

STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON AWARENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL LAWS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of education laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. A total of 150 participants, comprising principals, teachers, students, and parents, were selected using a multistage sampling technique. A validated questionnaire titled "Stakeholders' Perception on Implementation of Education Laws Questionnaire (SPELQ)" was used for data collection. Inferential statistics of ANOVA were employed to analyze the data obtained at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed no statistically significant differences in stakeholders' perceptions of both awareness and implementation of education laws based on their status. It was recommended that government and school authorities should organize regular sensitization workshops to improve stakeholders' understanding of education laws and their implications for school management. School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) should be empowered to play more proactive roles in ensuring that education laws are observed.

Keywords: Education law, Stakeholders, Perception, Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Education laws are fundamental frameworks that guide the administration and regulation of educational institutions. They are crucial for ensuring order, equity, and quality in education delivery (Okafor, 2019). Education law is the body of enactments, rules, and regulations that focus on the education industry (Adeboyeje, 2006). It is, therefore, imperative for teachers and all stakeholders in the Education industry to be fully aware of and understand all relevant enactments, rules, regulations, and court actions. However, many teachers, including

school principals, seem to be ignorant of the rules and regulations governing the school system and the legal knowledge of students' rights. Nakpodia (2007), in a Latin maxim, opined that "ignorantia juris est lata culpa," meaning ignorance of the law is not an excuse. This is very apt as many teachers appear to be unaware of their rights, duties, obligations, and responsibilities under the law, and more especially, actions against students. Such ignorance may be costly and disastrous to the education system concerning its perception and implementation of education laws. Below are two cited cases that are relevant to

stakeholders' perception and implementation of education laws.

Case I:

The State (Applicant) v (a) The Principal, Ijebu-Ode Grammar School (Mr. A. Kehinde). (b) S.O. Adelaja (chief inspector of education) (c) Commissioner for Education, Ogun State (1982). The defendants published in a national daily the purported expulsion of some students from Ijebu-Ode Grammar School and the disallowance of the students from sitting the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examinations.

This was challenged in the court by the State on behalf of the plaintiffs, on the breach of their right to a fair hearing and due process in handling the case at the school level, which is against the principle of natural justice. The boys (Rasidi Bakare, Odesanya Monsuru Otitoju & Fatia Awojobi) were accused of smoking, fighting, and abusing Vice Principal II, as well as the games master and Road Safety Society (R.S.S.) student. The membership of the disciplinary committee that tried the boys included both witnesses and victims in the same act that the students were accused of. This contradicts the legal maxim *nemo iudex in causa sua* (no man shall be a judge in his own case). The rule of *audi alteram partem* (fair hearing) was not followed.

The court concluded that the school did what it did to maintain its reputation in the face of the public by suspending the students, but it appeared they did not follow due procedures for disciplining them. The education laws of Ondo State specifically gave directives on the procedures to be adopted by the principal in suspending students of any institution. The school authority operated *ignorantia juris non excusat* ignorance of the law excuses no man. The students were allowed to return to the school and sit for the examinations as if nothing had happened. The fact that a man does not

know the law is no excuse for him to commit a crime, as the court will not condone it.

Case II:

Another litigation on this note includes *Abimbola Olusa v Commissioner for Education, Ondo State, and Marian Anike Olaniyan (AK/79/84)*. The plaintiff was a pupil in the Boarding House of Christ Apostolic Church Grammar School, Akure. In 1982, the second defendant was a teacher and Vice-Principal in the same school. The second defendant alleged that the plaintiff stole her money at her residence on the school compound. It was alleged that the second defendant assaulted the plaintiff through excessive beating, which rendered the plaintiff unconscious. It was also alleged that the second defendant locked the plaintiff up in her residence for several hours until the plaintiff broke the door and escaped.

Two years later, the plaintiff sued the defendants, claiming N250, 000.00 as damages for false imprisonment, and N250, 000.00 as damages for defamation. Counsel to the defendants referred to Section 277(1) (d) of the 1979 Constitution, where it is stipulated that persons engaged in the performance of public duties in the services of the state are exempted from prosecution or court proceedings unless such proceedings were commenced within three months of the act or neglect being complained of. Persons covered by this provision include the Commissioner for Education and the staff of any educational institution established by the government.

Defendant's counsel also argued that it was one of the duties of a teacher to discipline a student, and the punishment to be inflicted, unless specifically forbidden by law, is within the discretion of the teacher. The exercise of such duty or power by the teacher is in accord with public policy and also condoned by Section 32 (1) (d) of the 1979 Constitution. It was argued

further that a teacher in the boarding school of a State Government, such as the second defendant, is cloaked with public authority in acts or neglects done in relation to students in the same boarding school.

The act of the second defendant in flogging the plaintiff and locking her up in a room was a disciplinary act done by the second defendant in exercise of the public duty vested in her in relation to her students, of which the plaintiff was one at the time of the act complained of. However, only acts or punishments applied by the teacher for the discipline of the pupil and in the teacher's capacity as a guardian of moral upbringing are exempted from action. It was emphasized that even if the act of the second defendant was wrongful, an action could only be brought against him within three months of the commission of the act; otherwise, the action would be time-barred by virtue of the Public Officers Protection Law. Judgment was delivered in favour of the defendants. It could be observed in this case that the plaintiff's right was violated, but she did not approach the court within three months as stipulated in the law for lack of awareness; hence, she had slept on her rights.

The two cited cases above confirmed the low level of awareness and poor perception of the implementation of education laws on the part of the stakeholders involved in both litigations.

In Nigeria, several laws and policies, such as the National Policy on Education, the Child Rights Act, the school Rules and Regulations, underscore the legal backing for school operations, teachers' conduct, students' rights, and parental involvement. Education laws in Nigeria stem from several sources, which include: The Constitution, legislation, Judicial precedents, Administrative laws, school rules, and Regulations. Some global and international decisions of various bodies also serve as sources of education laws. The School is a

convergence point for individuals from diverse homes, each shaped by different parental values, cultural backgrounds, and environmental conditions. Given this diversity, it becomes imperative to institute checks and balances to ensure the realization of educational objectives. These checks and balances are operationalized through rules and regulations that govern school activities, ensuring that the fundamental human rights of all stakeholders are preserved (Nwakoby & Iloka, 2025). The essence of education law lies in its role as a framework that directs the conduct of all school personnel-students, teachers, administrators, and parents-towards the achievement of educational goals. By adhering to established codes of conduct, members of the school community can function effectively within defined ethical and legal boundaries.

Education law refers to the collection of rules, regulations, and codes of conduct that regulate behaviour and responsibilities within the school system. It ensures that school actors operate within legal and ethical limits while pursuing academic and administrative objectives. According to Iloka (2022), education law is "that part of the law in a state or city which is channeled to oversee the school administration, including public and private primary and secondary schools, as well as tertiary institutions." Without such rules and regulations, the aims of education would remain unfulfilled. Iloka further argues that in the absence of an education law, students, teachers, and administrators would not be accountable for their actions or inactions. Also, education laws serve as a road map for education, a catalyst for educational development, and it also communicates standards in education.

The importance and functions of education law include: serving as the code of conduct for instruction, regulating educational policies, activities, and programmes, providing direction

and guidance to students in their academic and social conduct, providing direction and guidance to teachers in their instructional delivery and professional interactions, ensuring that all stakeholders are held accountable in the implementation of education policies and programmes and curbing corruption and mismanagement by setting clear legal and ethical standards (Nwakoby & Iloka, 2025).

Certain characteristics are peculiar to education laws, which include: Education laws often take cues from the established specialized and controlling agencies, it is subordinated or susceptible to the court of justice; uphold procedural due process; governed by equity and fairness. It captures the three levels of education (primary, secondary, and tertiary), and lastly, education law is fluid, transformative, and adaptable to the emergent change and innovation in the school system. Similarly, there are different types of laws within education law such as: Laws protecting student access to education, laws protecting individual student's right, laws governing student's conduct and discipline, laws regulating educational standard and monitoring funding, laws protecting people against discriminations in schools, laws protecting teachers that are employed by schools (public officer protection law) and law regulating unique situations at the college level.

Despite the existence of these laws, there appears to be a gap in their implementation, particularly at the secondary school level in many regions of the country, including Ilorin-West Local Government Area in Kwara State. Stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, parents, and education officials play key roles in the realization of these laws. Their perceptions and attitudes significantly influence the success or failure of policy implementation (Afolabi & Loto, 2017). Thus, this study examined stakeholders' perceptions on the implementation of education laws in

secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

While Nigeria has numerous education laws meant to enhance the quality of education and safeguard the rights of all stakeholders, evidence suggests that these laws are often poorly implemented. Anecdotal reports and preliminary observations in Ilorin-West indicate that issues such as corporal punishment, illegal levies, poor infrastructure, and lack of teachers' accountability persist. This raises concerns about whether educational stakeholders are aware of or committed to implementing these laws. The problem of the study, therefore, is: What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implementation of education laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area?

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to:

1. Investigate the difference in stakeholders' perception of the awareness of education laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State.
2. Examine the difference in stakeholders' perception of the implementation of educational laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in stakeholders' perception of the awareness of educational laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in stakeholders' perception of the implementation of educational laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive survey design. All principals, teachers, and students in public secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area constituted the population of the study. A sample of 150 respondents (10 principals, 40 teachers, and 100 students) was selected from 10 secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area through multistage sampling. A structured questionnaire titled: “Stakeholders’ Perception on Education Laws Questionnaire” (SPELQ) was used to obtain responses from the participants. The instrument was both face and

content validated. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained through Cronbach’s alpha. Data were collected by the researchers and analyzed using inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

H01: There is no significant difference in stakeholders’ perception of the awareness of educational laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State

Table 1: Stakeholders’ perception of the awareness of education laws

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	13.56	2	5.23	13.09	2.11	No Significant
Within Groups	27.61	147	2.19			
Total	41.17	149				

Table 1 indicates that no significant difference existed in stakeholders’ perception of the awareness of education laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State, with $f\text{-value} = 13.09$, $p < 2.11$. This implies that stakeholders perceived awareness of education laws in secondary

schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State in the same way.

H02: There is no significant difference in stakeholders’ perception of the implementation of education laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Table 2: Stakeholders’ perception of the implementation of education laws

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	19.01	2	17.99	11.65	1.48	No Significant
Within Groups	76.29	147	5.43			
Total	41.17	149				

As shown in Table 2, no significant difference existed in stakeholders’ perception of the implementation of education laws in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State, with $f\text{-value} = 11.65$, $p < 1.48$. This shows that stakeholders’ perception of the implementation of education laws in secondary

schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State did not differ in the study.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study indicate that although education laws are in place and

generally acknowledged by stakeholders, there is inconsistency in awareness and implementation across different groups. The ANOVA results for Hypothesis 1 revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in stakeholders' perception of awareness of educational laws. This implies a relatively uniform level of knowledge among principals, teachers, and students about the existence of these laws. These results align with the earlier findings of Afolabi and Loto (2017), who noted that the mere existence of educational legislation is insufficient without active engagement and collaboration among stakeholders.

Similarly, Hypothesis 2 also showed no significant difference in stakeholders' perception of the implementation of educational laws. This suggests that stakeholders commonly perceive that while laws exist, enforcement and actual application within schools are often weak or inconsistent. Moreover, Ezeani (2020) emphasized that institutional factors such as poor monitoring, lack of sensitization, and weak enforcement mechanisms hinder the effective implementation of school policies. Similarly, the same factors also affect the effective implementation of school rules and regulations.

Furthermore, the low significance scores in the results may point to systemic issues, including inadequate training for school leaders, limited parental involvement, and gaps in policy awareness campaigns at the grassroots level (Okafor, 2019). These gaps mirror the observations of UNICEF (2018), which indicated that even in urban centers like Ilorin, policy communication often fails to reach the intended stakeholders in actionable terms.

CONCLUSION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Conclusion

This study concluded that while education laws and policies are structurally present in secondary schools in Ilorin-West Local Government Area of Kwara State, their implementation is not fully realized. Stakeholders, principals, teachers, and students possess a basic level of awareness; however, this does not necessarily translate into effective compliance and enforcement. The non-significant variation in perceptions implies that issues surrounding the implementation of education laws are not peculiar to one stakeholder group but rather reflect a general systemic challenge. For education laws to have the desired impact on school governance, discipline, and accountability, deliberate steps must be taken to bridge the gap between policy formulation and operational execution.

Recommendations

In light of the discussion, findings, and conclusions from this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government and school authorities should organize regular sensitization workshops to improve stakeholders' understanding of education laws and their implications for school management.
2. The Ministry of Education should enhance monitoring frameworks to ensure strict adherence to existing laws through periodic inspections and compliance assessments.
3. School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) should be empowered to play more proactive roles in ensuring that education laws are observed.

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CITED CASE LAWS

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