AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.14 (2), January-April, 2025 https://ajemates.org

VIOLATION OF STUDENTS HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL IN AFIKPO EDUCATION ZONE, EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the Violation of Students Human Rights in the Administration of Secondary School in Afikpo Education Zone, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The study was guided with two research questions and null hypotheses. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised eighty-one thousand, fifty-three students in the Co-educational public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The sample of the study comprised three hundred and ninety-seven students. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire titled "Violation of Students Human Rights in the Administration of Secondary Schools Questionnaire (VSHRASSQ)". The instrument was validated by three experts: two in the Department of Educational Foundations (Educational Administration and Planning Unit) while one was Measurement and Evaluation Unit of Science Education, all from the Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha technique which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.72. Mean (x) and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the data analysis revealed that Principals' implementation of students' right to personal liberty and right to life in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State is to a high extent. Based on the findings the study recommended that: the principals should ensure that corporal punishments are administered with caution and not every staff should administer corporal punishment and school management should ensure that students are not exploited nor detained after school hours as a form of punishment or any other guise.

Keywords: Human Rights, Management, Secondary Schools, Implementation, Principals

Introduction

Principals have critical responsibilities of directing and controlling the activities of the human and material resources in order to achieve educational goals and objectives. Ayeni (2016) stated further that the present system of secondary education in Nigeria poses a lot of new challenges to secondary school principals and to meet these challenges, a school principal as an

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administrator need to equip him/her self with the knowledge, skills and attitude which will make him/her proficient in his/her administrative and professional duties. The principal as a school administrator, who is supposed to have proven qualities and the knowledge of achieving his/her administrative roles in line with the objective of education. Igwe (2010) stressed that principals are the uncompromising leaders of their schools as well as administrators in whose hands lie the future of these institutions. Ogbonnaya (2003) in his related view sees the principal; as the chief executive of the school, who is charged with the day-to-day running of secondary schools in Nigeria. It is principal that implements the educational programmes in secondary schools, keeps statutory records as well as create a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning in the school.

It is therefore expected that the principal must be competent enough in his/her administrative duties, so as to ensure successful operation of secondary schools. In so doing, he/she maintains educational standards and goals established by the policy makers, supervise and support students, monitor students educational moral progress, manage career counseling and other student services. Kalu (2017) noted that many principals have abdicated their administrative roles in the areas of implementing students' fundamental rights.

However, implementation in this context implies the process of carrying out objectives or a plan. It is the process of performing a task, an activity or programme. Eimuhi (2014) described implementation as the stage where the preparations made earlier, the plans, designs and analysis proposed are tested to see what they really are. So, effective implementation of students' fundamental right in the actualization of educational objectives account for effective administration in the school system for enhancing students' academic performance. Akande (2018) also maintained that fundamental rights are backed up by the constitution of the land and argue that the theory of constitution as a superior law is well known. The courts apply the constitution as law to the cases before them but they do not enforce any law which, in their opinion is forbidden by the constitution. Chukwu (2010) reported that certain rights are perceived as sacrosanct: divine, natural and fundamental to the very existence of man in a civilized society and therefore cannot be deprived or subjected to reckless abuse or infringement.

Rights have been generally described as the liberty of a person to act or abstain from acting in a certain manner. Arop (2019) defined human rights as freedom and entitlements granted to man by reason of his being human, which also constitute the inherent and inalienable rights that all men without discrimination or deprivation are entitled to, in protection of their human

dignity. The rights are applicable to everyone, irrespective of age, sex, religion, and any other factors.

In secondary schools, students may face some problems ranging from abuse of dignity, right to fair hearing or association. The school has the social and constitutional responsibilities of educating citizenry and protecting its learners from abuse of their rights. This is intricately interwoven in the responsibility due to inadequate knowledge and unawareness of fundamental human rights. This appears to undermine administrator's ability to protect and promote such rights thereby causing a lot of setbacks in the actualization of educational goals.

In many secondary schools particularly in Ebonyi State, students are maltreated by some school principals and their teachers in the process of carrying out administrative activities in the school. These often lead to brutalization of students in the school environment therefore making students to feel less important in the schools. This abnormal attitude of brutalization by some principals do affect students academically due to emotional torture and also retards administrative effectiveness of the school.

Specifically, right to life and dignity of human person, appear mostly violated in the school system of today in Ebonyi State. The rising issues of sexual abuse has also generated lot of concern to stakeholders, especially parents who watch helplessly the moral decay in educational system. This often give rise to crisis between students' parents and school community due to the violation of personal liberty, righty to life and dignity of human person which no parents can tolerate. This in turn distract and cause setback in the administrative functions of any school.

Personal liberty as human right affirmed that one need not to be subjected to imprisonment, arrest and other physical coercion in any manner that does not admit legal justification (Eseni, 2011). Ngwakwe (2008) primarily asserted that freedom has to do with one's right to move about as willed. In educational environment the ensuring of freedom from imprisonment, arrest and coercion are primary roles of principals but the effective implementation of this function appears lacking in the process of carrying out administrative functions by some school principals (Arop, 2019). Personal liberty as a right of the *individual* is limited only by the authority of politically organized society to regulate ones' action so as to secure public health, safety, or morals or of other recognized social interests (Hornby, 2008). This right guarantees that individuals have a right to their liberty. This means that no individual must be deprived of his or her right to liberty or freedom unless it is in accordance with the law.

Similarly, right to life according to Lawpadi (2020) is the belief that a human being has an essential right to live, particularly that a

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human being has the right not to be killed by another human being. These right stresses that everyone has to exist, and no one can intentionally deprive a person of this right, either as individual, principals or the government, unless in the execution of a sentence of the law court in respect of a criminal offence. In a nutshell, what this right says is that no one can take one's life unless one is linked with criminal issues and has been tried by a competent court, and found guilty. All bases of protecting students in the school environment give a sense of belonging to students and this arouses students' moral over effective learning in the school system as their right to life and association are not tempered with.

The rising cases of violation of students' fundamental right is a source of worry to parents and the general public, especially when the major focus of the attention seem to be on the principals' poor implementation of the rights of the students under their control. Therefore, the problem of this study summarized in question form is: to what extent are students' rights to fair hearing, right to life, peaceful association, personal liberty and dignity of human person implemented by principals in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the Extent of Human Rights Implementation in the Management Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. determine the extent principals implement students' right to personal liberty in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.
2. ascertain the extent principals implement students' right to life in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State

Research Questions

The following research questions, guided this study.

1. What is the extent of principals' implementation of students' right to personal liberty in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
2. What is the extent of principals' implementation of students' right to life in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

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Review Related Literature

Fundamental Human Rights

Fundamental human rights are the basic natural rights which are essential for human existence and every citizen is entitled to them and is expected to enjoy them in full without hindrance or discrimination (Ukegbu, Adebayo, Uche and Anayeoha, 2012). The Nigeria constitution has several articles as fundamental rights of man. They include: The right to life, right to dignity of human person, the right to personal liberty, the right to fair hearing as well as right to peaceful assembly (Nwandike and Kalu, 2017). The fundamental rights are generally regarded as set of legal protections in the context of legal system, wherein such system itself is said to be based upon this same set of basic, fundamental or inalienable "rights." Such rights thus belong without presumption or cost of privilege to all human beings under such jurisdiction.

The concept of human right has been promoted as a legal concept in large part owing to the idea that human beings have such "fundamental" rights, such that transcend all jurisdictions, but are typically reinforced in different ways and with different emphasis within different legal system. Akande (2018) also maintained that fundamental rights are better backed up by the constitution of the land and argues that the theory of constitution as a superior law is well known. The courts apply the constitution as law to the cases before them but they do not enforce any law which, in their opinion is forbidden by the constitution. Mejieobi (1994) reported that certain rights are perceived as sacrosanct, basic divine, natural and fundamental to the very existence of man in a civilized society and therefore not to be deprived or subjected to reckless abuse or infringement.

This has made the attainment of equal rights to remain a constant struggle. The existence, validity and content of human rights continue to be the subject of debate in philosophy and politics (Obi, 2003). However, it is defined in both domestic and international laws, and there is a great variance between how human rights norms are perceived and defined in various ways both in context and how they are upheld in different countries of the world.

Personal Liberty

Personal liberty is one of the three terms used most frequently in the catholic social thought and now, more generally, in more secular discourse. These three terms are social justice, the common good, and persona or individual liberty. Personal liberty, according to Novak (2009) is not an intuitive, but a learned concept, a socially learned concept. He further expressed in the words of Jacques, maintain, that it is by this fragile and precious liberty that the human person transcends the stars and all the world of nature. Eseni, (2011) also sees personal liberty as the right not to be subjected to imprisonment, arrest and other physical coercion in any manner that does not admit legal justification. Ngwakwe (2008) supporting this view stated that the right primarily assures a person of the

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freedom to stay or move about at his own will, direction and time. From the above review of the concept of personal liberty, it can be defined as denoting freedom from bodily restraint and the right of the individual to contract, to engage in any of the common occupations of life, to acquire useful knowledge, to marry to establish a home and bring up children, to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience and generally to enjoy those privileges long recognized as being essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness. It is not surprising therefore when Plato called it the "good life" for citizens and it is the duty of the state to promote it and ensure the stability of the regime. Violation of the right to personal liberty take different forms including but not limited to all forms of arrest, detention, incarceration, imprisonment and obstruction of movement.

This is the freedom of the individual to do as he pleases limited only by the authority of politically organized society to regulate his action to secure the public health, safety, or morals or of others recognized social interests. It is also the liberty of an individual to do his or her will freely except for those restraints imposed by law to safeguard the physical moral, political and economic welfare of others (Novak, 2009). The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in line with the above maintains that every person shall be entitled to his personal liberty and no person shall be deprived of such liberty save in the following cases and in accordance with a procedure permitted by law.

Right to Life

Right to life is a phrase that describes the belief that a human being has an essential right to live, particularly that a human being has the right not to be killed by another human being. The concept of right to life is central to debates on the issues of euthanasia, capital punishment, abortion, self defence and war. In 1776, the United States Declaration of Independence, declared that all men are endowed with certain inalienable rights, and that "among these are life, liberty and pursuit of happiness." Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security. In 1950, the European Convention on Human Rights was adopted by the council of Europe, declaring a protected Human Right to life in Article 20. With the above, principals should not infringe on the right of students to life as this will violate their human rights. The resultant effect of this infringement leads to insecurity as students tend to avoid schooling, get frustrated and withdraw from such academic environment and this leads to academic instability and learning becomes ineffective and subsequently the result of all this violation by principals is poor academic performance.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey research design according to Nworgu (2006) is a design approach which aims at collecting and

describing data in a systematic manner, the characteristics feature or facts about a given population. The area of the study was Ebonyi State. The State has 13 Local Government Areas (LGA). These include: Abakaliki, Ebonyi, Izzi, Ivo, Ikwo, Onicha, Ohaozara, Ishielu, Ezza South, Ezza North, Afikpo South, Afikpo North, and Ohaukwu LGAs. Ebonyi state is divided into three (3) Education Zones which include: Abakaliki, Afikpo and Onueke Education Zones. Ebonyi State shares geographical boundaries with Benue State in the North, Abia State in the south, Cross River state in the East; and Enugu State in the West. The people of Ebonyi State are mainly farmers with a good number of traders and civil servants. The people of the state are mainly Igbos by their cultural background and other Nigerians. There are many public secondary schools in the State. The choice of the state for the study is based on the researcher's interest and various complaints of students on human right violation in the area. The zeal for choosing the area is basically to contribute towards the enhancement of the standard of secondary schools' system in the state as regards healthy school environment on the students' fundamental rights implementation in the area. The population of the study comprised 81,053 students in the 196-co-education public senior secondary schools in Ebonyi State. There are 40,986 male students and 40,067 female students in the co-educational schools as at the time of this study in Ebonyi State. The sample for the study is 397 respondents which comprised of 201 male and 196 female students. This sample size was arrived at Taro Yamane formular for finite population. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw the sample of female and male students in the state. The instrument for data collection was a researcher structured questionnaire titled Extent of Human Rights Implementation in the Management Secondary Schools Questionnaire (EHRIMSSQ). The questionnaire response option takes a modified likert type scale the form of 4 – point rating scale, ranging from 'Very High Extent (4), High Extent (3), Low Extent (2) and very Low Extent (1). Respondents were expected to make judgments by ticking (√) the appropriate columns which expressed their opinions about the items. The instrument was face validated by three (3) experts: two from the Department of Educational Foundations (Educational Administration and Planning) and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation); all from the Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. These experts were requested to review the items in terms of their clarity, the appropriateness of the language and expressions to ensure unambiguity and the relevance of the items to the problem under investigation. The experts made necessary corrections and the corrections made were effected by the researcher. The validated instrument was trial tested with forty (40) students in Enugu State which is not part of the study area to ensure its

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reliability. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha technique was used for its analysis. Reliability coefficients for the cluster were as follows; cluster A**:** 0.83 and cluster E:0.75. These gave an overall reliability score of 0.72. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable and therefore considered appropriate for use. In answering the research questions, data collected from respondents were analyzed using SPSS. In taking decision for mean, range values were adopted. That is 1.00-1.49 for Very Low Extent (VLE), 1.50 – 2.49 for Low Extent (LE), 2.50 – 3.49 for High Extent (HE) and 3.50 -4. 00 for Very High Extent (VHE). In testing the hypotheses, t-test was used to test the entire null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance

Research Question One: To what extent do principals' implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State?
The data providing answers to the above research question are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Responses on the extent to which principals' implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

S/No.	Principals' Implementation of Students' Right to Personal Liberty:	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DEC.
1	Secondary school principals graduate their students as at when due	397	3.00	0.48	HE
2	Students are deprived the privilege of writing examination they have duly registered for, no matter the offence levelled against them	397	2.49	0.57	LE
3	Opportunities are given to students to transfer to school of their choice without delay.	397	2.79	0.57	HE
4	Students are not punished after school hours.	397	1.87	0.60	LE
5	Principals vehemently prevent students from taking menial jobs from school teachers.	397	2.96	0.53	HE
6	Allow students to undertake their personal choice of class activities in the school environment.	397	2.04	0.53	LE
	Grand Mean		**2.52**	**0.54**	**HE**

In Table 1, the responses of the respondents revealed that secondary school principals graduate their students as at when due, give students opportunities to be transferred to school of their choice without delay, prevent students from taking menial jobs from school teachers, these were recorded to a high extent while items of serial numbers; 2, 4 and 6 recorded low extent. The grand mean for the

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cluster is 2.73; this is between 2.50 and 3.49 and corresponds to High Extent (HE).

Research Two: What is the extent of principals' implementation of students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State?

The data providing answers to the above research question are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Responses on the extent to which principals' implementation of students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

S/No	Implementation of students' right to life by Principals:	N	X̄	SD	DEC.
7	Principals move around the school environment, monitoring students' ways about in the school	397	2.08	0.40	LE
8	Principals administered punishments to student without due consideration	397	2.84	0.54	HE
9	Students are adequately supervised in their playground to avoid bullying among students.	397	2.66	0.47	HE
10	Fighting among students are seriously handled with care.	397	2.71	0.88	HE
11	Principal maintain cordial relations with students in order to extract information from them.	397	2.58	0.57	HE
12	School buildings are not left in dangerous conditions of disrepair to avoid injuries among students.	397	2.82	0.47	HE
13	Students learning facilities are effectively maintained in order to save their life.	397	2.66	0.55	HE
	Grand Mean		**2.62**	**0.55**	**HE**

In Table 2, the study revealed that responses of the respondents in items 8,9,10,11,12 and 13 recorded high extent thus: that Principals administered punishments to student without due consideration, that students are adequately supervised in their playground to avoid bullying among students, that fighting among students are seriously handled with care, maintained cordial relations with students in order to extract information from them, School buildings are not left in dangerous conditions of disrepair to avoid injuries among students s and students learning facilities are effectively maintained in order to save their life. Only item 7 recorded low extent.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. The components of students right to personal liberty were separated across gender of the school principals and subjected them to test of difference using t-test statistical tool. Summary of results were shown in Table 3.

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Table 3: t-test of difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

Items	Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit.	Decision
1	Male	201	2.61	0.79	395	0.32	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.63	0.68				
2	Male	201	2.47	0.51	395	0.92	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.52	0.53				
3	Male	201	2.83	0.56	395	1.41	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.75	0.57				
4	Male	201	1.89	0.61	395	0.63	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	1.85	0.64				
5	Male	201	2.96	0.28	395	0.26	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.97	0.30				
6	Male	201	2.06	0.57	395	0.93	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.01	0.53				
	Average					**0.75**	**1.96**	**Not Significant**

The result of t-test analysis presented in Table 3 indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. This is because from the table above, all items obtained a t-calculated value that is less than the t-critical. The average t-calculated value of 0.75 was also less than the average t-critic. Based on this, the researcher hereby accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

The data in respect to students' right to life were grouped based gender of the respondents. A t-test analysis of the difference between the two categories was used to compute the result as presented on Table 4.

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Table 4: t-test of difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Items	Category of Responds	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t.crit.	Decision
7	Male	201	2.10	0.39	395	1.07	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.06	0.41				
8	Male	201	2.82	0.55	395	0.75	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.86	0.54				
9	Male	201	2.67	0.47	395	0.28	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.65	0.47				
10	Male	201	2.73	0.89	395	0.59	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.68	0.87				
11	Male	201	2.58	0.58	395	0.09	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.58	0.56				
12	Male	201	2.83	0.45	395	0.09	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.82	0.48				
13	Male	201	2.67	0.55	395	0.24	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	196	2.65	0.54				
	Average					**0.44**	**1.96**	**Not Significant**

The result of t-test analysis presented in Table 4 indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. This is because from the table above, most of the items obtained a t-calculated value that was less than the t-critical value. The average t-calculated value of 0.44 was also less than the average t-critical value. Based on this, the researcher hereby failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Discussion

The revealed extent of principals' implementation of students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools which ranges from graduating their students as and when due, give students opportunities to be transferred to school of their choice without delay, prevent students from not allowing them to undertake menial jobs for school administrator corresponds to a high extent while the hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. This revealed that there were no differences in the responses of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to personal liberty in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

e. So, both opinions geared toward one direction

The above finding is contrary to that of Festus, Franca and Theresa (2011) in their study on evaluation of human rights implementation in students' personnel administration in secondary schools, they found, among other things, that there was a significant implementation of students' rights, particularly in the area of dignity of human person. This implies that the implementation of students' right to dignity of human person, has no national characteristic and does not justify the need to articulate remedial measures. The 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria supported this right and maintains that every person shall be entitled to his personal liberty and no person shall be deprived of such liberty in accordance with the procedure permitted by law. To this, there is need to assess extent principals implement students right to personal liberty in academic with the provision of law in secondary schools.

The results revealed that the respondents to high extent accepted that principals administered punishments to student without due consideration, that students are adequately supervised in their playground to avoid bullying among students, that fighting among students are seriously handled with care, maintained cordial relations with students in order to extract information from them, school building are not left in dangerous conditions of disrepair to allow injuries among students and students learning facilities are effectively maintained in order to save their life corresponds to high extent while hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. This an indication that there were no differences in the responses of male and female students on the extent principals implement students' right to life in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State.

The findings in support to the studies of Nakpodia (2011) and Kiggundu (2005), for example, in his analysis on implementation of students' rights in secondary schools, Nakpodia (2011) found out that school authorities implement some of the students' fundamental human rights, including right to life where they failed to apply due process of law in taking disciplinary actions. In a similar dimension, Kiggundu (2005), in his own study of management of students' discipline in Uganda, found that punishments were fairly administered on the students, often leading to respecting students' rights. Thus, there is need to assess extent principals implement students right to life in secondary schools.

Conclusion

In conclusion the issue of implementation of students' fundamental rights in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State are to high extent, the aspect of fundamental rights

recognized by secondary school principals are right to peaceful association and right to fair hearing in secondary schools which all correspond to high extent, which is an indication that the effective implementation of these rights vehemently improved students' academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion of the results, the following recommendations were made:

1. As regards the implementation of students' right to life by school principals, the principals should ensure that corporal punishments are administered with caution and not every staff should administer corporal punishment
2. In the area of implementation of students' rights to personal liberty, school management should ensure that students are not exploited nor detained after school hours as a form of punishment or any other guise.

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