



Implementation of the Child's Rights to Quality Education Delivery in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Chinmanma Obinachiⁱ

Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Lawrence Emenike Bull Igweⁱⁱ

Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Joy Chimajulam Nzokurumⁱⁱⁱ

Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study investigated the Implementation of the Child's Rights to Quality Education Delivery in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population of the study was 100 principals from a sample size of 100 public senior secondary schools out of 183 representing 56%, randomly selected from 15 LGAs across the three senatorial districts of the state. A validated 33 item questionnaire titled Implementation of the Child's Rights to Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire (ICRQEDQ) with a reliability index of 0.89 was used for data collection. Reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Research questions were answered using mean and hypotheses tested using z-test. It was found that there is a low level of implementation of the Child's Rights to access to secondary education; principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive enabling environment, although they do not practice effective facilities maintenance; there are insufficient lightening facilities for teaching and learning; also teachers are not regular to school. The study concluded that there are different aspects of the school that must work harmoniously to improve academic performance; hence principals need to brace up in making sure that conditions surrounding the child's education within the school boundaries are kept at optimum standards. It was however recommended inter alia that government should protect students' rights to secondary education by making and implementing policies that penalize offenders. Also, principals should ensure that school facilities are effectively utilized through supervision to avoid waste of scarce resources.

Keywords: Implementation, Child, Rights, Quality, Education Delivery, Secondary School.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Obinachi, C., Igwe, L. E. B., Nzokurum, J. C. (2019). Implementation of the Child's Rights to Quality Education Delivery in the Administration of Secondary Schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 12(2), 190-214. Retrieved [DATE] from <http://www.ij sre.com>.

INTRODUCTION

No nation can grow beyond its educational system, an individual can attempt to grow beyond the quality of education of his society, but no child can access an education whose quality is beyond that provided for him by the society he or she lives in. The educational system in Nigeria has taken a turn to attain heights which meets with global practices in education such as the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and a relative free education up to secondary school level of the educational system to mention the least. Efforts have also been made to expand the school size in infrastructure, funding and manpower.

Many schools at the primary and secondary stages of education experience a wind of change with the inclusion of subjects that emphasize entrepreneurship skills, computer studies and application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), technology studies, business studies including agro and trade subjects. The country in a bid to increase education through its length and breadth as well as increase learning opportunities, operates an open and distance education notably as one of its developmental feats. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) makes provision for a special education which caters for the special learning needs of those who present different forms of disabilities and learning problems. Its major aim is to equalize educational opportunities for children regardless of their abilities and disabilities, so that they can fully contribute to the development of the nation. While government's effort in realizing the goals of education cannot be over emphasized, there is need for school administrators as one of the major drivers of the system to make sure that policies are effectively implemented and resources harnessed to guarantee the right of the child to quality education delivery.

As man seeks to excel in different spheres of life, the question as to what quality a product, a process, an activity or a system have become of paramount importance. Quality describes to a degree, the positive or negative attributes of an object or system with respect to the functions for which they are made to serve. Education as an agent of change aims at developing the child's innate capabilities; to develop character, respect for instituted authorities and patriotism to community life. To qualify education as having the standard required, it should have the capacity to develop the child's personality, intellectual and physical abilities to their highest potential. Therefore, educational systems should be clear on strategies to adopt in meeting these objectives.

Every nation operates an educational system designed to meet its needs. The ability to achieve this objective depends on the quality of education it provides. Hence, quality education may be relative depending on the place and level of education. UNESCO (2011) identifies a broad concept of what quality education is as being effective for purpose, development relevant or responsive, equitable, resource-efficient and as denoting substantive access. Substantive access denotes an effective and successful participation in education instead of a token participation which does not lead to real learning outcomes. It is an idea that distinguishes access that is, the right to entry to schooling which most children have and access to education which most children do not have. According to Cavanaugh as cited by Kotirde and Yunos (2014), quality of education may include quantifiable elements such as school completion rates, student performance, and evaluations of the learning experience or outcome product of the students.

Education delivery relates to the process(s) involved in the transmission of knowledge to learners. The concept of quality secondary school education delivery hinges on some specific aspects of the education process which contributes to the overall performance of students at the long run. They consist of: the pedagogical process, the curriculum content, the language of instruction, teacher capacity, forming community partnership, provision of a fee free education, politics and funding, safe school environment among others.

The laws which ensure that the education children receive is of the desired quality are provided for in: the policy statement as outlined in chapter 2, section 18 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) which bothers on ensuring that there are equal and adequate opportunities at all levels of education. Also, the Fundamental Rights of persons as stated in chapter 4 of the constitution, on the right to life, dignity of human person, right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing, right to private and family life, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to freedom of expression and the press, right to peaceful assembly and association, right to freedom of movement and right to freedom from discrimination. The Child’s Right Act (2003) provides for and protects the rights of the Nigerian Child as a person and other matters related to it.

In attempt to ensure that children are provided with an education in which there is adequate supply of material and human learning resources and ensure that the school system operates on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice in Nigeria, many laws have been enacted. Notably is the 2005 Rivers State bill of law (Rivers State of Nigeria, 2005) which specifies the Rights applicable to children in schools as; access to basic and secondary education; adequate learning materials and resources; suitable learning environment; a conducive learning environment; right to high quality teachers and counsellors; right to counsel; a safe and supportive school environment and right to public forum (pp. 27-29).

The table below shows students’ rights in secondary schools and what is required to ensure that these rights are relevant to the child.

Table 1: Rights of children in secondary schools and the requirements of the rights

S/N	Rights of Children in Secondary Schools	Requirements of the Rights
1	Right to access to basic and secondary education.	Every child must be given the opportunity to receive senior secondary education or learn a suitable vocation trade.
2	Right to adequate learning materials and resources.	Every child is entitled to a clear statement of academic standards of what he or she expects to know and be able to do at every educational level, and the basic conditions for learning that the child and his or her parents expects from the educational system.
3	Right to a suitable learning environment.	Every child has a right to materials necessary to support the instructional programme as recommended in the state curricular standards. This includes appropriate, qualitative and adequate equipment for rigorous science and mathematics instructions; suitable chairs, desks and other classroom equipment.
4	Right to conducive learning environment.	Every child has right to a clean, un-crowded, well lighted and adequately ventilated classroom and other instructional space, reasonably maintained and free of health hazards. Adequate laboratories and studios for rigorous work in the sciences and arts. Accessible bathrooms and sanitary facilities, well stocked and maintained in decent, safe and hygienic conditions. Outdoor space sufficient for exercise, games and sports. Adequate medical unit for nursing and first aid services.
5	Right to high quality teachers and counsellors.	Every child is eligible to a trained and qualified teacher in each subject area of his or her study. A teacher who is mentally fit to care and teach the child. A teacher who has the cultural and communication skills and background to optimally teach a diverse population. A teacher who receives on-going professional development training and uses knowledge of cultural diversity of the Rivers people to design instructional decisions and delivery strategies.
6	Right to counsel.	A teacher who has sufficient time to devote to each child’s development. Every child has right to a trained Child Guidance Counsellor who has a good background;

7	Right to a safe and supportive school environment.	<p>One that is accessible to the child throughout the school year; Is the child's academic and moral adviser; Acts as the child's advocate and instructional leader.</p> <p>Every child while in school has a right to protection from harassment or abuse of any kind, from any person, including a person whose duty it is to provide security in the school.</p> <p>Right to a fair and non-discriminatory disciplinary system.</p> <p>Proactive measures on the part of the school to prevent criminalization of youths.</p> <p>Right against sexual harassment.</p>
8	Right to public forum.	<p>Right of a female child not to be impregnated.</p> <p>Every child has right to regular public forum where he or she can interact and express himself in the best interest of the child.</p> <p>Right to obtain mediation services to resolve conflict with children, teachers, principal or any other school personnel.</p> <p>Right to associate, organise, protest and petition peacefully without threat of retaliation.</p> <p>Right to repeat a class if he or she fails a terminal examination.</p>

Adapted from Rivers State schools rights (parents, children and teachers law) no 2 (Rivers State of Nigeria, 2005, pp. 27-29).

For the wellbeing of the child, there arises the need to protect children's rights within and outside the school. The term "Protection" or "Child Protection" encompasses a wide range of important issues, according to UNICEF (2004), it pays attention to every child's right not to be exposed to harm in form of violence, abuse and exploitation. Thus, it is complimentary to other rights that, inter alia, ensure that all children receive what they need in order to survive, develop and succeed. Akinlami (2016) asserted that since children spend a significant amount of their childhood at school, schools should be warm, caring, nurturing; a place where students feel supported and protected. This is in congruence with the students' right to a safe and supportive school environment (Rivers State of Nigeria, 2005).

One yardstick for determining quality of education provided is accessibility. It amounts to wastage of revenue if schools built and infrastructure expanded to high educational standards cannot be accessed by those it was meant for. As earlier stated, substantive access to education refers to the effective and successful involvement in education leading to real learning outcomes. The quality of education may include quantitative basics such as completion rates, student academic performance, and student assessments of the learning experience (Cavanaugh in Kotirde & Yunos, 2014). Access to education according to Okeke in Nwogu (2015) means free and limitless, unhindered and unfettered opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and abilities offered at any level of education, required to optimally participate and contribute to progress of the society. He notes that several factors have restricted access to education in Nigeria; they include:

1. **Individual differences among pupils:** provision of a common curriculum for the normal child, gifted child and mentally retarded does not give room for effective learning. Therefore, there is need to design a diversified curriculum which would provide for the different aptitudes and abilities of individual learners.
2. **Selection methods:** the common state and nationwide selection examinations which are based on merit encourage discrimination, since those who are unable to pass the examinations are dispossessed of the right to attend educational institutions which pleases them.
3. **Quota system of admission:** the proportionate sharing system of admission enthrones injustice and mediocrity, since well deserving candidates are robbed of opportunity.

4. **Unaffordable costs:** Nwogu (2015) while noting the failure of Nigeria to realize a hundred percent rate of transition from primary to secondary schools asserts that poverty is one of the main threats to high quality education in any particular country. Thus, admission fees, further charges for uniforms, workbooks and transportation fares to schools create financial obstacles for most parents.
5. **Gender discrimination:** some parents are reluctant training their female children, sometimes giving them out to early marriage, domestic labour and human trafficking. There are also cases where female schoolchildren outnumber their male counterparts. These disparities existing in some states of the federation often times result in school dropout.
6. **Armed conflicts:** several hundreds and thousands of children in Nigeria are forced out of school due to communal crisis, armed conflicts such as the Boko Haram insurgency and natural disasters such as the flood disasters of 2012-2014 and 2018.
7. **Carrying capacity:** no matter the amount of effort government has put to spread educational opportunities equitably, the fact remains that there is need for more infrastructure as classrooms are still overcrowded. An overcrowded classroom is not conducive for learning; students get uncomfortable and are not able to reach their maximum potentials, thereby dropping out of school.

Accessibility implies that education should be reachable to everyone without discrimination. It refers not only to physical but also economic access; in this context, all education should be affordable. According to Theirworld (n.d) accessibility means that schools must be within reach, suitable for disabled children and fit for purpose. They must be affordable for all children. There should be no discrimination for gender, race, religion or any other reason. The principal of a school sometimes have to grapple with conflicting interests between the school and parents. For instance, in the rural areas, there are instances of children removed from schooling to support their economically deprived families and for the necessity of child labour. Many children could not stay in the school and even when they did, did not have the right quality of education as their parents could not afford the price for good quality education (Amaechi in SDN, 2013). Therefore, governments have the responsibility to prevent individuals or groups from stopping children from being educated.

Implementing the child's right to quality secondary school education delivery is a task for all stake holders of education. Policies bothering on making education available, accessible and free at the primary and secondary levels of education must be handled seriously by school administration to achieve the cardinal goals of education. According to Udoh-Uwah (2015), an excellent academic performance and sustainable development of the education system depends on the effective and efficient administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. Thus, it is very important for the school principal as an administrator whose role chiefly lies in improving teaching and other things in his contribution to nation building, to have a comprehensive understanding of the factors that benefit and hinder the academic development of a child.

One of the issues of great concern in institutions of learning has been the level of sufficiency of learning materials. The accessibility and adequacy of school amenities is one of the main factors which support the process through which knowledge is transferred. Thus, the quality and amount of instructional materials determine teachers and students performance (Enefu & Okaforcha, 2017). Government on its part may not have been altogether negligent in the provision of school facilities to equip the learning environment but as Enefu and Okaforcha (2017) rightly put, school managers lack qualitative and quantitative information on facilities maintenance. Educational facilities such as laboratory equipment, textbooks and student desks are provided for schools from time to time. Many of these

materials are hardly used by teachers for the benefit of teaching the students. Most times they are kept away in damp and unsafe places to rot away. School properties get damaged due to poor handling and hardly considered for repairs by principals and headmasters. The consequence being that school demands are in the real sense not being met, since there is no proper utilization of facilities provided in teaching and learning, to achieve pre-determined goals and objectives. Hence, the core responsibility is to ensure that administrators, teachers and students have an atmosphere that is safe, healthy and responsive to educational programming, through proper use of educational resources and the provision of quality maintenance services.

The management of school facilities and resources is very crucial in the teaching and learning process and its outcome. According to Agabi (2009), the school principal gets a direct supply of school resources ranging from stationary to infrastructure and manpower (teaching and non-teaching) from the ministry through the Schools Management Board. The principal also receives statutory documents guiding the operation and control of the school. He is also provided with an imprest account to help him maintain a regular supply of instructional materials such as chalk, notebooks, pens, and so on, as well as effect repairs and maintenance of school facilities for effective teaching and learning. However, it appears such funds are not properly used as secondary schools have always been plagued with dilapidated structures and lack of working materials. Effective management of school facilities is necessary in creating the enabling conducive academic environment as a precursor to facilities sustainability, utilization and maintenance as it enhances effective productivity by the teachers and overall performance of the students (Uko, 2015). Hence the need to appoint only trained and competent professionals that can handle and maintain school facilities as principals.

The provision of educational inputs such as teachers, school buildings and classrooms, textbooks and other equipment depends on the amount of finance available. UNO recommends 26% allocation of the annual budgets of developing countries, which Nigeria has never met (Anibueze & Okwo, 2013). The country and many states of the federation fall short in implementing this recommendation because of the dwindling economic level hence, the inability of government to adequately manage the increasing number of schools and student population. School facilities/infrastructural facilities are material resources which facilitate effective teaching and learning. They comprise study materials such as chairs, lockers, libraries and textbooks; other facilities are laboratories, workshops, classrooms and boarding facilities. Ahmed in Ige (2013) observes that in most secondary schools in Nigeria, teaching and learning take place in un-conductive environment lacking basic materials, thus, hampering the fulfilment of educational objectives. Adequacy of educational facilities promotes the morale of teachers and students; this in turn determines the quality of instruction and academic achievement of students.

Adequacy of educational facilities among other things is determined by the availability of water and light facilities (Ojule, 2017). Safe water supply improves sanitation and ensures a healthy life. Provision of light facilities on the other hand enhances a good visual environment, electrical power for audio visuals, power point presentations, and for browsing the internet as well as carrying out experiments. Thus, adequate lightening facilitates teaching and learning. However, Ojule (2017) observed that despite the numerous benefits schools stand to benefit when connected to power from the national grid or installed generated plant, majority of our educational institutions in a 21st century remain without access to electricity.

The learning environment is important in the schooling of a child. Many factors determine the tone (otherwise known as the school climate) in an academic environment, the relationship of teachers towards the students and so on. Unsafe school environment lowers

competition and academic achievement rates of a child. Therefore, making the classroom and school environment, healthy, safe and student-friendly, can encourage and support a child's right to learn. Though, Lunenberg and Ostein (2012) are of the opinion that climate does not define effectiveness, but rather predicts it. Thus, a healthy school is characterised by the harmonious behaviour of students, teachers and principals, geared towards instructional success. Such learning environment is serious, neat and tidy, and teachers are protected from outside hostile forces. A healthy school climate is one where teachers have high expectation of their students, where no child is marginalized and no child is left behind. The number of students accessing secondary school education is sometimes not targeted very well in the provision of facilities, leading to overcrowded classrooms. Quality education is not achieved by "squeezing" children into inadequate classrooms and "feeding" them with the ceremonial procedures of teaching. More needs to be done in addressing the issue of class ratio in order to meet the basic learning needs of individuals.

An ideal school environment has suitable facilities and well – managed classrooms among other things. It is described as Child-friendly schools. According to UNICEF (2012) a Child-friendly school ensures a physically safe environment that is emotionally secure and psychologically enabling; where teachers create an effective and inclusive classroom; with a curriculum content that is focused on learning and the learner; receives participation and collaboration from families; children are motivated and capable to receive instruction; staff members are friendly, display a welcoming attitude to children and attend to all their health and protection needs. An enabling environment for learning should be characterized with a positive teachers/students interaction and classrooms that are friendly to pupils with disabilities.

It is a fact that the emotional disposition of the child can affect his ability to learn. Negative emotions can affect students desire to attend school, concentrate in class and keep their minds on their work, and this affects learning. Therefore, to achieve a quality education delivery, children must be protected from any action or inaction that can affect them psychologically such as discrimination, abuse, material and emotional neglect, all forms of exploitation and violence against children which can cause traumatic experiences that may influence the development of the child. Delfos (2002) posits that a traumatic experience affects the general functioning of the child in more or less all developmental tasks (intellectual, social, emotional, physical and motor development), so that it is difficult to know whether a child will overcome trauma or if he or she will be damaged for life. Thus, violation of rights early in life will tend to have more pervasive, diffuse and long lasting consequences than when the same trauma occurs later in life.

Child protection has been modified as part of educational policies in Rivers State. Legal aspects which relate to students' management in schools find their sources from the constitution and legislatures in form of edicts, decrees, bye-laws and common laws; administrative and executive directives (such as memos, circular letters and guidelines) from the Ministry, National Policy on Education, and school rules and regulations. Examples are:

- The Rivers State Ministry of Education circular letter Ref. ME/53/T/Vol. 111/44 dated 9/05/1984, titled "Powers of Principals and Headmasters in the Enforcement of Discipline", which defined limitations of principals and teachers on students' disciplinary management.
- The Rivers State Post Primary Schools Board Edict No. 4, 1989 which also emphasizes the instructional roles of teachers and the rule of natural justice in the school system.
- The Rivers State Schools Rights (Parents, Children and Teachers Law) No. 2,

2005 lay emphasis on students' rights in schools, students' instructional management, non-discriminatory disciplinary structure and students' welfare management.

- The Rivers State guidelines on Voluntary Agencies (1992) highlighted issues that border on teacher student ratio both in the classrooms and practical classes.
- Sections 1(4C) and 9(K) of the National Policy on Education (2004 revised) also highlighted laws that border on equal and suitable educational opportunities for the Nigeria child and on religious teachings in schools (Kalagbor, 2010).

Bukhari (2006) notes that implementation of the CRA has been hampered by customs, harmful traditional practices and the religion dogma that is reflective of the patriarchal tendencies pervading almost every aspect of daily life in the communities in Nigeria. More disturbing is the failure of government to muster the political will to undertake their lawful obligations towards children.

Teachers as instructors and facilitators are the direct wires through which education delivery is made possible. For this reason, it is imperative that they have a good understanding of what quality education entails, the rules of conduct in carrying out their duties and their role in the act of quality teaching and training of the child. Kotirde and Yunos (2014) opine that teachers constitute a major factor of quality education in the teaching and learning aspect. To Rice (2003), teacher quality is the most significant school-related factor influencing students' achievement. They however noted that many teachers are lacking in good quality which can enhance meaningful teaching. The quality of lessons to be given by this category of teachers is likely to be low, and this will have adverse effects on the learners. On the contrary, teachers of high quality could impart right and good skills, knowledge and attitude. The key aspect for the educators is to tutor their students effectively so that they can show quality performance in their academics. To achieve this objective, educators must have a better understanding on the factors that could contribute in the academic success of students (Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq & Berhanu, 2011).

Many teachers in Nigeria are involved in unwholesome act of practices which include examination misconducts, absenteeism from school and classes, late coming to school and classes, immoral relationship with female students, extortion of money from students, drinking and smoking during official hours (Achimugu, 2005; Ajayi & Shofoyeke, 2003; Adeyemi & Ige, 2002; Famade, 2001 in Ige, 2013). These practices contribute to students' un-seriousness, indiscipline, and poor academic performance. Thus, UNICEF strongly emphasizes on the five dimensions of quality consisting of the learners, environments, content, processes and outcomes; founded on 'the rights of the whole child and all children to survival, protection, development and participation' (UNICEF in UNESCO, 2005).

Every student who has a poor teacher has the potential to fall behind academically thus, many researches attribute poor quality education to inexperience and poor quality teachers. However, contrary to this, Ali and Saleen (2014); Oshionebo and Onyene (2011) observed that in government schools, teachers are no doubt experienced but they are not willing to teach; a reason why parents prefer the private schools for their children. The teachers although very qualified, do not seem to possess the right attitude to make students excel. Teachers in Nigeria must wear a global outlook in practicing their profession by promoting what is right and by so doing helping children to form their values. Oyedeji (2012) asserts that although classroom teachers' function is the transmission of knowledge, they also promote certain values; honesty, competition, respect and individualism, and norms, such as not cheating in tests, being punctual, not arguing with teachers and wearing the right school uniforms. Not everything is inculcated to a child through teaching; students can learn certain things such as being courteous and committed to work by demonstration. Again, teachers

should be committed to their responsibilities and be upright because students look up to them as their role models (Sarumi & Okoji, 2010).

There is no single form of training programme that can absolutely make teachers adequate for a lifelong profession; they require in-service education and re-training from time to time. This is important for the effective utilization of human manpower. Igwe (2015) generally defines training as a systematic process of altering the behaviour, knowledge and skills of employee to ensure effective and organizational goal achievement, while retraining involves exposing already trained personnel to more training for improvement. This is also termed manpower or human resource planning. It involves updating old teachers on how to carry out their duties efficiently to cope with modern trends. One way to improve teachers' competence in the secondary level is by implementing the code of ethics. Thus, Igwe (2015) rightly posits that there is a need to bring to the knowledge of newly recruited teachers as well as the old, the code of professional ethics to improve the teaching services.

Teacher quality in secondary schools can also be ensured through the process of staff recruitment and selection. Recruitment of staff in education according to Nwokamma (2017) is part of educational planning that focuses on the proper ways of bringing qualified staff into the system to control other aspects of educational resources. Therefore, there should be put in place proper measures to attract qualified human resources in adequate number so as to ensure the selection of an efficient labour force. The number of classes and subjects a staff teaches in a term/session otherwise known as the teaching load affects the morale, motivation and self-esteem of teachers, notwithstanding their level of qualification. When it is in excess, the teacher finds it difficult to organise and construct his lesson as required in order to transmit what is worthwhile to the learners. In this regard, teaching load becomes a very important issue that should be properly handled by the school administrators to ensure equity in work load.

All teachers yearn for encouragement that they are doing a worthy job. Most principals distinguish teachers' efforts by offering affirmative feedback publicly and privately. The weekly memos or e-mails, and regular staff meetings are perfect forums for recognizing special contributions made by teachers or other staff members (EDUCATION WORLD, 2017). Asodike (2012) asserts that efficiency and effectiveness among workers depend on how well their individual needs are met. These needs are met in form of rewards after a job well completed. This form of encouragement that makes a person willing to take risks and sacrifice time and effort to meet organizational goals is called motivation. Teachers contribute immensely in the transformation and growth of the students and the larger society. In return, they expect to be rewarded with some incentives in form of promotions, leave opportunities, fringe benefits, staff transfers, loans, allowances and development programmes. This, at the long run improves teachers' quality of service delivery, leading to higher productivity.

Certain services are required to guide young people in their pursuit for knowledge when the right learning environment and human resources have been put in place. These educational support services range from that offered by resource centres, the Nigeria Education Research Development Council (NERDC), the Virtual Library, radio and television broadcasting services, in-service education courses for the upgrading of teachers, correspondence education, school health services, information and communication technology (ICT), to guidance and counselling. Guidance and counselling services in schools do not only bring about an in-depth understanding of self and others, but also an increased understanding of education, vocation and personal social information needed to help students in their overall development (Opara & Ukoha, 2017).

Guidance and counselling has been identified as an indispensable educational support service in both public and private primary and post-primary schools in view of the obvious

ignorance of many young persons about career prospects, and personality issues among school children (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Thus, according to Affia in Opara and Ukoha (2017) career officers and guidance counsellors are expected to render services which include counselling, orientation, information, appraisal, placement, referral, fellowship and evaluation. Though, government continues to make provisions for the training of teachers in guidance and counselling, since qualified personnel in this category are still scarce, there arises the need to encourage professionalism in this area so as to effectively facilitate the implementation of educational policies.

Statement of the Problem

Children have rights among which is the right to education, this is evident as enacted in various international and national treaties notably, the UNESCO's Education for all (EFA) movement, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Nigeria National Policy on Education. Despite government efforts to ensure quality education delivery at all levels, it has been observed that there are students at the senior secondary school level who have difficulty in literacy and numeracy skills. Some students are finding it increasingly challenging to cope with academic work thereby dropping out of school. There are also those that have completed secondary education but are short of the qualifications to meet up with the requirements of gaining entry into tertiary institutions, due to poor academic performance. This is to say the least as respect to national values, dignity of the human person as well as moral and spiritual principles are more and more declining in interpersonal and human relations among youths. There is also the menace of child abuse and neglect which sometimes go unnoticed in schools. The Rivers State Schools Rights (Parents, Teachers and Students law) part 1, 2005 is one law among others which specifies the quality of education which children in schools are expected to have, to ensure that they achieve remarkable and measureable outcomes. These are rights to access basic and secondary school education, adequate learning materials, suitable conducive learning environment, high quality teachers and guidance counselors, supportive school environment, and right to public forum. The implementation of these rights seemed to have become sources of concern in schools. The researcher wondered if school administrators are really involved in implementing such rights. Therefore, the propelling question of this study can be summed up as, what is the extent of implementation of the Child's Rights to quality education delivery in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the extent of implementation of the Child's Rights to quality education delivery in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. In specific terms, the objectives of the study were to:

- Find out the extent to which the Child's Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State;
- Ascertain the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented by principals in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State;
- Investigate the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State;

- Investigate the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

In addressing the problem of this study, the following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- What is the extent to which the Child's Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What is the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented by principals in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What is the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive and enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What is the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive and enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 243 principals of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A simple random sampling technique was applied to select 15 LGAs out of 23 across the three senatorial districts of the state and 100 principals from a sample size of 100 public senior secondary schools out of 183 representing 56%. Instrument used for data collection was a validated 33 item questionnaire titled Implementation of the Child's Rights to Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire (ICRQEDQ). It was patterned after the Likert (Modified) response scale with four point ratings (Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent). The instrument

was duly validated. It was tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha and an index of 0.89 was established. Mean set was used to answer the research questions using a criterion mean of 2.50. Mean values 2.50 and above were considered high while any mean value less than 2.50 was considered low, however z-test was used in testing the Hypotheses.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the extent to which the Child’s Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of urban and rural school principals opinion on the extent to which the Child’s Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented

EXTENT TO WHICH THE CHILD’S RIGHTS TO ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED		Urban School Principals			Rural School Principals		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
1	Students are enrolled without tribal or religious considerations	3.61	1.84	High extent	3.21	2.11	High extent
2	The curriculum caters for the difference in abilities of individual learners	2.30	1.11	Low extent	2.14	1.40	Low extent
3	Schools promote equality among students	2.77	1.34	High extent	2.57	1.69	High extent
4	Students have access to a fee free education	2.53	1.25	High extent	1.93	0.29	Low extent
5	Early marriage affects children access to school	1.73	0.88	Low extent	2.57	1.67	High extent
6	Natural disasters affect children access to school	1.23	0.71	Low extent	1.71	0.91	Low extent
7	Poor classroom conditions affect students attendance to school	2.67	1.30	High extent	3.36	2.21	High extent
8	Government prevents individuals or groups from stopping children from attending schools	1.53	0.80	Low extent	1.50	0.10	Low extent
Aggregate mean		2.13		Low extent	2.37		Low extent

From the data in table 2, respondents agreed to items 1, 3, and 7 with mean scores greater than the criterion mean scores of 2.5. The results show that students are enrolled without tribal or religions considerations ($\bar{x} = 3.61$ and 3.21), schools promote equality among students ($\bar{x} = 2.77$ and 2.57) and poor classroom conditions affect students attendance to school ($\bar{x} = 2.67$ and 3.36). Principals differ on their responses in items 4 and 5. While principals in urban schools agree that students have access to a fee free education ($\bar{x} = 2.53$) principals in rural schools disagree ($\bar{x} = 1.93$). On the other hand, principals of schools in urban areas disagree that early marriage affects children access to school ($\bar{x} = 1.73$), principals of schools in rural areas are in agreement ($\bar{x} = 2.57$). However, all the principals unanimously disagree to the statement on items 12, 16 and 18; the curriculum caters for the difference in abilities of individual learners ($\bar{x} = 2.30$ and 2.14), natural disasters affect children access to school ($\bar{x} = 1.23$ and 1.71) and government prevents individuals or groups from stopping children from attending schools ($\bar{x} = 1.53$ and 1.50). The aggregate low mean scores of $\bar{x} = 2.13$ and 2.37 indicates that there are factors which affect students access to school.

Research Question 2: What is the extent to which the Child’s Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented by principals in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of male and female principals' opinion on the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented by principals

EXTENT TO WHICH THE CHILD'S RIGHTS TO THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE LEARNING MATERIALS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED BY PRINCIPALS		Male Principals			Female Principals		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
9	Principals ensure that students learn in a suitable environment	2.80	1.81	High extent	2.88	1.25	High extent
10	Principals ensure that school laboratories and studios are functional for learning science	2.90	1.89	High extent	2.38	1.03	Low extent
11	Principals ensure that classrooms are adequate for learning	2.75	1.79	High extent	3.68	1.60	High extent
12	Principals ensure that students have access to library books and computers provided by government	3.25	2.13	High extent	2.90	1.26	High extent
13	Library books are adequate for study	2.58	1.67	High extent	2.75	1.19	High extent
14	School facilities are properly utilized for teaching	2.08	1.37	Low extent	2.05	0.89	Low extent
15	Principals practice effective facilities maintenance	1.92	1.28	Low extent	1.90	0.85	Low extent
Aggregate mean		2.61		High extent	2.65		High extent

Table 3 shows that decisions were agreeably high in items 9, 11, 12 and 13. Principals ensure that students learn in a suitable environment ($\bar{x} = 2.80$ and 2.88); principals ensure that classrooms are adequate for learning ($\bar{x} = 2.75$ and 3.68); principals ensure that students have access to library books and computers provided by government ($\bar{x} = 3.25$ and 2.90) and library books are adequate for study ($\bar{x} = 2.58$ and 2.75). Respondents mean scores in item 10 are conflicting. The male respondents are in agreement that principals ensure school laboratories and studios are functional for learning science ($\bar{x} = 2.90$), while female principals disagree on the statement ($\bar{x} = 2.38$). The low mean scores in items 14 and 15 shows that principals disagree that school facilities are properly utilized for teaching ($\bar{x} = 2.08$ and 2.05). They also disagree that principal practice effective facilities maintenance ($\bar{x} = 1.92$ and 1.90). However, the aggregate high mean scores of 2.61 and 2.65 for male and female principals respectively is an indication that there is an appreciable level of implementation of the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials.

Research Question 3: What is the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of urban and rural school principals opinion on the extent to which they are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive enabling environment

EXTENT TO WHICH PRINCIPALS ARE COMMITTED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD'S RIGHTS TO A CONDUCTIVE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT		Urban School Principals			Rural School Principals		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
16	The school environment is safe for teaching and learning	3.20	1.57	High extent	3.21	2.12	High extent
17	Principals recognise when children are being subjected to abuse and know how to respond	2.93	1.94	High extent	2.93	1.94	High extent
18	Principals ensure that students have opportunity to associate, discuss and express themselves	3.53	1.74	High extent	3.14	2.07	High extent
19	Teachers have a good relationship towards the students	3.13	1.54	High extent	3.21	2.10	High extent
20	Teachers have high expectations for their students	2.93	1.43	High extent	2.43	1.58	Low extent
21	Students are motivated to learn	2.67	1.30	High extent	2.36	1.54	Low extent
22	Principals have control of the teaching and non- teaching staff	3.30	1.63	High extent	3.10	2.04	High extent
23	There are sufficient lightening facilities for teaching and learning	2.43	1.18	Low extent	2.00	1.31	Low extent
24	Water is supplied to improve sanitation	2.73	1.32	High extent	2.29	1.50	Low extent
25	Students undergo corporal punishment	4.83	2.83	High extent	3.29	2.16	High extent
26	Classrooms are overcrowded	3.10	1.51	High extent	2.14	1.43	Low extent
Aggregate mean		3.16		High	2.74		High

In table 4, items 16, 17, 18, 19, 22 and 25 portray high means scores. So it is clear that the school environment is safe for teaching and learning ($\bar{x} = 3.20$ and 3.21); principals recognise when children are being subjected to abuse and know how to respond ($\bar{x} = 2.93$ and 2.93); principals ensure that students have opportunity to associate, discuss and express themselves ($\bar{x} = 3.53$ and 3.14); teachers have a good relationship towards the students ($\bar{x} = 3.13$ and 3.21); principals have control of the teaching and non-teaching staff ($\bar{x} = 3.30$ and 3.10) and students undergo corporal punishment ($\bar{x} = 4.83$ and 3.29). These means are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and are all accepted. The disparity in weight of mean scores of respondents on items 20, 21, 24 and 26 signify that principals in the urban secondary schools are of the opinion that teachers have high expectations for their students, while principals in the rural schools disagree ($\bar{x} = 2.93$ and 2.43). The urban school principals agree that students are motivated to learn, while the rural school principals disagree ($\bar{x} = 2.67$ and 2.36). Principals in urban schools also have agreeable opinions that water is supplied to improve sanitation ($\bar{x} = 2.73$) and that classrooms are overcrowded ($\bar{x} = 3.10$). Adversely principal in rural schools disagree to the statements above ($\bar{x} = 2.29$ and 2.14), whereas all the respondents are of the opinion that there are no sufficient lightening facilities for teaching and learning in item 33 ($\bar{x} = 2.43$ and 2.00). The aggregate high mean scores of $\bar{x} = 3.16$ and 2.74 indicate that principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive enabling environment.

Research Question 4: What is the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation of experienced and less experienced principals opinion on the extent to which the Child’s Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented

EXTENT TO WHICH THE CHILD’S RIGHTS TO HIGH QUALITY TEACHERS AND COUNSELLORS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED		Experienced Principals			Less Experienced Principals		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
27	Teacher quality is considered before recruitment	3.61	1.84	High extent	3.22	2.34	High extent
28	Teachers are regular to their duties	1.77	0.94	Low Extent	0.62	0.03	Low extent
29	Teachers expose students to practical classes to enhance learning	3.45	1.75	High extent	3.03	2.20	High extent
30	Teachers help students to form right values	3.55	1.81	High extent	2.88	2.10	High extent
31	There are functional guidance and counselling units in schools	3.10	1.56	High extent	2.88	2.10	High extent
32	Principals ensure that students have access to guidance counsellors	3.23	1.64	High extent	3.38	2.47	High extent
33	Counsellors ensure that students are disposed to learn	2.00	1.27	Low Extent	2.10	1.90	Low extent
Aggregate mean		2.96		High	2.59		High

From table 5 above, the calculated mean scores in items 27, 29, 30, 31 and 32 are higher than the criterion mean of 2.5. Both the experienced and less experienced principals are in agreement that teacher quality is considered before recruitment ($\bar{x} = 3.61$ and 3.22); teachers expose students to practical classes to enhance learning ($\bar{x} = 3.45$ and 3.03); teachers help students to form right values ($\bar{x} = 3.55$ and 2.88); there are functional guidance and counselling units in schools ($\bar{x} = 3.10$ and 2.88) and principals ensure that students have access to guidance counsellors ($\bar{x} = 3.23$ and 3.38). The mean scores for items 28 and 33 are below the criterion mean of 2.5. It shows that respondents disagree that teachers are regular to their duties ($\bar{x} = 1.77$ and 0.62) or that counsellors ensure that students are disposed to learn ($\bar{x} = 2.00$ and 2.10).

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which the Child’s Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: z-test of the significant difference between the mean score ratings of urban and rural school principals’ opinion on the extent to which the Child’s Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal-z-Value	Critical z-value	Decision
Urban school principals	30	32.48	2.501	98	-0.082	± 1.96	HO1 Accepted
Rural school principals	70	32.55	3.268				

Data in table 6 showed the analysis of z-test difference between mean scores of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which the Child’s Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. The result of the z-test shows that the calculated z-value of -0.082 is less than the critical of ± 1.96 at the degree of freedom 98 of 0.05 significant level. The null hypothesis is accepted;

therefore there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 7: z-test of the significant difference between the mean score ratings of male and female principals opinion on the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal-z-Value	Critical z-value	Decision
Male Principals	25	32.55	3.268	98	-0.082	± 1.96	HO2 Accepted
Female Principals	75	32.48	2.501				

Data in table 7 showed the analysis of z-test difference between mean scores of male and female principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. The result of the z-test shows that the calculated z-value of -0.082 is less than the critical of ± 1.96 at the degree of freedom 98 of 0.05 significant level. The null hypothesis is accepted; therefore there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive and enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: z-test of the significant difference between the mean score ratings of urban and rural school principals' opinion on the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive and enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal-z-Value	Critical z-value	Decision
Urban School Principals	30	30.9200	3.4268	98	0.434	± 1.96	HO3 Accepted
Rural School Principals	70	30.5333	3.1702				

Table 8 showed the analysis of z-test difference between mean scores of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive and enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. The result of the z-test shows that the calculated z-value of $.434$ is less than the critical of ± 1.96 at the degree of freedom 98 of 0.05 significant levels. The null hypothesis is accepted; therefore there is no significant difference between the mean

ratings of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 9: z-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean score ratings of experienced and less experienced principals opinions on the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implementation in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal-z-Value	Critical z-value	Decision
Experienced Principals	31	33.3220	6.5331	98	-1.220	± 1.96	HO4 Accepted
Less Experienced Principals	69	33.9663	8.1700				

Data in table 9 showed the analysis of z-test difference between mean scores of experienced and less experienced principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. The result of the z-test shows that the calculated z-value of -1.220 is less than the critical of ± 1.96 at the degree of freedom 98 of 0.05 significant levels. The null hypothesis is accepted; therefore there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

Findings from the study in table 2 shows that the Child's Rights to access to secondary education has been implementation to the extent that students are enrolled without tribal or religions considerations, that schools promote equality among students and natural disasters do not affect children access to school. Analyses of results obtained indicate that there are factors which affect students' access to school; the curriculum does not cater for the difference in abilities of individual learners; poor classroom conditions affect students' attendance to school and government does not prevent individuals or groups from stopping children from attending schools. Data also shows that respondents differ in their opinion on whether students have access to a fee free education or does early marriage affect children access to school. Parents of students in the urban areas are used to paying charges for services received and are willing to do so for the education of their children. This may be the reason why principals of schools in the urban areas are of the opinion that students do not have access to a fee free education. Respondents' opinion in the rural school on the other hand, indicates that early marriage may affect children access to school. This revelation is worrisome and requires urgent attention; government will need to find ways of preventing individuals or groups from stopping children from attending schools for whatever reason, as no nation can undermine the education of its young.

Respondents' agreement on the item which states that poor classroom conditions affect students attendance to school is surprising considering the much talked about effort to

equip schools by present and previous political administrations in the state. This may mean that government efforts are not far reaching enough for all secondary schools in the state to benefit from, or that there is poor management of educational resources at various levels of the educational system. Hence, the need for government to match words with action in the attempt to improve schools within the state. The present study conforms to the research findings of Nzokurum and Awah (2011) which identified lack of conducive classrooms as one of the challenges facing quality assurance in public secondary schools. Nevertheless, if school administrators in Rivers State wish to be successful in improving children access to education, they must ensure that the curriculum caters for the difference in abilities of individual learners among other things. However, hypothesis 1 in table 6 was accepted which means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. Principals in rural and urban secondary schools both agree that the extent to which the Child's Rights to access to secondary education has been implemented is low.

The result in table 3 indicates that principals ensure that students learn in a suitable environment, they ensure that classrooms are adequate for learning and that students have access to library, books and other learning materials provided by government, which are adequate for study. This result clearly shows that a greater percentage of principals are aware of their responsibilities in the administration of the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials. This is not surprising but expected, because principals show better allegiance to the umbrella body which ensure that they regularly hold meetings. These meetings are avenues through which they can rub minds together and get more conversant with the responsibilities attached to the office of the school principals in improving schools. However, it is odd to find out that principals fall short in ensuring that school facilities are properly utilized for teaching or that they practice effective facilities maintenance. The female principals also disagree on the statement that principals ensure school laboratories and studios are functional for learning science. This result is also not strange as data from the analysis clearly shows that principals do not ensure that school facilities are properly utilized. It shows that principals either do not know how this affects the teaching and learning process or are lacking in knowledge on effective facilities maintenance, and this is a disturbing revelation.

This result is in line with the findings of Oshionebo and Onyene (2011), and Uko (2015) which revealed that laboratories and technical workshops among others were in a hopeless state. Other discoveries which do not agree with the results obtained in this work are that of Uko (2015) which asserted that educational facilities were grossly inadequate with classrooms in a complete state of despair. The difference noticed in the findings above may be attributed to the fact that the studies were carried out in other states of the country and not in Rivers State. The researcher in this study surmised that if the implementation of strategies to warrant the Child's Rights to quality education had been effective, then at the least laboratories would have been adequate for teaching and learning. The findings of the studies are commendable and serve as a step in the quest for an effective administration and implementation of policies in secondary schools in Rivers State. The hypothesis in table 06 was accepted because there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. Male and female principals are of the same opinion on the level of implementation of the Child's Rights to the provision of adequate learning materials by principals.

From table 4, the findings revealed that principals ensure that the school environment is safe for teaching and learning; principals recognise when children are being subjected to abuse and know how to respond, principals ensure that students have opportunity to associate, discuss and express themselves and teachers have a good relationship towards the students. Furthermore, principals have control of the teaching and non-teaching staff, and students undergo corporal punishment. Principals in the rural schools disagreed that teachers have high expectations for their students or that students are motivated to learn. They also disagreed on the statement that water is supplied to improve sanitation, and that classrooms are overcrowded. Adversely, principals in rural schools agree to the statements above. However, all the respondents are of the opinion that there are no sufficient lightening facilities for teaching and learning. This is not surprising as the issue of electric power failure has been a challenge all over the country.

From the findings, it is quite unanticipated to know that teachers neither have high expectations for their students nor are the students motivated to learn; this is the opinion of principals in the rural schools. The rural areas are prone to students absconding from school, which may be due to early marriage, domestic labour or human trafficking. Students must have good reasons to stay in school, which is why teachers need to motivate them and make them know that much is expected from them.

In line with this study, the findings of Uko (2015) revealed that effective management of school facilities is necessary in creating the enabling conducive academic environment thereby enhancing a corresponding achievement and performance in the teaching – learning process. Ikati (2005), noting that classrooms were overpopulated discovered that overpopulation of secondary schools was significantly related to principals' tort of negligence in the administration of the secondary schools. There are other discoveries which does not agree with the results obtained in this work such as that of Mebradu (2008) which found out that rural students are not even aware on how to seek redress with respect to the rights to express themselves. The difference noticed in the findings above may be attributed to the fact that the study was carried out several years ago.

The test of hypothesis in table 8 showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of urban and rural school principals on the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive and enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. Principals in both the rural and urban schools are of the same opinion on the extent to which principals are committed to the implementation of the Child's Rights to a conducive and enabling environment in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

From table 5, the findings revealed that Teacher quality is considered before recruitment, teachers expose students to practical classes to enhance learning and teachers help students to form right values. Furthermore, there are functional guidance and counselling units in schools and principals ensure that students have access to guidance counsellors. Principals disagreed that teachers are regular to their duties or that counsellors ensure that students are disposed to learn. Considering the large number of students who attend the state public secondary schools and the limited number of guidance counsellors available, they may not be efficient enough to attend to every student, ensuring that they are disposed to learn. There seem not to be a reasonable level of embrace of the services of guidance counsellors by students. There is a need to get students enlightened on the importance of counselling services in the area of their academics and personal development. It is surprising to learn that teachers are not regular to their duties, and then one is tempted to ask, of what use is the recruitment of qualified teachers in ensuring the Child's Rights to quality education delivery? Government needs to find out why teachers are not regular to their duties, so that they can find a way to remedy the situation.

This result means that government is committed to ensuring quality workforce to improve secondary school education. There are other discoveries which agree with the results obtained in this work such as that of Onwuaso (2008) who investigated the attitude of teachers to teaching as a profession in senior public secondary schools. He found out that the attitude of teachers to teaching as a profession was negative. Likewise, Oshionebo and Onyene (2011) discovered that teachers although very qualified, do not seem to possess the right attitude that could make students excel. In Mathew (2008), it was also revealed that guidance counselling in schools is one of the strategies adopted in educational policy implementation among other things. Contrary to the findings of this study is that of Nzokurum and Awah (2011) whose investigation proved that hiring of unqualified teachers was one of the challenges facing quality assurance.

The test of hypothesis in table 9 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of experienced and less experienced principals on the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State. Both experienced and less experienced principals believe on the level of commitment on the extent to which the Child's Rights to high quality teachers and counsellors have been implemented in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

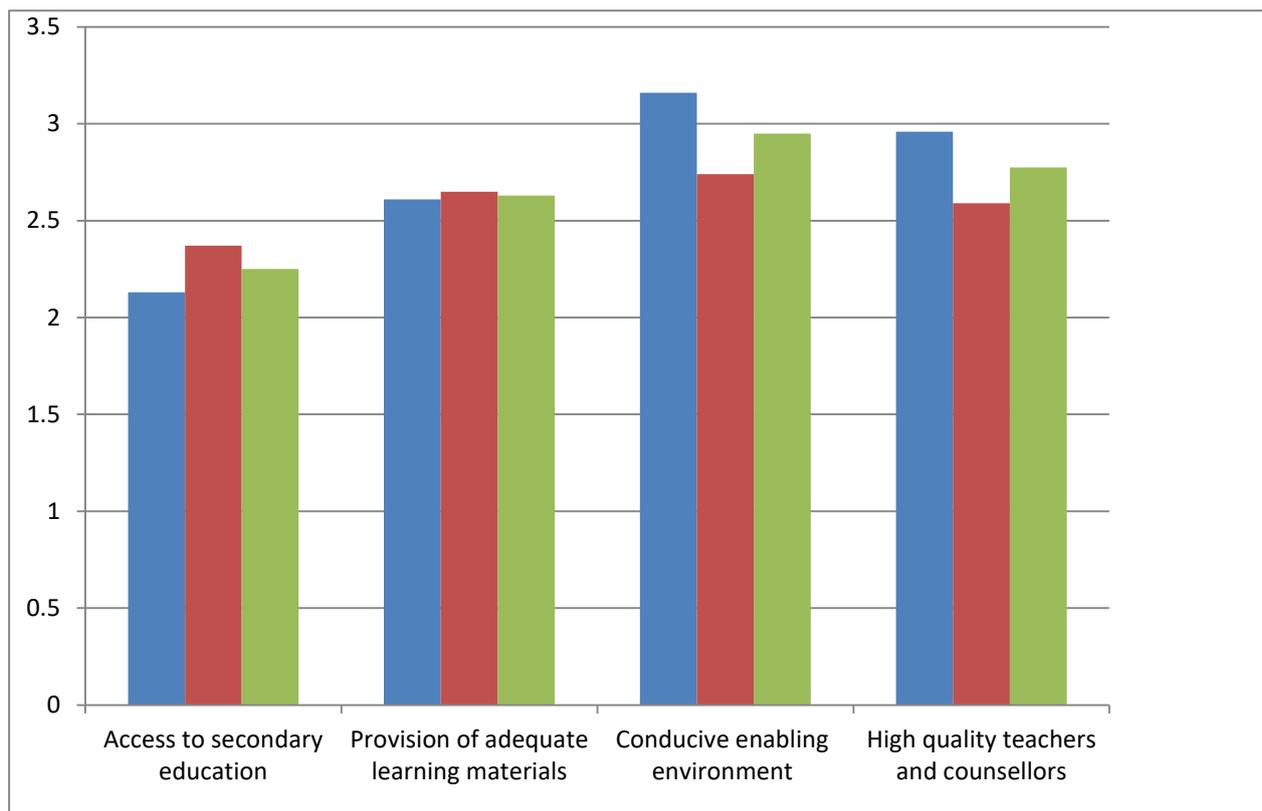


Figure 1: Ranking of implementation of the Child's Rights to Quality Education Delivery in secondary schools in Rivers State. Source: The Researchers field study, 2018.

The graph above illustrates the rank order for calculated means of the rights under study. The right to a conducive enabling environment ranks first, right to high quality teachers ranks second, right to provision of adequate learning materials rank third while right to access to secondary education ranks fourth. This means that the right to a conducive enabling

environment is the most implemented while the right to access to secondary education is the least implemented among the rights according to data analysed.

CONCLUSION

The Child's Rights to quality education delivery are the rights of students to receive quality education in schools. Principals are the direct managers for quality education delivery in secondary schools, and their being knowledgeable on the constitutional provision relating to students rights are commendable. Notwithstanding, there is need for conformity to standards and the acquisition of measureable competences to their job description, so as to maintain a suitable school infrastructure that meets the learning needs of all children. It is evident on the other hand that principals are designated to exercise an overall authority in the school environment, its resource and also over the process of teaching and learning. These are different aspects of the school that must work harmoniously to improve academic performance. Educational resources are used to meet educational needs hence, the success of school administration in Rivers State is dependent first and foremost on preventing factors stopping children from attending schools, then on the effective management of school facilities, teachers motivating their students, ensuring a quality workforce of teachers and guidance counsellors to improve academic performance. There is need to check all threats of child abuse, neglect and discrimination which schools are sometimes in denial of. Quality education ensures a balanced emotional, physical, psychological, social and moral development of the child. Hence, principals need an urgent shift from the "Know all, do less" attitude to making sure that conditions surrounding the child's education within the school boundaries are kept at optimum standards.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the present study and conclusion therefore, the following recommendations were made.

- The students' rights to access to secondary education should be protected by making and implementing policies that penalize offenders.
- School administrators at all levels should enlighten staff and students on what constitutes abuse in schools (such as the use of corporal punishments) and how it can affect a child's development, so that it can be guided against. This is because principals alone cannot guarantee safety of the school environment.
- The researcher recommends that government should establish regular training and retraining programmes within and outside the school to support teachers in senior secondary school to develop professionally so that they can be equipped for effective dispense of their duties.
- Principals should ensure that school facilities are effectively utilized through supervision to avoid waste of scarce resources. They should be given training on facilities management, and assessed based on their ability to preserve school facilities in good working conditions.
- Government at all levels must come to the realization that education like every other economic sector, also suffers from inefficient power supply. This does not portend well for the nation, therefore government should declare a state of emergency in the power sector so that the education system can also benefit from its overhaul.

- It is likewise recommended that counsellors find ways to enlighten students about their presence in schools, as well as create an enabling environment for many students to access them as much as possible.

REFERENCES

- Achard, D. W. (Ed.). (2014). Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy (SEP). Retrieved from <http://www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights-children/>.
- Agabi, C. O. (2009). Resources for effective classroom instruction. In S. B. Nwideeduh (Ed.), *Focus on effective teaching in schools* (pp. 45-57). Port Harcourt: Paragraphics.
- Akinlami, T. (2016). Fast forward project: The child protection training manual.
- Ali, S., & Saleen, H. (2014). Quality Education. Retrieved from www.slideshare.net/Sabali5015/quality-education-42593835.
- Anibueze, U. A., Okwo, F. O. (2013). Counterpart funding of the universal basic education in Nigeria: Implication for counselling. In *Journal of Humanities And Social Science*, 17(2). Retrieved from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol17-issue2/B01721116.pdf?id>.
- Asodike, J. D. (2012). Instructional supervision: constraints and reform. In J. D. Asodike, L. E. S. Kaegon, O. E. Olawolu & N. Amadike (Eds.), *Educational planning and supervision: An introductory text* (pp. 158-172). Lagos: Ifomedia Graphic.
- Bukhari, B. (2006). *Review of recent legislative developments in the legal protection of women and children in Nigeria*. Paper presented at the Nigerian bar association's annual conference. Port Harcourt.
- Delfos, F. M. (2002). The developmental damage to children as a result of the violation of their rights. Retrieved from <http://www.mdelfos.nl/2002-maastricht-rights.pdf>.
- EDUCATION WORLD (2017). 25 ways to motivate teachers. Retrieved from http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin289.shtml.
- Elechi, G. E. (2010). Teaching and its professional ethics. In E. E. Adiele, M. B. Leigha & L. N. Abraham (Eds.), *Introduction to teaching profession* (pp.98-107). Port Harcourt: Harey Publications.
- Enefu. S. M., & Okaforcha, C. C. (2017). Maintenance of school facilities. In W. A. Amaewhule, N. M. Abraham & J. D. Asodike (Eds.). *School business management: Theoretical and practical approach* (pp. 462-471). Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers.
- Farooq, M. S., Chaudhry, A. H., Shafiq, M., & Berhanu, G. (2011). Factors affecting students' quality of academic performance: a case of secondary school level. *Journal of quality and technology management* 7(2), 1-14. Retrieved from pu.edu.pk/images/journal/iqtm/PDF-FILES/01-Factor.pdf.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2015). *Nigeria teachers' service manual*. Lagos:
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National policy on education*. Lagos: NERDC.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2003). *Child's Right Act 90 (116)*, 462. Lagos: Federal Government Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). *The constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria*. Abuja: Federal ministry of information.
- Higherlife Foundation (2016). Factors that affect student performance. Retrieved from <https://www.higherlifefoundation.com/factors-that-affect-student-performance/>.
- Ige, A. M. (2013). Provision of secondary education in Nigeria: Challenges and way forward. *Journal of African studies and development*, 5(1), 1-9. Retrieved from www.academicjournals.org/article/article1380092456_Ige.pdf.
- Igwe, L. E. B. (2015). *Elements of education law*. Port Harcourt: Redemption Printing and Publishing.

- Igwe, L. E. B. (2015). *Introduction to educational administration*. Port Harcourt: Redemption Printing and Publishing Company.
- Ikati, L. (2005). *Principals' tort of negligence and the legal implications of effective administration of secondary schools in Bayelsa State* (unpublished masters' thesis). University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- Kalagbor, L. D. (2010). An Assessment of Educators' Awareness of Legal Aspects of Secondary Students' Management in Rivers State. Retrieved from <http://globalacademicgroup.com/journals/the%20intuition/An%20Assessment%20of%20Educators%20%80%99%20Awareness%20of%20Legal%20Aspects.pdf>.
- Kotirde, I. Y., & Yunos, J. M. (2014). The impact of quality controlling in Nigerian secondary schools educational systems. In *international journal of scientific and research publications* 4(6), 1-4. Retrieved from www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0614/ijsrp-p3023.pdf.
- Lunenburg, F. C., & Ornstein, A. C. (2012). *Educational Administration*. USA: Wadsworth.
- Mathew, G. U. (2008). *Strategies for effective implementation of educational policy in secondary schools in Rivers State* (unpublished masters' thesis). University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- Meador, D. (2017). Factors that Limit School Effectiveness. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/factors-that-limit-school-effectiveness> UNESCO, (2005). Understanding education quality. Retrieved from www.unesco.org/education/gmrdownload/chapter1.pdf.
- Mebradu, R. E. (2008). *Students' rights and legal implications in the administration of secondary school education in Rivers State* (unpublished masters' thesis). University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- Nwogu, G. A. I. (2015). Barriers to equality of access to educational opportunity in Nigeria: A philosophical approach. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(4), 1-6. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1083781.pdf>.
- Nwokamma, A. O. (2017). Staff recruitment and management. In W. A. Amaewhule, N. M. Abraham & J. D. Asodike (Eds.). *School business management: Theoretical and practical approach* (pp. 257-275). Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers International.
- Nzokurum, J. C., & Awah, O. A. (2011). Quality assurance at the secondary school level: indices and challenges in public secondary schools in Abia State. *African Journal of Education Research and Development*, 4(2a), 205-216.
- Obisike, I. O. (2011). Professional awareness as a correlate of job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria. Retrieved from www.unn.edu.ng/publications/files/images/professional%20Awar...
- Odumbe, G. A., Enose, M. W. S. & Ayodo T. M. O. (2015). Factors influencing student academic performance in day-secondary schools in Kenya. A case study of Migori sub county. *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, 5(3), 78-97. <http://doi.org/10.15580/GJER.2015.3.071815099>.
- Ojule, I. C. (2017). Provision and management of water and light services in schools. In W. A. Amaewhule, N. M. Abraham & J. D. Asodike (Eds.). *School business management: Theoretical and practical approach* (pp. 338-355). Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers.
- Olaleye, F. O. (2013). Management competence; need for effective professionalization of Nigeria secondary school Principals. In *Kuwait chapter of Arabian journal of business and management review* 2 (10), 49-54. Retrieved from http://www.arabianjbmr.com/pdfs/KD_VOL_2_10/9.pdf
- Onwuaso, E. C. (2008). *Attitude of teachers to teaching as a profession in Aba zone, Abia State Nigeria* (unpublished masters' thesis). University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

- Opara, C. Z., & Ukoha, C. A. (2017). Guidance and counselling services in schools. In W. A. Amaewhule, N. M. Abraham & J. D. Asodike (Eds.). *School business management: Theoretical and practical approach* (pp. 391-408). Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers.
- Oshionebo, E. E., & Onyene, V. (2011). Quality assurance in federal government colleges in Lagos State. *African Journal of Education Research and Development*, 4(2a), 274-286.
- Oyedeji, S. O. (2012). Nigerian education law and discipline in secondary school: an Assessment of the role of classroom teachers. *African Journal of Educational Research and Administration* 5 (4). Retrieved from <http://www.irdionline.com/africanjournals/article/NIGERIAN%20EDUCAT...>
- Rice, J. K. (2003). Teacher quality: Understanding the effectiveness of teacher attributes. Retrieved from http://www.epi.org/publication/books_teacher_quality_execsum_intro/
- Rivers State of Nigeria (2005). *Rivers State schools rights (parents, children and teachers law) no 2*. Port Harcourt: Government Press.
- Sarumi, A., & Okoji, O. O. (2010). Indiscipline among the female secondary school students in selected rural communities of Rivers State in Nigeria: Causes and effects on academic performance. *Journal of Education and Practice* 1(1), 8-13. Retrieved from www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/viewFile/1651/1...
- STAKEHOLDER DEMOCRACY NETWORK (2013). A case study of poor service delivery: bolo community secondary school, Ogu-Bolo LGA education in Rivers State Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org/stockholm/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/BOLO-Education.pdf>.
- Sunshine, B. A., Lawrence C. C., & Juan J. T. D. (2015). Factors affecting the academic performance of the student nurses of BSU. *In international journal of nursing science* 5(2), 60-65. doi: 10.5923/j.nursing.20150502.04.
- Theirworld (n.d.). Right to education. Retrieved from <https://theirworld.org/explainers/right-to-education>.
- Udoh-Uwah, O. E. (2015). Effective administration of secondary schools in Cross Rivers, Nigeria: A panacea for academic excellence. *In science journal of sociology and anthropology*. doi :10.7237/sjsa/214 Science Journal of ...-3194686
- Uko, E. S. (2015). Principalship and effective management of facilities in secondary schools in Cross River State. *In international journal of academic research and reflection* 3 (1), 64-76. Retrieved from www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/PRINCIPALS...
- UNESCO (2011). A comprehensive reference framework for quality in education. Retrieved from <http://slideplayer.com/slide/706261/>.
- UNESCO (2011). General education quality diagnostic: Analysis and mentoring framework. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Santiago/pdf/general-buenos-aires.pdf#page=1&zoom=auto,-100,800>.
- UNESCO (2005). Understanding education quality. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/education/gmr_download/chapter1.pdf.
- UNICEF (2017). Right to education and schools. Retrieved from <https://www.unicefusa.org/mission/protect/education>
- UNICEF (2012). Child – friendly schools. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7260.html
- UNICEF (2004). Child protection: A handbook for parliamentarians. Retrieved from http://archive.ipu.org/PDF/publications/childprotection_en.pdf
- Waseka, E. L., Simatwa, E. M. W. & Okwach, T. O. (2016). Influence of teacher factors

on students' academic performance in secondary school education. A case study of Kakamega county, Kenya. *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, 6(4), 151-169. Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.15580/GJER.2016.4.060216102>.

World Education Forum (2000). Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf>.

 © JSRE

ⁱ **Chinmanma Obinachi** is of the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

ⁱⁱ **Lawrence Emenike Bull Igwe** is of the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Joy Chimajulam Nzokurum** is of the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.