

KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATION LAWS AND THE MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADS IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

Law is an integral part of our society affecting all human activities to ensure order, peace and stability. With increased knowledge due to globalization, people are aware of their rights and obligations and can exercise such rights in events of infringements. This work is to determine the level of principal's awareness, application and effect of education laws in school management. Thus, two-Likert-type of questionnaire items were used and the data obtained were analysed using Regression Analysis. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a test-retest method with reliability coefficient of .71 and .68 obtained for principals and teachers respectively. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between education laws and administrative effectiveness. It was, thus, recommended that for effectiveness, principals should attend workshops, seminars and convention programmes dealing with school management and legal issues to enable them have legal knowledge in dealing with people to avoid litigations.

Introduction and Background of the Study

Law is the set of acceptable rules of conduct meant to govern or regulate a people. According to Blackstone, an English jurist, law is a rule of civil conduct prescribed by the supreme power in a state, commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong. Every organization or society has its own laws and members are expected to observe these laws.

The leader's knowledge of the law and his disposition to apply the knowledge in executing his functions holds the key to the proper attainment of the purpose, which the organization was meant to project. In the school system, the regulatory measures put in place are aimed at perfecting the institutional framework and management rubrics of the service. The efficiency of the service is assured by the effective implementation of the regulatory measures.

In Nigeria, education has been looked upon as a pragmatic instrument for national development, unity and stability.

The wealth of any nation is boldly expressed in its educational system. Thus, the government allocates a colossal amount of money to education annually.

In school management, the principal is the one who is sufficiently close to the educational operation, to engage in and maintain the kinds of relations that are necessary to make the system operative.

According to Ibanga (1979), effective management of educational system requires competent administrators. Thus, the principals must have the legal knowledge and skills necessary to manage the people and resources to attain a desired outcome. They are held accountable for their responsibilities on issues relating to both laws and education.

According to Peretomode (2001), most teachers in our school system have never read the Nigerian constitution nor even the laws, rules and regulations governing the administration of the school system. Many are not aware of the rights, duties obligations and responsibilities under the law. Whereas, there is increased knowledge due to globalization and parents as well as the students nowadays are becoming increasingly aware of their rights and are ready to exercise such rights in the events of infringement. On the use of education laws and principal's effectiveness, Umoh (2001) in his study on the principal's use of education laws in school administration stated that the school being a complex, social and dynamic system requires some form of school laws which are relatively consistent for effective management and quality of work.

Ibanga (1979) on the duties performance evaluation of school principalship in Cross River State reveals that the quality of work and learning in secondary school system depend to a large extent on the influence of education/school laws or the use of such laws and policies in the management of schools.

Rebore (1985) asserted that school today requires a principal who in addition to understanding the instructional process should also have a solid foundation in managing techniques, in-depth knowledge of educational rules, policies and effective management. It is observed that in recent times many school principals are more vulnerable to judicial review of their decisions and actions. Some have been relieved of their posts on grounds of ignorance of law and incompetence in the implementation of educational policies. These necessitate the undertaking of this study.

Significance of the Study

A study of this nature is of immense importance for the survival of our educational system. The Ministry of Education, Education Boards and other agencies may be guided by the findings of this study in identifying the teachers and principals' weak areas with the view to organizing seminars and workshops to remedy the situation.

This study will act as a guide to the school principals who will use this medium to investigate on their legal rights and liabilities.

To the prospective principals in the school, the study would assist them to make early preparations by acquainting themselves with knowledge of education laws so that they would be able to manage effectively.

The study would contribute to the wealth of knowledge in educational management and a source of relevant literature for future research.

Research Question

The research question formulated to guide this investigation is: 1. Does the principal's knowledge of education laws affect his/her administrative effectiveness in secondary schools?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis formulated and tested was:

1. There is no significant relationship between the principal's knowledge of education law and his/her administrative effectiveness.

Methodology

Population: The population of the study comprised 6,290 teachers and 237 principals present in 237 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board.

Sample

A total of 420 participants constituted the actual sample size of the study. A stratified random sampling technique was employed in selecting schools for the study. The stratification was based on the three senatorial districts present in the State. From each districts, 40 principals and 100 teachers were selected making a total of 120 principals and 300 teachers respectively.

Instrumentation

Two questionnaires were constructed one for the principal and the other for the teachers. The questionnaire used demanded the respondents to indicate by ticking whether they agreed or disagreed to simple statements, and to show the degree of agreement or disagreement by responding under any of the following:

SA - Strongly Agree A - Agree D - Disagree SD - Strongly Disagree

The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a test-retest method and reliability co-efficient of .71 and .68 were obtained for principals and teachers respectively.

Data Analysis

Regression analysis was the statistical method used to analyze the data collected. hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance.

Results and Discussions

Hypothesis 1

In The Null Form

There is no significant relationship between the principal's knowledge of education laws and his administrative effectiveness. Regression analysis was used in testing this hypothesis. The summary is presented in Table (1)

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Relationship Between the Principal's Knowledge of Education Laws and His Administrative Effectiveness

Force of Variance				
Between group				
Total	7		80	84

Significant $P < .05$

The result of the analysis showed that the calculated F of 67.84 is higher than the observed F of 1.67 at .05 level of significance. Thus, the result of the analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge of education laws and the administrative effectiveness of the principal (See Table 1).

Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between the principal's knowledge of education laws, and his Administrative Effectiveness.

Effectiveness is generally determined by the extent to which an organization achieves its objectives. On education law and administrative effectiveness, a significant relationship was found to exist (see Table 1).

Since there is increased knowledge due to globalization, parents and students are becoming increasingly aware of their rights and their obligations and are ready to exercise such rights in events of infringements. It was also discovered that the principals are not left out knowledge-wise. The findings, therefore, agree with Umolis (2001) and Ibanga's (1979) findings who believe that effectiveness in school management depends to a large extent on the use and knowledge of laws and policies.

The finding is also in support of Rebore's (1955) assertion that the present day principal should have indepth knowledge of educational rules, policies and skills necessary for efficient and effective management.

To achieve administrative effectiveness, some principals formulate policies and school rules in line with existing education laws and communicate same to teachers, parents and students.

Conclusion

From the findings of the research, it was concluded that a significant relationship exists between the principal's knowledge of education laws and his effectiveness in the administration of secondary schools. Those principals that make use of education laws in the administration of their schools are more effective managers. They are able to administer without infringing on the rights of the students since they already knew what the rights are.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following was recommended. It is believed that ignorance of legislation and court decision is no excuse for initiating administrative procedure that are in conflict with such legislation. School administrators should attend workshops, seminars and convention programmes dealing with school management and legal issues.

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