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Awareness of Education Law for Effective Administration of Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study examined awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary school in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was carried out in Rivers State. Two research questions guided the study. The study employed the descriptive research survey design. The population of the study is 311 Principals in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample of 208 respondents (112 urban principals and 96 rural principals) were selected for the study using proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire tagged "Awareness of Education Law for Effective Administration of Secondary School Questionnaire" (AELEASSQ) which was designed in a four-point rating scale arrangement of 1 – 4. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Management and Educational Foundations respectively. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was established using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) for research question 1 while Frequency count (F) and Percentage (%) were used to analyzed research question 2. For research question 1, mean value less than 2.50 was considered as "Disagree (D)" while item with mean value equal 2.50 and above are considered as "Agree (A)". The study found that available strategies enhances the awareness of education law in secondary school. The study also found that, available items are the challenges facing the awareness of education law in secondary school. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended amongst others that, full provision of the constitution of the land and adequate financial encouragement should be provided for by the government. Good planning and proper supervision of manpower should always be carried out within and outside the school.

Keywords: Education Law, Effectiveness, Administration, School plants, Secondary school.

Introduction

Policy makers and school administrators are the major focus in the achievement of secondary school objective both in private and public educational institutions. However, the extent to which achievements are conceived also calls for general attention since it deals with remodeling and the production of secondary school products that will be beneficial to the society.

The establishment of secondary schools and every other educational institution are usually anchored on the laws and policies of the host country and state. In the same vein, Oyaka (2016) stated that, schools whether public or private, formal and informal are all educational institutions established to render public services and can sue or be sued either by private or cooperate bodies. Educational institutions are organizations established in a given society in order to help integrate positive values amongst members of the society. Therefore, for a smooth running of school activities and achievement of education objectives, there is need for full awareness of the laws guiding the operations of school. This is because, many parents are more informed and enlighten about the law and therefore eager to know what happens to their child in school.

Igwe (2014) stated that, every school administrator needs to be aware of the law for proper direction and to be on track. Nwadike and Godwins (2018) stated that ignoramus of a fact or law is never an excuse within the context of the law. More so, nowadays most school administrators, school managers and policy makers lack the knowledge of education law and its practicability in their various schools. The doctrine of in-loco parentis empowers both the teacher and the school managers to act as parents and be parents to the students whiles in school. As a parent therefore, there is need to be aware of do's and don'ts within the educational circle for the enablement and achievement of effective secondary school administration. Again, government being the head, owner and controller of educational institution has a vital role to play in making the school administrators and school managers be fully aware of education law and the implications that follows. The National policy on education NPE (2004) has stated objectives that relates the awareness and guidelines on education law that would help boost educational activities in Nigeria. Elemchi (2017) opined that, that effectiveness of secondary education is solely dependent on the versatile knowledge of the school administrators. In knowing, know it all and in doing, do it all. This means that, teachers as pioneers of secondary education in Nigeria are expected to know more in order to give out more for the effectiveness of the educational goal.

Finally, many teachers and administrators of secondary school are purely not aware of the mechanism of the functionality of the laws guiding secondary school's system in Rivers State Nigeria, hence commencement of this study is to ascertain the level of awareness and practicability of education law for effective administration of secondary school in Rivers State Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

The review will be captured under the following sub headings: Education law, Nigerian judicial system, Characteristics of education law, Importance of education law, Sources education law, Effective administration of secondary school.

Education Law

Every county, every state, every organization and every living thing has a law that is guiding them so as to enable the players stick to the modus-operandi and also achieve expected goals of the said organization. However, educational institution has their Own structured laws which in outwards are referred to as education law. Igwe (2015), defined Education Law as range of rules and regulations guiding the operation, workability and administration of schools. In the same vein Saha (2018) defined Education Law as laws that are been passed by the legislative organ of a country which are specifically for the operation, organization, administration and planning of educational system in a given country. Nwadike and Godwins (2018) defined education law as the legal disciplinary action covering all issues pertaining to school from primary school through tertiary institution. Furthermore, Dike (2020) opined that education laws are those laws, decrees and regulations which empowers educational administrators and school managers to act and carryout actions that are within the law on both teachers and students respectively as a disciplinary measure in curtailing some negative vibes around the school.

Laws of educational institution are synonymous to compass device which also act as a guide in ensuring that good directions are gotten in piloting the affairs of certain institutions within their jurisdiction. Education laws are the jurisprudence which is mainly being practiced only at the educational institution whether private or public for onward achievement of goals and objectives. In the contemporary world mainly in this part of the country, the awareness of education law amongst school's administrators is quite very discouraging and unacceptable. Ojoh (2019) argued that, the unawareness of teachers and administrators of education laws pose a great danger on the students in knowing the rudiments of the law while in school. Therefore, the need for education law to be made grown course for the betterment of the students is very necessary. The essence of education law in secondary schools is to help state clarifies the duties, responsibilities, rights, obligations, boundaries and penalties to the teachers and administrators as well as same to the students.

Nigerian Judicial System

Laws are being practiced, displayed and argued in the law court and the Nigerian judicial system are being structured mainly in two wings that is, the federal and the state judiciary. The arrangement of the judiciary is usually done in an ascending order, whereby the lower court is stationed at the foundation, the middle court at the middle and the Supreme Court at the top.

The lower court takes evidence(s), witness(es) and delivers judgement, the appeal court sits to review the judgement of the lower court and correct judicial errors where necessary while the Supreme Court sit also to review the decision of the appellate court which usually, their decisions are based on votes among their lordships. Ojoh (2019) agreed that both the appeal court and the supreme court are appellate courts.

The supreme court of Nigeria can also be seen as a policy court because every of their rulings are automatically laws of the land. The types of courts as stated in the Nigerian 1999 constitution as amended are as follows:

- 1) The Supreme Court
- 2) The Appeal Court
- 3) The Federal High Court
- 4) The High Court of FCT Abuja
- 5) The National Industrial Court
- 6) The High Court of a State
- 7) The Sharia Court of Appeal of FCT Abuja
- 8) The Sharia court of Appeal of a State
- 9) The Customary Court of Appeal of FCT Abuja
- 10) The Customary Court of Appeal of a State.
- 11) The Magistrate Court

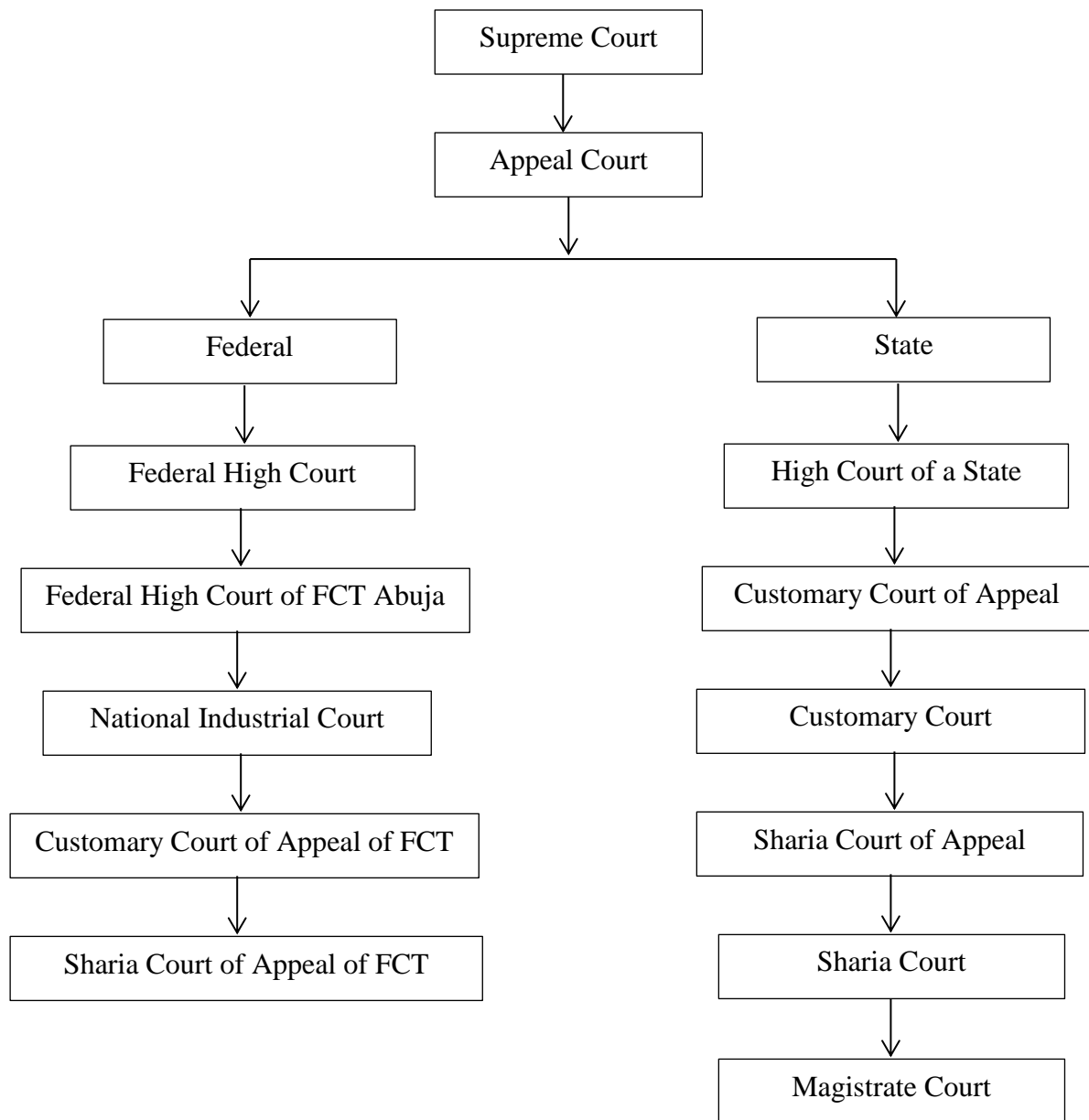


Fig 1: Diagram of the Nigerian Judiciary System
Source: Researchers construct, 2024

Characteristics of Education Law

Dike (2020), identified the following as the key components of education law at the educational institutions and they include, clarity of purpose, simple and short, acceptability and visibility.

- Clarity of purpose: educational laws must be clear and direct to the end users for proper and prompt adherence and compliance.
- Simple and short: educational laws are to be made simple and short without any form of ambiguity, confusion or contradiction.
- Acceptability: the laws of educational institutions must be acceptable by the public or should be an affordable law for targeted people.
- Visibility: Education law is meant to be visible either written or unwritten, but must be visible in the heart of the end users.

Importance of Education Law

Education Law enables both the teachers and administrators to understand their rights, do's and don'ts, limitation and the corresponding implications of the law. Elemchi (2017) pointed out this few points as importance of education law and they include: self-education, good knowledge of the law, eradication of illiteracy and dispute settlement.

- Self-education: it helps school administrators to take good, positive and orderly decisions without the help of a legal luminary.
- Good knowledge of legal side of education, that is knowing when to sue and be sued.
- Inculcate in the end users the spirit of law and the mind of being a full legal representative.
- Helps to give the thought of settling issues or dispute legally between teachers – students and school – community.
- Helps to eradicate the illiteracy of unawareness of education laws amongst administrators and make them legally literate in order to discharge their duties accordingly.

Sources of Education Law

Nwadike and Godwins (2018) outlined some sources of education laws which include, customary law, constitution, decree and statutory laws.

- Customary law: basically, the laws and cultures of the people constitutes education law because, the more one is obeying the laws of the land, the more knowledge he acquires.
- Constitution of the country: constitution is laid down rules and regulation of a country on how her citizens should behave which could be written or unwritten as the case maybe.

- Decree: the military in their regime make laws for educational institutions to obey and work with.
- Statutory laws, Common sense, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Criminal Court, United Nation.

As a means of controlling unacceptable conduct in the educational system, discipline plays a prominent role in that area hence, Saha (2018) identified suspension of salary, change of classroom, half payment of salary and deduction of salary as some disciplinary actions that can be taken against teachers and students. However, below are some other ways of disciplining some people within the educational sector.

(i) Waring, (ii) Quarry, (iii) Suspension, (iv) Rustication, (v) Termination, (vi) Dismissal, (vii) Compulsory retirement, (viii) Demotion.

Who can sue and be sued:

- a. Students
- b. Teachers
- c. Parents
- d. School
- e. Cooperate body
- f. Government.

Effective Administration of Secondary School

The administration of secondary school for effective result requires the cooperation of all stakeholders within the educational institution. Effectiveness entails proper management of educational resources both human and physical facilities. The quality of manpower displayed also determines the level of efficiency and output to be recorded. Ododo (2021), stated that, stakeholders in educational industry are the major contributory factors towards effective administration of secondary school. The smooth running of secondary school is highly dependent on the level of manpower, physical facilities and policy makers available for maximum discharge of duties. Dike (2020) opined that, proper administration of secondary school can only be achieved maximally with the help of the government. Therefore, the influence of government on the administration of secondary school helps in achieving the goals and objectives of secondary education smoothly.

Statement of the Problem

Administrators of secondary school in Nigeria is so sensitive that it requires the highest level of professionalism amongst the administrators. However, the unawareness of education law and its challenges is a major problem within the educational sector which Nwadike and Godwins (2018) affirmed that ignorance of laws that governs schools slows down the speed for efficiency and effectiveness of school objectives. The question is “will the awareness of education law among school administrators enhance effective secondary school administration”? In trying to answer this question, this study seeks to examine the awareness of education law for an effective administration of secondary school in Rivers State, in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Objectively, the study sought to achieve the following:

1. Identify the strategies for promoting awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Find out the challenges facing awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the strategies for promoting awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges facing awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive research survey design. The study was conducted in Rivers State. The population of the study is 311 principals in public senior secondary school in Rivers State. A sample of 208 principals (112 urban and 96 rural) were selected for this study using proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire tagged “Awareness of Education Law for Effective Administration of Secondary School Questionnaire” (AELEASSQ) which was designed in a patterned modified four-point rating scale agreement of 1-4. The instrument was validated by expert in educational management and education foundation respectively. A reliability

coefficient of 0.82 for both was established using Cronbach Alpha. The instrument that was administered to the respondents was retrieved completely and used for the study. Data collected were analyzed using Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) for research question 1 while Frequency count (F) and Percentage (%) were used to analyze research question 2. For research question 1 mean value less than 2.50 was considered as “Disagree (D)” while items with mean value equal to 2.50 and above are considered as “Agree (A)”.

Results

The results of the study were presented in Table 1 – 2 below.

Research Question 1: What are the strategies for improving awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Respondents’ Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) scores on the strategies for improving awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Strategies for Improving Awareness of Education Law	Urban Principals (112)			Rural Principals (96)			X+X/2
		\bar{X}	SD	Rmk	\bar{X}	SD	Rmk	
1	Provision of constitution of the country to school administrators	3.60	0.77	A	3.43	0.68	A	3.51
2	Regular conduct of school administration law seminars and workshops for administrators	3.16	0.75	A	3.0	0.71	A	3.30
3	Financial encouragement	3.50	0.77	A	3.0	0.80	A	3.25
4	Industrial training and attachment in a law firm for more knowledge of the law	3.0	0.81	A	2.61	1.01	A	2.80
5	Regular implementation of education law to the defaulters	3.0	0.81	A	2.70	0.80	A	2.90
6	Provision of relevant instructional materials and educational resources	2.90	1.01	A	2.60	0.89	A	2.80
7	Recruitment of competent hand with law background	3.30	0.76	A	2.70	0.88	A	3.0
8	Enactment of good, simple and accessible laws and policies by the government	3.60	0.84	A	2.70	0.71	A	3.15
Aggregate Mean		0.71			0.81			3.10

Source: Researchers’ field work 2024

Table 1 shows respondents' responses on the strategies for awareness of education laws for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Result from Table 1 indicates that all the items listed from 1-8 are strategies for awareness of education law in secondary school in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result also shows an aggregate average Mean of 3.10 with standard deviation of 0.71 and 0.81 respectively for urban and rural principal. The mean values were higher than the criterion mean of 2.50 as a bench mark for the decision taking. Standard deviation values less than 1.0 (< 1.0) indicates that the respondents were divers in their response while standard deviation value greater than 1.0 (> 1.0) show that respondents responded in uniformity.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges facing awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary school in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents' Frequency count (F) and Percentage (%) scores on the challenges facing awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary school in River State, Nigeria

S/N	Challenges facing awareness of education law	Urban Principals (n=112) Freq	%	Rural Principals (n=96) Freq	%
9	Lack of fund	112	100.00	96	100.00
10	Lack of manpower	112	100.00	96	100.00
11	Government negligence	112	100.00	96	100.00
12	Abuse of power by school administrators	112	100.00	96	100.00
13	Cultural Differences	112	100.00	96	100.00
14	Lack of interest to master education law by school administrators	112	100.00	96	100.00
15	Poor planning	112	100.00	96	100.00
16	Poor supervision	112	100.00	96	100.00

Source: Researchers' field result 2024.

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage responses of urban and rural secondary schools principals on the challenges facing awareness of education law in Rivers State. The result indicates that the respondents all agreed that the listed items are the real challenges facing awareness of education law in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Result from Table 1 revealed that items 1-8 are the strategies for awareness of education law in secondary schools in Rivers State. Strategies such as provision of constitution, workshops and seminars, financial encouragement amongst others are some of the strategies for awareness of education laws in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the findings of Ogbugi (2020) who found that strategies such as grass root campaign and enlightenment of education law, financial assistance, subsidizing law courses amongst others are some of the strategies for improving awareness of education law.

Result from Table 2 showed the challenges facing awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Result from Table 2 shows that, the challenges facing awareness of education law in Rivers State include lack of fund, lack of manpower, poor planning, poor supervision amongst others. The funding is in agreement with Uzor (2018) who found that poor funding and financing of education hinders the progress of secondary school administration.

Conclusion

The study concluded that awareness of education law for effective administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria is of great paramount for both school administrators and students. The study found that the identified strategies for the awareness of education law in secondary school enhances proper administration of secondary education. Also, the study found that the challenges facing awareness of education law in secondary school is a major setback in the administration of secondary school in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that:

1. The strategies listed should be encouraged and adhered to so as to boost the morale's of secondary school principals and administrators both in awareness and in practice of education laws in school.
2. Proper supervision, good and comprehensive planning and more funding and financing by the government should be provided for so as to ameliorate the challenges facing awareness of education laws and the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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