

PRINCIPALS' IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF SCHOOL LAWS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL RECORDS IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated Principals' implementation of School Laws for the management of school records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Four research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. It adopted a descriptive survey design. The sample of 158 representing 60% of the entire population of 264 principals in the State was adopted for the study. The instrument for data collection was Principals' Implementation of School Laws for Records Management Questionnaires (PISLRMQ). The Correlation coefficients of the two tests were analyzed using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) which yielded the calculated(r) for the reliability of the instrument at 0.83. The data collated were scored and analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20.0 version and Excel Software.) The mean and standard deviation were used to provide answers to the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance. The study found among other things that there is a low level of principals' implementation of school laws on record management. The study concluded that the variables identified required appropriate implementation. It was however recommended among others, that the Rivers State Ministry of Education should organize seminars and workshops on legal strategies for record management . This will help to boost the moral of the educational stakeholders to remain professionally relevant.

Keywords: Implementation, Record management, School laws

One of the integral requirements for school records' management that is optionally mandatory and obligatory is for principals to implement the provisions of school laws. These records provide the school with the legal instruments for optimal achievement of the goals of the teaching and learning process (Anyalebechi, 2018). Kemkpa and Nduka in Omoha (2013) had described school records as any written or documented proof which indicates legitimate students on admission, transfer, facilities, social, academic events etc. They are referred to as encyclopedia of all functional activities and repertoire of useful historical

antecedent of the school Alabi, 2017). In addition Osakwe (2011) said that these records contain soft and hardware materials like books diskettes. Record management therefore is the art or process of securing, storing and safe keeping of record, containing the school laws, statutory and non-statutory documents for the continual existence of the school administration (Omoha, 2013).

It is oftentimes observed that one of these records like the attendance registers which are used to show students that are present in the school could be arbitrarily marked resulting in most cases where regular students may be punished for habitual absenteeism This display of injustice and unfair treatment could be contested in any court of law for abuse of rights (Kalagbor, 2017). In most cases a student could be marked present when in actual fact he was not in school for obvious reasons. For example Peretomode (2019) cited an incident at Mbaise in 1987 where two primary school pupils girls got drowned as they were attracted by a beautiful floating object on a deep pit of pool water after a heavy downpour. Throughout the three days they were been marked present. In another incident is a child who was knocked down and died on the spot was marked present in her school at Cameroun road Barracks primary school Aba in Abia State. The teacher claimed that the child was in school before sneaking out. These two incidents are enough to make principals and teachers to be aware of the legal consequences of abusing the statutory records as it can lead to legal action (Anyalebechi, 2019). Anero (2018) had noted with sadness that some principals have been interdicted for their show of ineffectiveness in keeping up-to-date, the financial records of their schools or make them available on demand. The view of Ibara (2010) is that records provide a veritable proof of accountability that help to provide information on the general conduct to predict the students' behavioral outcome.

The statutory records include admission, attendance register, corporal punishment, continuous assessment; testimonial and transfer certificate books, examination records etc. are mandatory or compulsory under the law. The non-statutory School records include duty roster, daily register, announcement book, health record books, school calendar are not mandatory but are vitally important in the daily administration of the school (Robert- Okah, 2014). This is why the principals are expected to implement the provisions of education law on the strategies like maintaining the originality, reliability of records. The school law requires that it is the professional obligation of the principals to properly identify the major constraints like dearth of facilities, deliberate alteration, and lackadaisical attitude of delegated staff on duty to keep these records for appropriate retrieval in order to access the average ability and behaviour of the students based on facts and figures without forging any information (Ololube, 2017).

It is sometime very difficult to access accurate statistics and record of any transaction as the few available once lack credibility due to distorted unverifiable and inevitable detail (FRN, 2013). Igwe (2014) also maintained that the increase in administrative inconveniences, legal entanglements, lack of accountability, and low quality of performance, poor task accomplishment and measurable outcomes are associated with lack of accessibility to usable school records. A school law on the management of statutory records is found in section 19

(iii) of the Rivers State Rights (Parent, Children, and Teachers Law) No 2, 2005 which states that a teacher shall maintain accurate attendance of the school child (Kalagbor, 2017) It is also observed that students overall performances are not properly documented due to missing score or vital information (Fayokun & Adedeji, 2012). Some of the identified challenges of keeping school records may include lack of uniformity, continuity, material scrutiny, falsification and apathy on the part of the teachers.

Statement of Problem

The implementation of the relevant provisions of school laws is indispensable for an effective management of school records. It is indeed heartbreaking to note that most principals jettison the implementation of the provisions of school laws in the management of these records. The researchers have observed with utmost disappointment that most principals have been interdicted for their roles in mismanaging statutory and non statutory records (Fayokun & Adedeji 2012). The possible causes of the poor management of these school records has been attributed to lack of adequate implementation of the provisions of school laws and its implication on record keeping,.

It is the unprecedented vacuum generated by these administrative lapses that the present study intends to fill. The study therefore examined principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory, non statutory records, constraints and strategies for proper record management.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of study is

1. To determine the extent to which principals implement the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
2. To determine the extent to which principals implement the provisions of school laws for the management of non statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
3. To determine the extent to which principals implement the provisions of school laws for identifying the constraints to the management of school records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
4. To determine the extent to which principals implement the provisions of school laws by putting in place strategies for the management of school records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Research Questions

1. To what extent do principals implement the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent do principals implement the provisions of school laws for the management of non-statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

3. To what extent do principals' implement the provisions of school laws for identifying the constraint to records management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
4. To what extent do principals' implement the provisions of school laws by putting in place strategies for record management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of non statutory records.
3. There is no significant relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws in identifying the constraints to record management.
4. There is no significant relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws and putting in place strategies for the management school records.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population is 264 principals. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 158 principals representing 60% of the entire population. The research instrument is titled, 'Principals' Implementation of the provisions of School Laws for School Records' Management Questionnaire (PISLMSRQ). The instrument consisted of twenty one (21) items which were used to elicit information to answer the four research questions. Items 1-5 were used to gather information on the management of statutory records. Items 6-11 were used together information on the management of non statutory records, items 12-16 were used to elicit information on the constraints while items 17-21 were used to generate information on possible strategies to improve record management. The responses were structured in a 4 point scale range of Very High Extent (VHE) 4points, High Extent (HE) 3points, Low Extent (LE) 2points and Very Low Extent (VLE) 1point. The instrument was validated by some experts in the Department. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test, retest method. The same instrument was administered to 20 (twenty) principals who were not part of the sample. After the first administration, the second came up after a fortnight. Analysis of the scores from the administration of the two sets using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) yielded a reliability coefficient value of 0.83 (83 percent). The researchers administered the 200 copies and 158 copies representing 79% percent were retrieved. The data were collated, scored for descriptive analysis using the Mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (SD) to provide answers to the research questions. The Pearson's' Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: To what extent do principals implement the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Mean and Standard Deviation of Principals Implementation of the Provisions of School Laws for the Management of Statutory Records.

n=158

S/N	ITEM	Weight value	Mean	SD	RM
1	Admission register	270	1.70	0.91	LE
2	Attendance register	252	1.59	0.75	LE
3	Examination records	282	1.78	0.89	LE
4	The Log book	236	1.59	0.75	LE
5	Corporal Punishment book	224	1.41	0.61	LE

Grand mean 1.61
0.65 LE

LE =Low Extent

In table 1 (1-5) show a low extent to which principals implement school laws in the management of statutory records in public senior secondary school in Rivers state. Specifically it indicates that item 1 has a \bar{x} =1.70 SD = 0.91, item 2 \bar{x} =1.59, SD = 0.75, item 3, = 1.78 SD=0.89, item 4, \bar{x} =1.59, SD = 0.75 while item 5 had \bar{x} =1.41, SD=0.61. It has a grand \bar{x} =1.61 which is below the criteria \bar{x} =2.50. This is a clear indication that there is a low extent to which principals implement the provisions of school law in managing statutory records

Research Question Two: To what extent do principals implement the provision of school laws for the management of non-statutory records?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Principals' Implementation of the Provisions of School Laws for the Management of Statutory Records

n=158

Items	Weight value	Mean	SD	Rm
6	Students movement book	213	1.34	0.59 LE
7	Duty Roaster book	220	1.39	0.58 LE
8	Levy Accounts Record	268	1.69	0.90 LE
9	School Calendar	234	1.48	0.72 LE
10	Health record book	252	1.59	0.81 LE
11	Register of First Instance	240	1.51	0.69 LE
Grand mean			1.50	0.35

The results as shown in table 2 items (6-11) indicates that the extent to which principals implement school laws for the management of non-statutory records is on the low extent. Specifically item 6= \bar{x} =1.34, SD=0.59, item 7= \bar{x} =1.39, SD=0.58, item 8= \bar{x} =1.69, SD=0.90 others are item 9= \bar{x} =1.48, SD=0.72, item 10 had \bar{x} =1.59, SD=0.81 while item 11 had \bar{x} =1.51, SD=0.69. The grand \bar{x} =1.50 which is below the criteria x of 2.50. This is an indication that there is a low extent to which principals implement the provision of school laws in managing non-statutory records in school.

Research Question three: To what extent do principals implement the provisions of school laws by identifying the constraints to records’ management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on Principals’ Implementation of the Provisions of School Laws by Identifying the Constraints to Records Management in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

n=158

Items	Weight value	Mean		Remark
		Mean	SD	
12 Dearth of record keeping storage facilities	226	1.43	0.87	LE
13 Destruction and deliberate alteration of materials.	213	1.34	0.88	LE
14 No continuity and routine monitoring and supervision of subordinates.	270	1.70	0.91	LE
15 No originality and uniformity of record keeping	236	1.49	0.75	LE
16 Lackadaisical attitude of delegated staff to record keeping	254	1.60	0.65	LE
Grand mean		1.51	0.46	LE

Source: Researchers’ Field Study. November, 2021

The items (12-16) show a low extent of principals’ implementation of school laws by identifying the constraints to record management. Specifically, item 12 has a \bar{x} =1.43 ,SD=0.89 ,item 13 has \bar{x} =1.34, SD=0.88, item14 has \bar{x} =1,70,SD=0.91, item 15 has \bar{x} -1,49, SD=0.75 and item16 has \bar{x} =1.60,SD=0.05. In all, the grand \bar{x} **1.51** is below the criteria \bar{x} of 2.50. This is an indication that principals’ implementation of the provisions of school laws in identifying the constraint to record management is alarmingly very low

Research Question Four: To what extent do principals’ implement the provisions of school laws by putting in place strategies for record management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation on Principals' Implementation of the Provisions of School Laws by Putting in Place Strategies for Record Management in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State?

n=158

D	Items	Weight value	Mean	SD	Remark
17	Maintain the originality of the record.	224	1.41	0.61	LE
18	The records must provide reliable facts	244	1.54	0.70	LE
19	They must be used for appropriate action	220	1.39	0.74	LE
20	Protection from humidity	213	1.34	0.73	LE
21	Availability of records for any legal action	258	1.63	0.71	LE
Grand mean			1.46	0.44	LE

Hypotheses 1:

There is no significant relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship Between Principals' Implementation of the Provisions of School Laws for the Management of Statutory Records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Correlations

		Principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws	Management of statutory records
Principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws	Pearson Correlation	1	0.31**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.08
management of statutory records	N	158	158
	Pearson Correlation	0.31**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.08	
	N	158	158

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 indicates that there is a positive correlation ($r = 0.81$), and very strong ($r = 0.81$; $r \leq \pm 0.8$ to ± 1.0), relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Thus, since $p\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.05$, there is significant relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws and the management statutory records in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, hence null hypothesis one is rejected at the 0.05 significance level.

Hypotheses 2:

There is no significant relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of non statutory records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Principals' Implementation of the Provisions of School Laws for the Management of non statutory Records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Correlations

		Principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws	Non statutory records
Principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws	Pearson Correlation	1	0.10
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.10
Non statutory records	N	158	158
	Pearson Correlation	0.10	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.10	
	N	158	158

Table 6. indicates that there is a positive correlation and very weak ($r = 0.10$; $r \leq \pm 0.0$ to ± 0.19), relationship between the level of principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of non statutory records that relate to non statutory record management in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Thus, since $p\text{-value} = 0.10 > 0.05$, there is no significant relationship between the level of principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws that relate to the management of non statutory records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, hence null hypothesis one is retained at the 0.05 significance level.

Hypotheses 3

Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between the Level of Principals' Implementation of the Provisions of School Laws for in Identifying the Constrains to Record Management the Management in Public Senior Secondary Schools

Correlations

		Principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws	constraints to record management
Principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	0.24
	N	158	158
constraints to record management	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.24	1
	N	158	158

Table 7 shows that there is a positive correlation and moderate ($r = 0.24$; $r \leq \pm 0.0$ to ± 0.09), relationship between the level of principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for in identifying the constraints to record management in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Thus, since $p\text{-value} = 0.24 > 0.05$, there is no significant relationship between the level of principals' implementation of school laws that relate to identifying the constraints to record management in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, hence null hypothesis three is retained at the 0.05 significance level.

Hypotheses 4: There is no significant relationship between principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws and putting in place strategies for the management school records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis on the relationship between the level of principals’ implementation of the provisions of school laws and putting in place strategies for the management school records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State
Correlations

		Principals’ implementation of the provisions of school laws	Strategies for record management
Principals’ implementation of the provisions of school laws awareness of school laws	Pearson Correlation	1	0.10
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.11
	N	158	158
students’ record management	Pearson Correlation	0.10	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.11	
	N	158	158

Table 8 this shows that there is a positive correlation and weak ($r = 0.10$; $r \leq \pm 0.0$ to ± 0.11), relationship between the level of principals’ implementation of the provisions of school laws and putting in place strategies for the management of records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Thus, since $p\text{-value} = 0.10 > 0.05$, there is no significant relationship between the level of principals’ implementation of the provisions of school laws and putting in place strategies for the management of records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State, hence null hypothesis three is retained at the 0.05 significance level.

Discussion of Findings

First Finding

The first finding revealed that principals’ level of implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory records had a low extent. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between principals’ level of implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of statutory records. These findings are in collaboration with the findings of an earlier study by Oloko (2015) which established that school administrators do not have the necessary legal skills that are basically required for the management of school records. It is stated in the Rivers State – Nigeria Section 19 (iii) of the Rivers State Right (parent, children and teachers law) NO.2, 2005 that a teacher shall maintain accurate record of cases of the school child (Anyalebechi, 2019) This is because of any litigation arising from the students’ disciplinary matters may easily be referenced to

records. It is revealed that most principals are not conversant with legal underpinnings of students' record management. The hypothesis was therefore accepted.

The Second Finding

The second finding also revealed that principals' level of implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of non statutory records had a low extent. According to Education laws demand that every institution should keep both statutory and non statutory records for the storage of information for the school (Amanchukwu & Ololube 2015). Ibara (2010) asserts that there is no accountability in the school system without statutory and non statutory records like student movement book, accounts records school calendar, health records, register of first instance etc as they make provisions for useful information.

Third Findings

There is also a revelation that principals have a low extent to which they implement school laws' provisions in identifying the constraints to the management of school records. This agrees with (Ajayi & Ayodele in Alabi, 2017) where they identified the constraints to record management to include dearth of materials, laziness and false information, no originality and uniformity, no continuity and routing monitoring of subordinates deliberate alteration of records. The study of Kalagbor (2017) also averred that dearth of relevant legal material like educational law reports on decided court cases constitute hindrance to principals' implementation of school laws. It also revealed that most administrators were constrained by a lot of factors such as inadequate manpower, insufficient fund, dearth of basic facilities and others in the school etc.

The Fourth Findings

The revelation of the fourth finding shows that principals have a low level of the implementation of the provisions of school laws that are needed to put in place strategies that will enhance record management. The no significant relationship is a clear indication that when principals put in place viable strategies for implementing school laws the students' statutory and non statutory records will be properly managed.

Conclusion

The present study on principals' implementation of the provisions of school laws for the management of school records in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State has shown a low extent. Hence, there have been several litigations in the court of law against the principals and their employers. It is therefore the conclusion of this study that there is urgent need for principals to acknowledge the fact that in this 21st century the school system has become a hazardous place, legally as every matter in the school system has its attendant legal underpinnings. Principals should not allow the perceived intervention and dictates of the courts on internal school administrative processes and actions.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made:

1. There should be an immediate implementation of legally associated professional development conferences and seminars that are related to the legal aspects of school record' management in school administration to update principals abreast of the current realities.
2. The various school laws relating to the students' record management should as a matter of legal urgency be published by the State Government.
3. The Nigeria Union of Teachers should expedite actions towards incorporating or facilitating the recognizance and publication of legal reports on education issues.
4. These school laws as reflected in the school rules and regulations should be made readily accessible and affordable to the students and the teachers.

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