the criterion mean of 2.5. All the variables show that the identified factors except items 6 are the constraints to the effective application of education law in junior secondary schools. The mean set of 2.59 suggest the acceptance of the factors that inhibit the effective application of education law in the administration of school system.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the principals of urban and rural schools in their mean ratings on the knowledge of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 1.4: Test of significant difference between the urban and rural schools on principals knowledge of education law.

Type of school	N	\bar{x}	Std	df	z-cal value	z-critical value	Remark
Urban	140	29.41	4.31	274	5.36	1.96	Significant
Rural	136	31.23	6.22				

Table 1.4 shows that the mean of urban junior secondary schools is 29.41 and the mean of rural junior secondary schools is 31.23. The standard deviation of urban schools is 4.31 while that of the rural schools is 6.22. With the degree of freedom of 274, the z-calculated value was 5.36 and the z-critical value was 1.96. Therefore, since the z-calculated value of 5.36 is greater than the z-critical value of 1.96 the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted, this shows that a significant difference existed between the urban and rural schools in their mean rating of principals knowledge of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the principals of urban and rural schools in their mean ratings on the ways principals utilize rules and regulations in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 1.5: Test of significant difference on the ways principals of urban and rural schools utilize education law.

Type of school	N	\bar{x}	Std	df	z-cal value	z-critical value	Remark
Urban	140	31.21	3.21	274	1.15	1.96	Not significant
Rural	136	32.23	4.32				

Table 1.5 shows that the mean of urban schools was 31.21 while the mean of rural schools was 32.23. The standard deviation of urban schools was 3.21 and that of the rural schools was 4.32. With the degree of freedom of 288, the z-calculated value was 1.15 and the z-critical value was 1.96. Therefore, since the z-calculated value of 1.15 was less than the z-critical value of 1.96 the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternate hypothesis that states that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of the two group of schools was rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the urban and rural schools in their mean rating of the ways principals utilize education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the principals of urban and rural schools in their mean ratings of the constraints to effective application of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 1.6: Test of significant difference on the constraints to the effective application of education

law.

Type of school	N	\bar{x}	Std	Df	z-cal value	z-critical value	Remark
Urban	140	25.99	4.81	274	3.96	1.96	Significant
Rural	136	31.42	3.53				

Table 1.6 shows that the mean of urban schools was 25.99 while the mean of the rural schools was 31.42. The standard deviation of urban schools was 4.81 and that of the rural schools was 3.53. With the degree of freedom of 274 the z-calculated value was 3.96 and the z-critical value was 1.96. Therefore, since the z-calculated value of 3.96 was greater than the z-critical value of 1.96 the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted; this means that there is a significant difference between the principals of urban and rural schools in their mean rating of the constraints to the effective application of education law in the administration of junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data analyses the following findings were made:

1. Principals knows the dos and donts.
2. Principals knows the principles of in-loco parentis.
3. Principals understand the implication of teachers and students assaults.
4. Rules and regulations are used to regulate the behaviour of both the teachers and students.
5. Rules and regulations are used to check the activities of teachers and students during examination.
6. Poor attitude of parents are constraints to effective application of education law in schools.
7. Lack of cooperation of host community is a constraints to effective application of education law.
8. A significant difference existed between the urban and rural schools in their mean rating of knowledge of education law.
9. There is no significant difference between the urban and rural schools on the ways principals utilize education law in the administration of junior secondary schools.
10. A significant difference existed between the urban and rural in their mean rating of constraints to effective application of education law.

Discussion of Findings

Education is the process through which an individual acquires skills and knowledge that will help him to be useful. The principal is the manager of the school system. The principal apply education law in the administration of junior secondary schools, this findings is in line with the findings of Babson (2015) who asserted that the school system is complex and large, therefore the complex nature of the school makes the application of education law very imperative, this findings was also supported by Igwe (2015) who stated that the school as an institution is large and complex which makes it expedient and imperative for the schools to have rules and regulations, this is to ensure that the behaviour of both the teachers and students are regulated.

Conclusion

The educational system in the recent times has witnessed an unprecedented expansion or increase on students enrolment and furthermore some teachers with and without educational qualifications have been recruited into the school system. Succinctly, most of these teachers does not understand the application of education law, this is why the teacher sexually abuse the female students and physically abuse the male students. However, the proper understanding of the principle or doctrine of in-loco parentis helps the teachers and school administrators to put themselves in the place of the parents. By this position there will be less or no problem of sexual abuse and negligence of duty. Finally, the application of education law in the administration of junior secondary school system is

hoped to promote orderliness, peace and it will result to effective administration of schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals knowledge of the principles of in-loco parentis should be sustained, this is because it helps the principal to put himself in the place of the parents.
2. The rules and regulations that was used to regulate the behaviour of the teachers and students should be sustained.
3. Parents should see the training of the child as a joint effort of both the parents and the school.
4. There should be cordial relationship between the school and community, so the community should give support to the school.
5. Parents should also appreciate the need to discipline the child at home when laws are flouted.
6. As a matter of policy there should be regular training or workshop organized for principals of junior secondary schools, this will help them to be more knowledgeable on the application of education law in the school system.

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