



ENFORCEMENT OF LAW, ETHICS AND VALUES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS SUSTAINABILITY IN OGOJA EDUCATION ZONE OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA



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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine enforcement of law, ethics and values in the administration of secondary schools in Ogoja education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. In order to effectively carry out this study, two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population consist of all the teachers in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The simple random sampling technique was employed to select the size of 524 teachers(200 males and 324 females) representing 90% of the total population in Secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire titled: ' Enforcement of law, ethics and values for effective administration of secondary schools sustainability questionnaire (ELEVEASSSQ). Generated data were analyzed using the t-tested statistical tool at .05 level of significance. Findings revealed that numerous obstacles hamper the enforcement of education law, ethics and values for effective administration of Secondary schools in the zone. The paper concluded that adequate attention has not been given to the enforcement of education law. Ethics and values in secondary schools in the zone. The paper recommended amongst others that the Cross River State Ministry of Education should conduct seminars and workshops for all the stakeholders on the enforcement of education law, ethics and values as it will adequately equip them in the discharge of their duties in the school setting.

Keywords: Enforcement, Law, Ethics Values, Administration, , Sustainability, Secondary school.

Introduction

The school is a social organization; it has the need to interact with other people. But to do this, certain laws, ethics and values must be given, because life in the social system usually demands a process of give and take. There is no society that does not have laws, ethics, values and some codes of conduct guiding its members. They are made to bind on members of the society.

These laws, ethics and values are necessary because they regulate and direct the conduct and behaviour of members of the society. The school setting needs to operate with strict laws, ethics and values if anarchy must be averted in this micro society. At the secondary school level of formal education in Nigeria, the principal members of the school in a society are adolescent students between the ages of 11+ and 18+, as well as adult teachers. The teachers are responsible for the development of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of the students. In doing this, the teachers are expected to behave and conduct themselves according to some laid down laws and values which constitute the professional ethics or code of conducts.

Law refers to all the rules established by authority or custom for regulating the behaviour of members of a community (e.g a school community) or a country. It can also be described as rules of conduct made by a controlling body (usually a government) which are enforceable. The American college dictionary defines law as (the principles and regulations emanating from the government and applicable to a people whether in a form of legislation or of custom and policies recognized and enforced by the judicial decision. Therefore, education law refers to the rules and regulations enacted by government and enforceable through judicial processes to guide educational practices and development.

. School whether privately or publicly are established by law and certain prescribed functions of legal consideration they both become public institutions in the sense that they are established to serve the public and can be sued or sue since there is a law establishing them as cooperate organizations with the aim of carrying out specific duties in line with the rules and regulations as enshrined in the various states and Federal Government Education Laws, codes, ordinances, Decrees and Edicts; (Oloko, 2015). Education law is the whole system of rules made by authority and recognized by the courts, which must be obeyed by all citizens of the country or place, including the operators and beneficiaries of the education enterprise, for proper regulation and orderly development of education (Olagboye; 2004).

The word ethics comes from the Greek root, *ethos*, meaning character, guiding beliefs, standards, or ideals that pervade a group, a community, a people Today, ethics is the studies of moral behaviour, the behaviour of how standards of moral conduct among individuals are established and expressed behaviourally.

Terms such as business ethics, corporate ethics, medical ethics, and legal ethics are used to indicate the particular area of application. But to have meaning, ethics involved in each area must still refer to the value-oriented decisions and behaviour of individuals. Ethics are principles that guide the operation of a professional body. Codes of ethics are moral principles by which human actions are judged. Ethics has to do with the problems of human conducts and behaviour. Ethics is also concerned with the norms of the organization. Osaat (2002) equates ethics with moral philosophy and explains it as “the principles guiding actions”. It has to do with the problems of morality, that is good or bad, justice, fairplay, or altruism and good neighborliness. Durosaro (2002) defines ethics as “a branch of philosophy that deals with the theory of values”

According to Cooks (1983) who explains values as “something that is usual and expected...and average standard or level”. He goes further to explain values as “standards of behaviour that are accepted in a particular society. Okoh (2003) sees values as “basic norms”. Therefore, school values are basic and standard behaviour expected to be exhibited and norms held by both students and staff (mostly teachers) in the school be it primary, secondary or tertiary. 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 and teachers act *In loco parentis* (as parents) to guide them so that their youthful exuberance does not mislead them. He also revealed that most teachers and administrators have never read the Nigeria constitution nor even the secondary school ethnical law that guided their operational and administrative day to day functioning. Education laws 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 laws, ethics and values. Yolo (2014), lamented that law, ethics and values are of paramount importance in the operations of the school system in Nigeria and beyond. Thus, teachers 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) (2004) 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 enforced and 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 law, ethics and values of the land, criminal or civil as the case may be, they are also expected to comply with law, ethics values designed exclusively to regulate what can be done or not to be done in the process of teaching, learning and management. The law, ethics and values 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. It is important for all concerned with the management of the education system to be conversant with law, ethics and values, especially 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 quite 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, ethics and values 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 study on enforcement of law, ethics and values will remain virtually incomplete without discussing the fundamental right of students under the right of fair hearing (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 laws 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 programmes tailored to that individual. No wonder Peretomode (2004) remarked: that “it is necessary that education officials and teachers constantly examine their actions and inactions in the light of these fundamental right so that 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, ethics and values prevent a state of anarchy and provides the enabling environment for the stakeholder in the education industry to thrive. The absence of these law, ethics and values would mean anarchy, a state of lawlessness issues because the level of indiscipline amongst these stakeholders would be high. Moreover, where there are no law, ethics and values 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 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, in Ekiti State most of the school boards hardly release fund for training, seminar, conference, or other developmental programmes related to educational law, ethics and values in the State.

For the achievement of secondary school educational goal and objectives, it is important to maintain a conducive atmosphere in the system. Law, ethics and values and the rule of law are important and indispensable tools necessary for the maintenance of such conducive environment and health organization and climate between the principals, teachers, students and other stakeholders in the affairs of Secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State but the State Secondary Schools' Board that is 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 are lacking in most of our Secondary schools, adequate funding is 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 affairs 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 Edict or Act which most have rules and regulations guiding the day to day smooth running of the schools in accordance to the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria and the rule of law. Hence, emphasis of this paper is on enforcement of law, ethics and values as key to effective secondary school administration in Ogoja Education Zone.

Teachers' Empowerment in the enforcement of law, ethics and values

Teacher empowerment in this context entails the acquisition of the prerequisite legal right and knowledge in order not to fall short of the law in enforcing discipline in the school system. As such, it is imperative that teachers are empowered to be able to enforce discipline when responsibility is being delegated to them in an acting capacity from the administrators. According to Bogler and Nir (2012), empowerment suggests real changes in one's professional expertise, rising autonomy, and involvement in decision making processes, especially in the area of school discipline when an assignment is delegated to the teacher in the school system. Teachers are expected to carry out assigned duties in the place of the school head and parents, thus, the need for them to be adequately abreast of the education law in order not to fall short in its execution. Similarly, Bolin (1989) emphasizes that empowerment is participating in decisions about school objectives and displaying these decisions in the actual educational field. Inference here is that, empowerment enables a teacher to be grounded on education law before the implementation process in the school. kimwarey, Chirure and Omondi (2014) assert that an empowered individual (teacher) has the skills and knowledge to act or improve in a positive way within the ambit of the law. Through teacher empowerment, teachers develop their own competence

and self-discovery of their potential and limitations that help to keep them in line. Also, it is pertinent to state here that teacher empowerment in the school setting has correlations with motivation and provides teachers with knowledge about themselves, their colleagues and the school decision making process with a bid to foster and nurture students' achievement collaboratively (Dee, Henkin & Duemer, 2002). In the view of Bogler and Somech (2004), there is a correlation between teacher empowerment and student success. This implies that when teachers are adequately empowered to instill discipline, students under their watch are easily put in line to achieve academic success unlike those with teachers that are less knowledgeable in education law and school discipline.

Additionally, Hatcher (2005) proposed that teacher empowerment is the opportunity to exercise teacher leadership by creating a non-hierarchical network of collaborative learning, where a teacher is taught on how to be the head of the school or an establishment, where the desire to maintain and sustain standard is paramount. Irwin (1991) indicates that empowered educators (teachers) believe in themselves and their capabilities, understand the system, dedicate time and energy to their work and respect others which helps in the actualization of educational objectives. Irwin posits further that, teacher empowerment is proved to be related to many different administrative strategies aimed at facilitating administration, making decisions, control and leadership. In the view of Short and Greer (1997), decision making should be exercised more carefully and tactfully in such a way that teachers' participation areas should be well defined in order for them not to deviate as a result of the sway of power and authority; hence, Short and Greer noted that providing teachers' full-participation in the enforcement of school discipline tends to impact their quality in terms of school activities for the actualization of educational goals. By doing so, their voice is heard in many areas related to their work thus, the enhancement of students and staff performance and actualization of organizational objectives.

Purpose of the study

The following purpose guided the study:

1. To determine various obstacles facing the enforcement of law for effective administration of secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.
- ii) To ascertain the techniques adopted by the State School Board for the enforcement of ethics and values for effective administration of Secondary schools in Ogoja education zone of Cross River State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at .05 level of significance.

7. There is no significant mean difference between male and female teachers' perception of obstacles on enforcement of law for effective administration of Secondary Schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.
8. There is no significant mean difference between male and female teachers' perception of techniques on enforcement of ethics and values for effective administration of Secondary Schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of 735 which consists of 280 male and 455 female secondary school teachers in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The simple random sampling was employed to select the size of 200 males and 324 females) representing 90% of the total population in Secondary Schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire titled: 'Enforcement of law, ethics and values for Effective administration of secondary schools sustainability Questionnaire (ELEV EASSSQ). Generated data were analyzed using the t- test statistical tool at .05 level of significance.

Data Presentation

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant mean difference between male and female teachers' perception of the obstacles on enforcement of education law for effective administration of Secondary Schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. Table 1 illustrates the result.

Table 1: T-test analysis on mean difference between male and female teachers' perception of the obstacles on enforcement of education law

Items	N	Mean	SD	Df	Level of sig	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Male	200	2.57	.25	522	.05	1.36	1.96	Accepted
Female	324	2.50	.26					

The results in Table 1 revealed that the t-calculated value was 1.36, while the t-critical value was 1.96 at degree of freedom 522 of .05 level of significance. This implies that both male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone accepted that various obstacles are hampering the smooth implementation of education law in secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant mean difference between male and female teachers' perception of techniques on enforcement of ethics and values for effective administration of Secondary Schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. Table 2 illustrates the result.

Table 2: T-test analysis on mean difference between male and female teachers' perception of the techniques on the enforcement of ethics and values.

Items	N	Mean	SD	Df	Level of sig	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Male	200	2.48	.45	522	.05	1.35	1.96	Accepted
Female	324	2.57	.25					

The results in Table 2 revealed that the t-calculated value was 1.35, while the t-critical value was 1.96 at degree of freedom 522 of .05 level of significance. This implies that both male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State accepted that working techniques are not put in place to enhance the enforcement of ethics and values in secondary schools.

Discussion

Findings from hypothesis one revealed that there are several obstacles facing the enforcement of education law in Ogoja Education Zone. This finding aligned with the study by Adudede (2014), who noted that various obstacles like gross misconduct, truancy, fraudulent registration, sexual harassment, amongst others are some of the obstacles inherent in secondary schools; which if not properly handled has legal implications in the law court. Also, Afolabi's (2014) 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 management, thus making them prone to litigation.

Findings from hypothesis two revealed that adequate techniques are not put in place by the Ogoja Education Zone in particular and Cross River State Government in general for the enforcement of ethics and values in most public secondary schools in the state. The study of Peretomode (2014) aligned with the present study where he revealed that, most schools in Ogoja Education Zone cannot put into operation its ethics and values as a result of inadequate techniques put in place for its enforcement in most of the secondary schools in the Zone.



Conclusion

Arising from the findings reached, the study concluded that various obstacles and insufficient techniques stand as a stumbling block for 'effective enforcement and administration of law, ethics and values for Secondary schools sustainability in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- The state ministry of education should conduct seminars and workshops for all the stakeholders on the enforcement of education laws as it will adequately equip them in the discharge of their duties in the school setting.
- A tranquil environment should be made available by the State Ministry of Education in Secondary schools for efficient enforcement of law, ethics and values that will propel effective administration.

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