

IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS OF CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL RECORDS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the implementation of standard specifications of curriculum and school records in public primary schools in rivers state, Nigeria. Two objectives and two research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised all the 956 public primary schools in Rivers State. The total respondents were 7,146 made up of 956 head teachers and 6,190 teachers. The sample for the study consisted of 287 public primary schools and 402 respondents (48 head teachers and 354 teachers) in Rivers State. The disproportionate stratified random sampling technique of 30% and 5% was used to arrive at the sample. The instrument for the study consisted of an observation schedule of 27 items. Face and content validities were ensured. The frequency and percentage were used to answer the research questions. It was found that the standard specifications in the areas of curriculum and school records were moderately adhered in accordance to the specifications. It was recommended that the school administrators and subject teachers should insist through proper supervision in order to ensure that all the subjects in the standard specification are taught forthwith. The school administrator should make it necessary for every teacher to attend at least one development programme before promotion into the next level. A register and good file cabinet should be provided by the school head-teachers for effective and efficient record keeping in the schools.

Keywords: Facilities, Staffing and Standard Specification

INTRODUCTION

Primary education is the education attainment and accomplishment before the secondary education. Primary education is vital in the process of acquiring knowledge and skills. It sets the pace for other levels of education within the educational system. It also serves as a key to the success or failures of the entire system, as the rest of the levels of education are built round it. It's worthy to note that the importance of primary education is seen from the point of view of literacy and numeracy. Primary education from the formal point of view is the foundation of formal education which also implies that everyone embarking or intending to embark on an educational pursuit would have to start from this level as a child. According to Asodike and Ikpitibo (n.d), primary education is an extremely important ingredient within the arrangement of the educational system of every nation. That one must have to pass through the primary level of education before going to other levels of education thus, it serves as an institution upon which the educational attainment of the levels are built on. Furthermore, they said that primary education sets the mind of the child in motion towards acquiring the kind of training necessary for the pursuit of further educational attainment which also creates an opportunity for such a child to acquire the fundamental knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic equally known as the three Rs. From the views expressed, it is obvious that primary education is indeed important in the process of knowledge acquisition hence it should be accorded significant attention so as to deliver quality education at this level. The objectives of primary education are as follows:

1. To inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively;
2. To lay a sound basis for scientific, critical and reflective thinking;
3. To promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity;
4. To instill social, moral norms and values in the child;
5. To develop in the child the ability to adapt to the changing environments; and
6. To provide opportunities for the child to develop life manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capability(Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014:10).

The achievement of these noble and lofty goals and objectives of primary education is based on the adherence to standard specified in this level of education. Standards specifications in its entirety deals with those conditions that ensures that educational programmes particularly at the primary level is achieved through the provision of physical facilities such as well-built school buildings, spacious classrooms, tables, chairs, pupils/teacher ratio of 35:1, etc. that will create an enabling environment for teaching and learning. Also ensures that qualified teachers are employed to teach in primary schools across the nation. It specifies that appropriate curriculum should be used to ensure that the content taught conforms to the intentions of the objectives of primary education in line with the national policy on education. Also is the need to ensure that records pertaining to the day to day activities of both the teachers and pupils are kept properly such as admission register, lesson notes, staff personal files, etc. Also prescribed is the need for periodic training to be given to teachers in the form of seminars, workshops, in-service training and other professional development programmes to update their knowledge since we are in a changing world. Equally emphasized is the need for parents to be involved in monitoring the activities of the school to make the teachers responsible and accountable. These standard specifications serve as inputs in the educational system that is expected to go through a process. The process is the interaction between the teacher, pupils and the environment in which the activities of teaching and learning takes place.

These standard specifications are mandatory to be implemented by primary schools in order to maintain a minimum quality of educational delivery. The extent to which these directives are implemented will go a long way in terms of improving the quality of education to be attained as schools will function more efficiently and effectively thus, the realization of educational goals and objectives of the national policy on education. Issues relating to quality cannot be resolved without these minimum standards because they serve as benchmarks for measuring improvement. Therefore, it becomes imperative to say that if this standard specification implementation is not strictly adhered to, will continue to affect the quality of education delivered at this level. This will lead to the non – attainment of educational goals and objectives as stated in the national policy on education at this level. Ademolekun in Makinde (2005) describe implementation as the activities that are carried out in the light of established policies. Ademolekun further stated that it is the process of converting financial, material, technical and human inputs into outputs – goods and services. Egonmwan and Edwards also in Makinde (2005) describe implementation as a phase of policy making between the formation of policy (such as the passage of legislative act, issuing of an executive order or the promulgation of a regulatory rule) and the consequences of the policy for the people whom it affects. Egonmwan and Edwards further specified that it involves a wide range of actions such as allotting and imposing of directives, paying money, creating loans, allocating and engaging people, etc.

Nigeria as one of the developing countries is faced with the problem of the inability to implement successfully over the years, plans of various educational programmes, including

the plans to maintain standards. According to Uwazuruike(1991), Obi, Nwachukwu and Obiora (2008), often times the inability to implement plans of educational programmes is attributed to the lack of proper planning, efficient administration, funds and resources, political instability, etc. The driving force towards any plan attainment is implementation because it is action oriented; and is concerned with putting educational plans into action. Educational programmes plans no matter how good they may look or sound makes little or no meaning until they are actually implemented. Olaniyi (1998) said that implementation is the process of interaction between goals and actions geared towards achieving them. It then implies that implementation is the means to an end. It is a system or tool by which result is achieved or attained.

In this study, implementation means compliance to the regulations of the Ministries of Education (MOE). It is to obey and put into practice the rules given as minimum standard specifications in order to maintain minimum qualitative education at the primary level. As mention was made earlier, the foundation of any educational system, is very vital, hence it requires a sound and excellent structure to create positive impact at other levels within the educational system. Ibeh (1990) said that the early years of the child are the formative periods of his life that at these formative years, the child's personality, behavior and characteristics is determined. Therefore, there is need to ensure that proper foundation is laid in order to develop the child most appropriately. It is against this backdrop, the ministries of education established the guideline, specifying the minimum requirements for the establishment of primary schools. These specifications include physical facilities provision, school staffing, curriculum/instruction, governance and school record keeping (FME, 2005; RSMOE, 2004).

The success of primary education hinges on the implementation of these minimum standard specifications by government and private individuals who are stakeholders. Obi, Nwachukwu and Obiora (2008) said that the general assumptions are that when resources, knowledge, money and materials are available, implementation will be easy, but that is not always the case. Barret and Fuge in Obi et al (2008) believes that implementation of educational programmes depend on factors such as knowing what to do, the availability of resources, the ability to marshal and control these resources to achieve the desired end or result and the level of co-operation between the implementers (stakeholders). This implies that effective implementation of educational programmes require the identification of the cause of actions, in terms of knowing what to do. Most people who delve into establishing schools lack knowledge of what it takes to start – up. Some others who find themselves in leadership position who know little or nothing about education will apparently not be interested in its functioning. More so, most people see or perceive the establishment of primary level of education as a quick way of making money as such will not bordered by knowing the “nitty gritty” of establishing a standard school.

The Curriculum is of vital importance in the entire educational process. It refers to the knowledge and practice in various subject area that teachers are expected to teach and that learners are supposed to learn. Precisely Curriculum means a planned course of action, which explicitly states the programme of learning as endorsed by the government for use by all levels within the educational system. It consists of a breath of content in subject areas and a sequence of concepts as well as activities for learning.

Perhaps this is the basis upon which curriculum is developed for the entire educational system as it seems to embraces all aspects of human development. The curricula of the Nigerian educational system are developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) for all schools in the country, in line with the adoption of the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) to meet the ideas of the UBE programme (FRN, 2013). The curriculum contains the fundamentals of both the National Economic

Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thus, it was implemented in September, 2008 and later faced out. Also, as a result of the feedback on the implementation of BEC, there arose the need to review the subjects of BEC thereby leading to the reduction of the number of subjects offered in primary schools and a new curriculum presented for use by all schools.

Record keeping is a fundamental activity in every organization or institution. Without records, no organization whether companies or educational institutions can be effective as well as be accountable. Records refer to a written account of something that is kept so that it can be looked out and used in the future. This implies that any unprocessed or processed datum collected and kept for future use, constitutes a record. Primary educational institutions requirement information for work to be done on regular basis and records represent a particular and crucial source of information. Thus, according to Udoh and Akpa (2010) records are viewed as indispensable instruments for efficient and effective management and administration of educational institutions. Though it could be argued that good memory could be an asset to a successful administrator, Robinson in Udoh and Akpa (2010) stated that many people tend to forget things easily thereby finding it difficult to remember events in their lives and for this reason, the keeping of records will help to solve some of the problems associated with forgetting things. He further stated that when records are properly kept, they supply vital and adequate information at all times. Records serve as reliable, legally verifiable source of evidence of decisions and actions taken in the past within the educational institutions. Records are required to ensure conformity amongst the various activities being carried out, such as administrative and academic to ensure the attainment of the goals and objectives of the primary institutions.

School records according are important and handy records which must be carefully kept by the school administrator in his or her school in order to ensure effective and efficient administration. That when vital records are maintained in its totality, forms the cornerstone for an efficient administration. School records are also school books, documents, diskettes registers and files that contain important school activities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Primary school is the foundation to all other levels of education. Lack of quality and standard at the primary level of education will be manifested in poor academic record and poor school adjustment at all other levels of education. Sometimes, the poor educational attainment at the primary level is not only the fault of the students but could also be traceable to the implementation of standards as enshrined in the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education has made it mandatory that teachers must qualifications in education and must be attending development programmes from time to time. They also warned that the primary schools must have facilities, records, curriculum, staffing and supervision. When there is no adherence to these standards, it will go a long way to defeat the general purpose of basic level of education. It is still uncertain whether standard specifications have been implemented in primary schools in Rivers State in the areas of curriculum and record keepings. The researcher is therefore bothered, hence, investigated whether standard specifications of curriculum and record keeping have been implemented in public primary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives guided this study:

1. Examine whether curriculum meets with the standard specifications on curriculum in primary schools in Rivers State.

2. Identify how well school records are kept in primary schools in Rivers State;

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What is the status of implementation of standard specification on curriculum in public primary schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the status of implementation of standard specification on school records keeping in public primary school in Rivers State?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprise all the 956 public primary schools in Rivers State. Rivers East has 356 public primary schools, Rivers South – East has 279 public primary schools and Rivers West has 321 public primary schools. The study involved schools, head teachers and teachers. The respondents were 7,146 made up of 956 head teachers and 6,190 teachers. The sample size of the study consisted of 287 public primary schools and 906 (287 head teachers and 619 teachers) respondents. The 287 public primary schools were simple randomly drawn using 30% of the population of schools (956). The respondents were sampled using disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. The head teachers of 382 was sampled from a population of 956 representing 40% of the population. Moreso, 619 teachers were sampled from a population of 6,190 representing 10% of the population of teachers. A self-designed instrument titled Implementation of Standard Specifications on Facilities and Staff Training Questionnaire (ISSFSTQ). Face and content validities were ensured by experts. Kuder Reachardson 20 was used to establish the reliability coefficient of ISSFSTQ to be 0.71. Frequency was used to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What is the status of implementation of standard specification on curriculum in terms of subjects in public primary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1. Frequency and percentage scores on the implementation of standard specification on curriculum on subjects in public primary schools in Rivers State

s/n	Use of Prescribed Curriculum	Rivers East		Rivers South-East		Rivers West	
		Imp(%)	NImp(%)	Imp(%)	NImp(%)	Imp(%)	NImp(%)
1	English Language is taught as a subject	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
2	Mathematics is taught as a subject	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
3	Basic Science and Technology is taught as a subject	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
4	Religion and National Values is taught as a subject	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
5	Cultural and Creative Arts is taught as a subject	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
6	French Language is taught in upper basic classes	0(0%)	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(0%)
7	Hausa Language is taught as a subject	0(0%)	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(0%)
8	Igbo Language is taught as a subject	0(0%)	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(0%)
9	Yoruba Language is taught as a subject	0(0%)	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(0%)
10	Prevocational studies	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)

Table 1 revealed the implementation of standard specification of curriculum on subjects. The table showed that items with serial numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 have their various percentage

scores above the average percentage score of 50%, and were the curriculum on subjects implemented in primary schools in the 3 senatorial zones of Rivers State. The implemented curriculum on subjects based on standard specifications was: English Language, Mathematics, Basic Science/Technology, Religion/National values, Cultural/Creative Arts and prevocational skills. On the contrary, items with serial numbers 6, 7, 8 and 9 have their various percentage scores below the average percentage of 50% and were not implemented in primary schools in the 3 senatorial zones of Rivers.

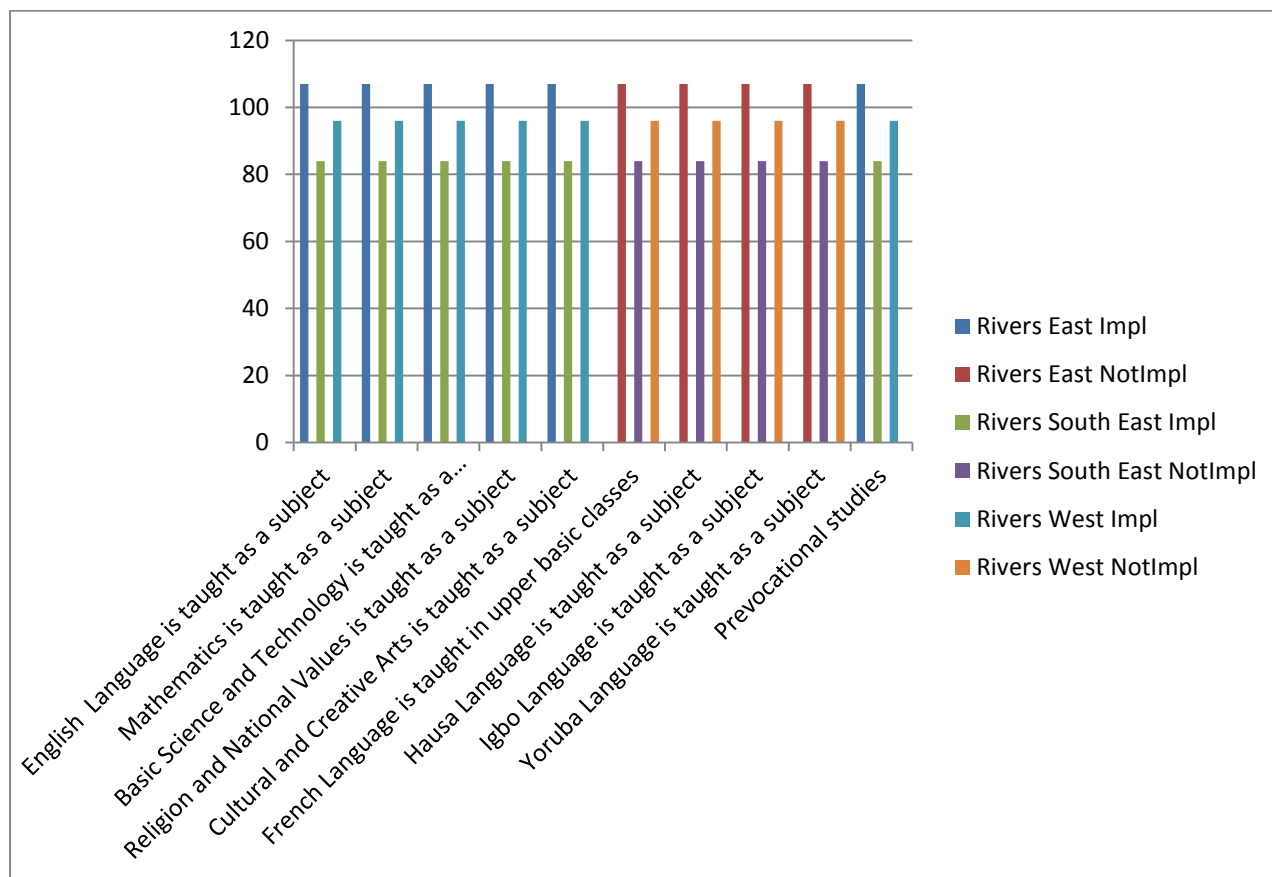


Figure 1: Graphical representation of the implementation of standard specification on prescribed curriculum

Research Question Two

What is the status of implementation of standard specification on school records keeping in public primary school in Rivers State?

Table 2 revealed that items with serial numbers 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 have their various percentage values above the average percentage score of 50%, and were therefore the school records that met the standard specifications in the 3 senatorial zones of Rivers State. The school records that met the standard implementations were: admission register, pupils attendance, log/announcement, school diaries/scheme of work, staff register, withdrawal register, school time tables, staff attendance, transfer certificates, curriculum/syllabus, staff duty role, testimonials, staff movement register, pupils continuous assessment, inspection reports, minutes book of board of governors and submitted lesson notes. On the contrary items with serial numbers 22 and 23 have their various average percentage below 50% and were therefore not implemented in line with the standard specifications in primary schools.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage scores on the implementation of standard specification on school records keeping

s/ n	School Records Keeping	Specification	Rivers East		Rivers South East		Rivers West	
			Imp (%)	NImp (%)	Imp (%)	NImp (%)	Imp (%)	NImp (%)
11	Admission Register	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
12	Pupils' Attendance Registers	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	83(99%)	1(1%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
13	Log/Announcement books	At least a copy	103(96%)	4(4%)	80(95%)	4(5%)	76(80%)	20(20%)
14	School diaries/Scheme of work	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
15	Staff Registers	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
16	Withdrawal Register	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	81(96%)	3(4%)	90(94%)	6(6%)
17	School – Time Tables	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
18	Staff Attendance Registers	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	93(97%)	3(3%)
19	Transfer Certificates	At least a copy	101(94%)	6(6%)	73(86%)	11(14%)	86(89%)	10(14%)
20	Curriculum/Syllabus	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
21	Staff duty Roll	At least a copy	98(92%)	9(8%)	79(94%)	5(6%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
22	Education Law book	At least a copy	2(2%)	105(98%)	2(2%)	82(98%)	39(41%)	57(59%)
23	School Prospectus	At least a copy	0(0%)	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)
24	Testimonials	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
25	Staff Movement Register	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
26	Pupils' Continuous Assessment Records/books	At least a copy	88(82%)	19(18%)	67(79%)	17(21%)	88(92%)	8(8%)
27	Conduct/Reward books	At least a copy	78(73%)	29(27%)	53(63%)	31(37%)	71(74%)	25(26%)
28	Copies of Inspection Reports	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
29	Minutes book of Board of Governors	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)
30	Submitted lesson Notes	At least a copy	107(100%)	0(0%)	84(100%)	0(0%)	96(100%)	0(0%)

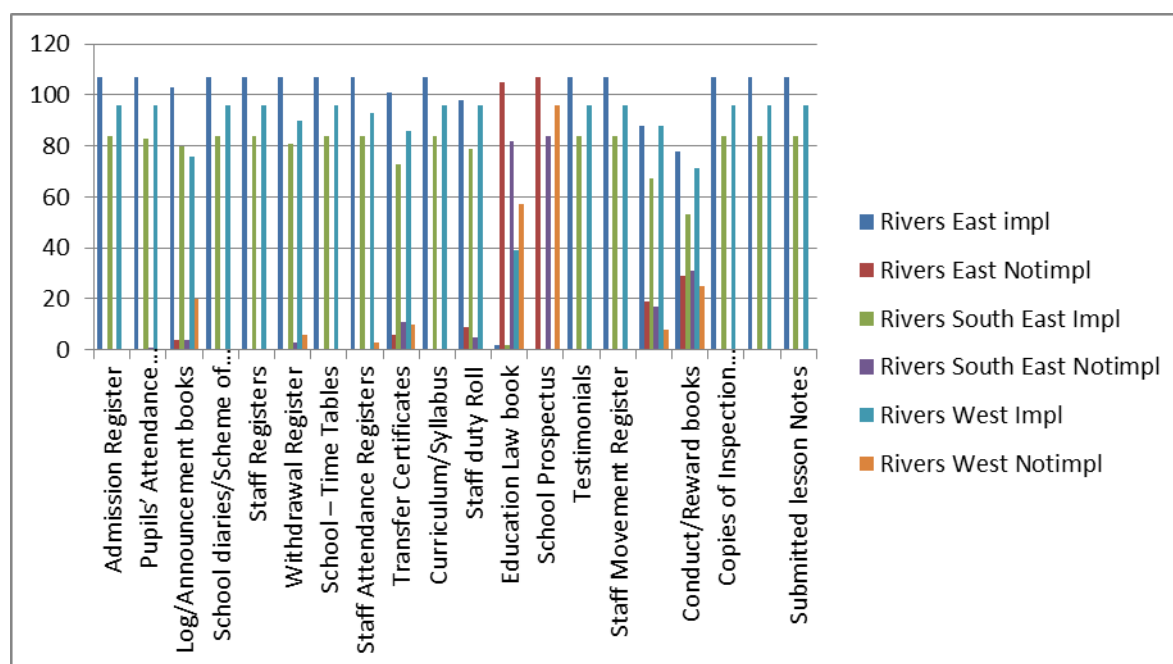


Figure 2: Graphical representation of the standard specification on the implementation of school records keeping

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Implementation of Standard Specification on Subject Curriculum

The implemented curricular on subjects based on the standard specifications are on: English Language, Mathematics, Basic Science/Technology, Religion/National values, Cultural/Creative Arts and Prevocational Skills. The schools in the various senatorial zones of Rivers State, Nigeria have not in any way adhered to the standard specification on subject curriculum implementation. It is expected from the standard specifications that all the recommended subjects should be taught in primary schools in Rivers State but a few of them were implemented. The few subjects that were recorded in these schools are English Language, Mathematics, Basic Science/Technology, Religion/National values, Cultural/Creative Arts and prevocational skills. The schools have failed to comply maximally to the specifications on the subjects. The finding of this study is not at variance with that of Oporum (2017) who reportedly found that the required subjects are not properly taught in order to increase the versatility of the students.

Implementation of Standard Specification on School Records

The school records that met the standard Specifications were: admission register, pupils attendance, log/announcement, school diaries/scheme of work, staff register, withdrawal register, school time tables, staff attendance, transfer certificates, curriculum/syllabus, staff duty role, testimonials, staff movement register, pupils continuous assessment, inspection reports, minutes book of board of governors and submitted lesson notes. School records are very important documents such as the learning and learning processes. The school records enable the movement of the teachers and that of the students to be under close control. The importance of school records in the effective and efficient running of the school cannot be swept under the carpet. Instances where students refuse to enter classrooms are captured through their attendance register. Staff register goes a long way to inform the school administrators on the staff that are regular to school.

The school requires proper documentation of activities that prevails in the school hence the need for record keeping. It is unfortunate that most of the schools in Rivers do not know the importance attached to proper record keeping. The schools in the three senatorial zones of Rivers State appeared to adhere to standard specification on school records to a very reasonable level showing that they conformed to the specification to an appreciable level. Its only by knowing the importance of documentation that the school can implement such and that is why Okoye (2006) reported that documentation is very essential in the school system. Proper documentation will lead to proper accountability and vice versa.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the schools in the three senatorial zones of Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East moderately implemented the standard specifications in the areas of curriculum and school records

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school administrators and subject teachers should insist through proper supervision in order to ensure that all the subjects in the standard specification are taught forthwith.
2. The school administrator should make it necessary for every teacher to attend at least one development programme before promotion into the next level.

3. A register and good file cabinet should be provided by the school headteachers for effective and efficient record keeping in the schools.

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