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PRINCIPALS' ENFORCEMENT OF EDUCATION LAW AS KEY TO EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated principal's enforcement of education law as key to effective public secondary school administration in Delta State. In order to effectively carry out this investigation, two null hypotheses was formulated to guide the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the investigation. The population of 475 which study consists of 295 male and 180 female secondary school principals in Delta State. The sample random sampling was employed to select the size of 95 principals (40 males and 55 females) representing 20% of the total population in Secondary Schools in Delta State. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire titled: Principals' Enforcement of Education Law for Effective Administration Questionnaire (PEELEA). Generated data were analyzed using the t-tested statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that numerous challenges hamper the enforcement of education law for effective secondary school administration in the state. The paper concluded that adequate attention has not being given to the enforcement of education law in secondary schools in the state. The paper recommended amongst others that the Delta State Ministry of Education should conduct seminars and workshops for all the stakeholders on the enforcement of education laws as it will adequately quip them in the discharge of their duties in the school setting.

KEYWORDS

Principals, Education Law, Administration, Secondary School.



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Introduction

The schools be it private or public is a public institution established by law and certain prescribed functions of legal consideration, they are public institutions in the sense that they are established to serve the public and can be sue or sued since there is a law establishing it as a cooperate organization with the aim of carrying out specific duties in line with the rules and regulations as embodied in the various states and Federal Government Education Laws, codes, ordinances, Decrees and Edicts; (Oloko, 2014). Schools are structures set up in the society to inculcate desirable values in education and for schools to operate well; they need laws to guide their operations while these laws are adhered to if they are properly enforced. This is because in Nigeria today parents and guardians are better informed, enlightened, curious and inquisitive about what happens to their children and wards in their various schools.

Quite often, they express their curiosity by asking their children questions about the activities of their teachers and school administrations, Oloko, (2015); commented that “it should be realized that students are yet in their formative stage, no matter at what level of education”. The educational administrators serve as their parents and so schools guide them so that their youthful exuberance does not mislead them. He also revealed that most teachers and principals have never read the Nigeria constitution nor even the secondary school ethnical law that guided their operational and administrative day to day functioning. Educational law especially on the consequences or implications of their actions in their day to day activities within the school system, by, buttressing further on the school management ignorance of the educational law, Yoloye (2014), lamented that educational law are of paramount importance in the operations of the school system in Delta State and beyond. Thus, principals as the heads of the secondary schools have roles to play in their enforcement since they are responsible and accountable for everything that is expected to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) in her National Policy on Education has noble objectives relating to the due enforcement of education laws that would turn Nigeria to a first class country if well implemented.

Oloko (2015) said that education laws are simply those laws that have been enacted specifically for the organization, administration and control of the education system and those who operate in the education enterprise are citizens governed by the laws of the land, criminal or civil as the case may be, they are also expected to comply with laws designed exclusively to regulate what can do or not do in the process of teaching, learning and management. The education laws are necessary because educational establishment or institution is a social organization with many individuals and groups as stakeholders. There are many aims and objectives to achieve and numerous diverse interests, aspirations and expectations to satisfy. The need to regulate social interaction and behaviour appears obvious or imperative. Education laws have been promulgated as Ordinances during the colonial era, but during military regimes, the education laws were released as Decrees if made by the Federal democratic civil rule, parliaments enact laws in the form of Acts. It is important for all concerned with the management of the education system to be conversant with education laws and how these govern our activities and programmes. Education law is one aspect of the vastly complex system of social control and it may be defined as those areas of jurisprudence which focus on educational activities the operation of public and private elementary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

However, Nakpodia (2014) in a “Latin maxim” opined that “ignorantia juris est lala culpa” meaning ignorance of the law is not an excuse, is guile apt. Many teachers are not aware of the right, duties, obligations and responsibilities under the law and more especially actions on students. Also, they

do not know and appreciate the general principles and provisions of law and regulation as they apply in handling issues of order and students discipline in school. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria forms the basis law of the country, since all the education laws of various state and the federal education laws are made in accordance with the provisions and the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, this article/paper on enforcement of educational law will remain virtually incomplete without discussing the fundamental right of students under the right of fair lawing [See 1999 constitution of federal republic of Nigeria states - section 36(1)].

Akukeide (2014) said that educational law in the area of law that relates to school teachers and the right of Nigeria to a public education as well as standards for those students who attend private schools. The Nigeria educational law mandated every child be given the opportunity to education because each state in the federation has its own school system and as a result, there are very different educational law among the various states with regard to management of school teachers and funding of public education. The Federal Ministry of Education formulated an educational law that all Nigeria children should be given equal education opportunities Act of 1974 provides that no State can deny an equal opportunity to education of any individual on the bases of race, color, sex, or nationality origin.

Similarly, for children with disabilities, or the individuals with disabilities the Education Act establishes a process for evaluating students' needs and providing for an education program tailored to that individual. No wonder Peretomode (2004) remarked: that "it is necessary that education officials and teachers constantly examine their actions and in actions in the light of these fundamental right so they do not infringe on or violate them". Amirize (2014) conditioned that the growing complexity of the Nigeria society, couple with the increasing cases of litigations involving secondary schools and their students demand that students disciplinary cases should be handled with much care since the fundamental right of both the school management and students is now a global challenge. Thus, the law prevents a state of anarchy and provides the enabling environment for the stakeholder in the education industry to thrive. The absence of these laws would mean anarchy, a state of lawlessness issues because the level of indiscipline amongst these stakeholders would be high. Moreover, where there are no laws in schools, teachers and students may not keep to their legal obligations.

Oyebode (2015) suggested that most secondary schools in Ekiti State lack the professional management staff that will help in enforcing the appropriate educational law in are various secondary schools in the state because fund are not always provided for the supervisors, principals and other staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) for the implementation of educational law in most of the secondary schools in the state. Secondly, the Ekiti State most primary schools board hardly release fund for training, seminar, conference, or other developmental programmes related to educational law in the State.

Thus, Asure (2014), stated that educational activities programmes and procedures can be adequately ordered and controlled by relevant laws and The awareness and appreciation of human rights by the ever increasing literate citizenry, the carnegies council as cited in Koko (2014), on policing studies in secondary education observation that "the courts is particular have been moving further and further into the classroom" will fast becoming a reality in most of our public secondary schools in Delta State, it was based on these ascension that the researchers were inspired to carry out the study on the enforcement of education laws of effective administration of public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

For the achievement of secondary school educational goal and objectives, it is important to maintain a conducive atmosphere in the system. Education law and the rule of law are important and indispensable tools necessary for the maintenance of such conducive environment and health organization school climate between the principals, teachers, students and other stakeholders in the affair of senior secondary schools in Delta State but the Delta State Senior Secondary Schools Board that are responsible for the formulation and implementation of the educational law failed to live up to expectation because the needed resources required for the enforcement of educational law, disciplinary law and fundamental right of the students is lacking in most of our secondary schools adequate funding are not released for these purpose and the required secondary school administrators needed for the enforcement of this educational law do not have the necessary skills to function and the State Schools Board refused to address the problem undermining the importance in improving good organizational climate for both the school management, teachers, students and other stakeholders in the affair of the management of secondary school system . But, in recent development in the society in which individuals and other stakeholders seem to become more aware of what they consider as their fundamental human right and privileges in igniting a misunderstanding between the students, teachers and secondary schools management because all schools be it private or public are established by an Edit or Act which most have rules and regulations guiding the day to day smooth running of the schools in according to the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria and the rule of law. Hence, emphasis of this paper is on principals' enforcement of education law as key to effective secondary school administration in Delta State.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study:

- i. To examine various challenges facing the enforcement of Education Law for effective administration in Secondary Schools in Delta State.
- ii. To ascertain the strategies put in place by the state school board for the enforcement of Education Law for effective administration in Secondary Schools in Delta State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significant mean difference between male and female principals perception on the challenges of enforcement of education law for effective administration in Secondary Schools in Delta State.
- ii. There is no significant mean difference between male and female principals' perception on strategies for enforcing education law for effective administration in Secondary Schools in Delta State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the investigation. The population of 475 which consists of 295 male and 180 female secondary school principals in Delta State. The sample random sampling was employed to select the size of 95 principals (40 males and 55 females) representing 20% of the total population in Secondary Schools in Delta State. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire titled: Principals' Enforcement of Education Law for Effective Administration Questionnaire (PEELEA). Generated data were analyzed using the t-tested statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant mean difference between male and female principals perception on the challenges of enforcement of education law for effective administration in Secondary Schools in Delta State. Table 1 illustrates the result

Table 1: t-test analysis on mean difference between male and female principals' perception on the challenges of education law enforcement

Items	N	Mean	SD	df	Level of sig	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Male	40	12.49	4.87					
Female	55	12.57	4.89	93	0.05	1.57	1.96	Accepted

The results in Table 1 revealed that the t-calculated value was 1.57, while the t-critical value was 1.96 at degree of freedom 93 of 0.05 level of significance. This implies that both male and female principals in public secondary schools in Delta State accepted that various challenges are hampering the smooth enforcement of education law in secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant mean difference between male and female principals' perception on strategies for enforcing education law for effective administration in Secondary Schools in Delta State. Table 2 illustrates the result

Table 2: t-test analysis on mean difference between male and female principals' perception on the strategies of education law enforcement

Items	N	Mean	SD	df	Level of sig	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Male	40	8.06	2.87					
Female	55	9.57	2.93	93	0.05	1.17	1.96	Accepted

The results in Table 2 revealed that the t-calculated value was 1.17, while the t-critical value was 1.96 at degree of freedom 93 of 0.05 level of significance. This implies that both male and female principals in public secondary schools in Delta State accepted that working strategies are not put in place to enhance the enforcement of education law in secondary schools.

Discussion

Findings from hypothesis one revealed that there are several challenges facing the enforcement of education law in the State secondary schools. This finding aligned with the study by Adudedede (2014), who noted that various challenges like gross misconduct, truancy, fraudulent registration, sexual harassment, amongst others are some of the challenges inherent in secondary schools; which if not properly handled has legal implications in the law court. Also, Afolabi (2014)'s study is in agreement with the finding of this study; as he noted that both head teachers (62.5%) and class teachers (32.5%) had low awareness of education laws regulating schools administration, thus making them prone to litigation.

Findings from hypothesis two revealed that adequate strategies are not put in place by the Delta State government for the enforcement of educational laws in most public senior secondary

schools in the State. The study of Peretomode (2014) aligned with the present study where he revealed that, most schools in Delta State cannot put into operation its education laws as a result of insufficient strategies put in place for its enforcement in most of the secondary schools in the state.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings reached, the paper concluded that various challenges stand as a stumbling block for principals' enforcement of education laws for effective administration in secondary schools in Delta State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were preferred:

- i. The Delta State Ministry of Education should conduct seminars and workshops for all the stakeholders on the enforcement of education laws as it will adequately quip them in the discharge of their duties in the school setting
- ii. A tranquil environment should be made available by the state Ministry of Education in secondary school for efficient enforcement of educational laws that will propel effective administration

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