LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRINCIPALS ROLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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MILITANT ACTIVITIES AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS IN PORT HARCOURT CITY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
This study investigates militant activities and students' academic performance in senior secondary school examinations in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area in Rivers State. It is a correlational study. The sample of the study comprises six hundred and twenty six teachers and one hundred and ninety two (192) students drawn from the fifteen Senior Secondary Schools in the Local Government Area. The instrument used was Militant Activities and Students Academic Performance Questionnaire (MASAPQ). The instrument was tested and found to be valid and reliable. The major findings on the activities of militants and their effects on students' academic performance include: use of dangerous weapons — gun, bullets, grenades, bombs, cutlasses, broken bottles, etc., infliction of harm on students, killing of victims, disruption of teaching and learning processes, threat to non-members, teachers inclusive, etc.

Background to the Study
The Merriam-Webster Comprehensive Dictionary defines education as; "The systematic instruction and cultivation of the natural powers by inculcation, or instruction and training in the use of reason. Education is also the comprehensive development of the mind and other faculties of the individual in order to bring about a reformed, well-behaved and well-instructed acceptable and disciplined individual for the use of the society which is in demand of it. Education as one of the greatest investments that can make the country that is near the human resources of any country cannot be overlooked. In other words, education is to integrate the individual in a sound citizen useful to himself, community and the nation at large. Over the world, the education system has been classified into three: primary, secondary and tertiary. The term secondary education which is our primary focus in the National Policy on Education (2004:18) is: the form of education that takes place after the primary and before tertiary stage. The expected age group in secondary education is 13-18 years and above depending on the social strata of the students. However, the broad aims of secondary education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2004:13) are to:

1. Promote Academic Education and Scientific Research
2. Promote Artistic Education
3. Promote Vocational Education
4. Promote Physical Education
5. Promote Democratic Education
6. Promote Social Education
7. Promote Civic Education
8. Promote Religious Education
9. Promote Health Education
10. Promote Environmental Education
11. Promote Cultural Education
12. Promote Leadership Education
13. Promote Entrepreneurship Education
14. Promote Human Rights Education
15. Promote Peace Education
16. Promote Humanitarian Education
17. Promote International Education
18. Promote Global Education
19. Promote Sustainable Education
a. Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level irrespective of sex, social status, religion or ethnic background.

b. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades. Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture to the context of world's cultural heritage; inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievements of excellence. Foster national unity with an emphasis on the communities that unite us in our diversity. Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour under our broader national goals and live as good citizens. Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development. The question arises, have the above laudable objectives of the secondary school education been achieved? If no, why? This work will tend to make recommendations and suggestions that, if honestly followed, will reduce the high rate of poor academic performance amongst secondary school students. Tolofari quoted in Akpuh (2001:5) observed with tears;

"That the activities of militants have led to fear, killing, maiming, kidnapping and intimidation of non-members (teachers, students, parents, school administrators etc) in the entire city..."

He continued that the activities of militants at times restrict movement of persons irrespective of status, age, sex, religion or colour. The former Governor of Rivers State – Sir, Celestine Omehia was constrained to impose a curfew in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas from 7.00pm - 06.00am and later from 10.00pm till dawn because of the activities of militants. All these contributed to poor classroom attendance, disruption of classes, militant-activities induced absenteeism etc. These ugly situations affect students' academic performance negatively. Thus, the emphasis of this study is on the influence of militant activities on students' academic performance. This is what this study wants to uncover.

Research Questions
The following research questions will guide the study;
1. A. What roles does militant activity play in the academic achievement of students in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area?
2. B. What environmental contributions help in the growth of the membership of militant groups by students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area?

Hypotheses
The following are the hypotheses guiding the study;

H01: There is no significant relationship between the perception of teachers and students on the role of militant activities in the academic achievement of students.

H02: There is no significant relationship between the mean scores of male and female respondents on the contributions of the environment in the membership of students in militant groups in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area.
Theoretical Framework

In any establishment, industry or organization, performance of such establishments is usually the concern of the management. In the educational system, the performance of the system whether students academic performance, teachers job performance, administrative performance, all have been the concern of educationists. Performance is sometimes presented synonymously with achievement in class intelligence test. According to Raph quoted in Okolo (1993:14) performance is a response which may be identified as an interacting system from the researcher's point of view.

Igwe (2000:12) sees system "... as a group of interdependent elements acting together to accomplish a predetermined purpose ..."

A system could be either be opened or closed. A closed system does not interact with its environment while on open system relates with its environment. From the above explanation, the Nigerian educational system which comprise of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions can be seen as an open system that strives to achieve good performance. Okolo (1993:15) quoted earlier gave three definitions of academic achievement as;

i. General term for the successful attainment of some goals requiring a certain effort.

ii. The degree of success attained in a task.

iii. The result of certain intellectual or physical activities defined according to individual/or objectives pre-requisite or proficiency.

Similarly, Bloom quoted in Okolo (1993:18) explained three factors that determine a person's academic performance or achievement. The three factors are namely;

i. Cognitive entry behaviour

ii. Affective entry behaviour

iii. The quality of instruction

i. The Cognitive Entry Behaviour

This means the extent to which the students have already learned to accomplish these basic pre- requisites which include; knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and emotional sets. Since the amount of time needed to learn is obviously a function of how much has been learned already, the pre-requisite or cognitive entry behaviour constitute a necessary link between the leaner and the accomplishment of the learning task.

ii) Affective Entry Behaviour;

This means the extent to which the student is or can be motivated to engage in the learning process. Affective entry behaviours are generally expressed in interest, attitude, appreciations, values, biases and emotional sets. They range from simple level for attending to a complex level.
for characterization by value. Therefore, the extent to which a child is motivated
process can help to determine his level of involvement hence, his performance

iii) The Quality of Instruction
This is another determinant of academic performance. This means the extent to which the instruction to be given is appropriated to the learner. The quality of instruction, such as the student practice of the learning task by each pupil and the type of re-enforcement given by the learner, determines the extent to which a student assimilates what he/she has been taught. Related to these variables are the variety of instructional modes and materials, the verbal ability and the type of feedback available to both teachers and students. Therefore, it be stated that for students in secondary schools to perform well academically, these variables have to be present. Any one of them lacking will definitely affect the performance of secondary school students.

Origin of Militancy
Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2003:1040) sees "... Militancy as an act of strong and violent action in order to achieve political or social change. "... But how did Militant started in the Niger Delta? The region as we have today (Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom; Cross River and Edo States) were not known for violence except in 1967 when Isaac Asafo Ama took up arms against the Federal Government in his now famous "Twelve (12) Days Revolution" and was later crushed, conscripted into the Nigeria army where he fought and later died in controversial circumstances. There has never been a large scale violence that affected the entire region as we have experienced recently. Peaceful agitations especially the intellectual waged by Prof. Claude Ake, Dr. Obi Wali and Tee Ken Saro-Wiwa were prevalent in the region until recently when violence come as past non-violence struggles failed. The failure of past and present government to address the protracted developmental crisis has now formed the vacuum of ever increasing militant activities in the region coupled with the pursuit of social justice and fair treatments. Until frantic efforts are made to curb militant activities, layed on the foundation of sincerity, justice and fairness are made to curb the menace, the region will be worse for it. Army less will at best provide a half measure which would fall short of world best standards. Reports have shown that the attacks on oil vessels, installations and infrastructure targets some external interests and are aimed at destabilizing the flow of energy resources to global oil markets. Amadi-Eric (2000:8) posited that the denial of political self-determination and resource control triggered the present crises. He added that the crisis is a culmination of over a hundred years of violent political regression by more powerful outsiders to facilitate the expropriation of the resources of the local people, the consequences of which has been widespread poverty, the erosion of legitimate political authority and unprecedented ecological catastrophe.

Governor Amaechi of Rivers State recently linked the problems of insecurity in the Delta region which Port Harcourt remains the hot bed with the commencement of oil exploration activities. He said;
Injustice real or imagined is a fact of life when the bounty of oil is dole out not that the Niger Delta inhabitants have seen much of the rewards of the fifty years of petroleum production. Since the scramble for Nigeria’s oil started in the 1950s, hundreds of billions of dollars have been grossly mismanaged by corrupt government officials.

The above situation for the past years has led to increased militant activities, criminality, thuggery and community bounty looters and believing that there is a thin line between the groups. They carry out different illegitimate activities and their operations either real or imaginary are anchored on the quest for justice and equity. Tamuno (1999:44) observed that:

The degradation of the environment of Ijaw land by multi-National Oil Companies, insensitive nature of previous governments ... robbed the Niger Delta, the control of their land and resources through undemocratic Nigeria state legislations such as the Land Use Decrees of 1978 and petroleum Decrees of 1969, 1991 ... are responsible for the charged atmosphere in the region ...

He decried the derivation formula which he tearfully observed as follows:

That the principle of Derivation in revenue allocation has been consciously and systematically obliterated by successive regions of the Nigerian State ... we note the drastic reduction of the derivation principles from 100% (1953), 50% (1960), 45% (1970) 20% (1975), 2% (1982), 1.5% (1984), 3% (1992) and later 13% ...

The above scenario has continued immensely to the militarization of the struggle for a just and equitable revenue allocation formula to the oppressed people of the Niger Delta which Port Harcourt is central. This struggle has led to the killing of some citizens of the region. A columnist quoted in Tamuno (1999:41) observed after the death of the Ogoni four and subsequent judicial murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his compatriots that;

These martyrs have a God- a God of vengeance. He will deal with all those whose hands are dripping with the blood of the Ogonis ... He will raise soldiers who will resist native colonialism and who will fly the flag of freedom, justice and peace ... the blood of the martyrs will one day in the not too distant future speak ...

The researcher is of the belief that the blood is now speaking, and that oil is the centre of militancy which may seize to exist when oil wells are dry. The majority tribes in Nigeria have exploited the Niger Delta even more than the colonists. They (Nigeria state) reap where they have not sown. The oil flows and brings grief, sorrow, tears and death to those who sit on the oil deposit, but brings affluence and riches to the oppressors in faraway lands (Nwafor 2002:14-15). Militancy therefore originated as a result of poor handling of the non-violent agitations of the Niger Delta activities, dearth of infrastructural development in the Delta area, corrupt practices amongst the elites, the nonchalant attitude of oil companies and falling standard of education etc.

**Militancy and Academic Implications**

The emphasis on academic performance in our secondary schools is greater today than any other time in our history. A good number of parents are now zealous and financially buoyant and
therefore are able to send their children and wards to higher institutions. The function of
education in this modern time has also increased the zeal parents have to ensure that
children/wards are well-educated. Because of this burning desire for University education and the
need to maintain a high standard among Nigerian graduates, universities have decided to set up
high standard which prospective students have to meet before they are admitted. The post-Jamb
screening test is presently used by universities and Colleges of Education to screen out students
who could not pass the test even though they may have scored the required cut-off marks in the
Joint Matriculation Examination. Therefore, for the noble objectives of education to be achieved
and parents to have their children and wards in the universities, a better academic performance
of students in the secondary schools becomes a sine qua non than was the case in the past.
Because of what education brings, teachers, parents, governments at various levels place high
premium on education and on good academic performance of students. In Port Harcourt Local
Government Area, the pressure on secondary school students has resulted in the need for more
efficient school administrators and teachers. Meanwhile, contrary to the people's high
expectations, majority of the students failed their senior secondary school examinations every
year and those few who passed and are subsequently admitted into higher institutions after the
post - UME tests still perform poorly. The above situation poses great concern to administrators,
teachers, parents, government and the entire society. Many people especially those in the
education sector are confused of what to accept as meaningful academic performance. The
performances of students have a multiplier effect. If it is below average the social, economic and
political structures are all affected. This is why in recent times; most people lament the poor
standard of students' academic performance. Some feel that teachers, parents, students and
even the government etc should be blamed; while others hold the view that the zeal with which
students pursues their academic work is commendable despite the odds against them. In a
survey conducted by the researcher in three secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local
Government Area viz; Government Secondary School, Government comprehensive secondary
school and Enitonna High School all in the Borikiri axis of the city in four years - 2003, 2004,
2005 and 2006, out of the whole students that sat for the Senior Secondary Examinations, none
has an A1, while more than 20% failed in all the subjects while less than 30% were able to have
five credits and above including English Language and Mathematics. This is quite pathetic. Many
researchers have conducted works into the various causes of poor academic performance in
Senior Secondary Examinations. Militant activities have been fingered as constituting a major
cause. Militancy is the process whereby a person or group used strong or violent action in order
to achieve political or social change.

Research Design
This research work which is a correlational/relationship study finds if there is a relationship,
positive or negative between the militant activities and academic performance of students in Port
Harcourt City Local Government Area.

Research Question One (RQ1)
What role does militant activity play in the academic achievement of students in Secondary
Schools in Port Harcourt City?
The activities of militants were inimical to social, economic and educational growth in the local government in particular and the Niger Delta in general. In the heat of the militant crisis that engulfed the city, kidnapping its upshot, became the order of the day. The kidnappers respected no age, gender, colour or economic status in the society. Anybody that caught their fancy became a victim. Sometimes, suckling babies were harshly snatched from the living arms of their parents. Ransoms of various sums of money were paid to the rampaging militants. The environment being charged, the academic achievement of students suffered a major setback. This agrees with the postulations of Dappa, (2006:27). The research question of what role does militant activities play in the academic achievement of students in secondary school in Port Harcourt Local Government Area is then answered. From the analysis it is clear that respondents agreed that militant activities plays a negative role on the performance of students in the area under investigation.

Research Question Two (RQ2)
What environmental contributions help in the growth of the membership of Militant groups by students in Port Harcourt City Local Government Area?

Table 1: showing the perception and student on the role of militant activities

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Table 2: showing the perception of male and female respondents on the contributions of the environment in the membership of students in militant groups.

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The over fifty years of oil exploration, the financial empowerment of a microscopic few, the unprecedented ecological catastrophe, wide spread poverty, erosion of legitimate political authority etc contributed to the militarization of the environment. Also the perceived injustice real or imagined by past government against the people of the Niger Delta region, the unimaginable unemployment amongst young men and women, and corruption amongst the elites encouraged the youths to join the various Militant gangs that unleash terror in the City of Port Harcourt considered as a hot bed for Militant activities. This is what Tamuno (1999:44); Amadi-Eric (2000:3) and Nwafor (2002:14-15) postulated that is responsible for the increase of membership of the Militant groups in the Niger Delta. The research question of what environmental factors helps swelling the membership of Militant groups in the Local Government Area has been answered. Both male and female respondents are of the view that the environment where the students attend school has contributed highly to encouraging them to join Militant groups.

**HO1**: There is no significant relationship between the perception of teachers and students on the role of militant activities in the academic achievement of students in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area.

**Table 5: showing the perception and student on the role of militant activities**

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**NOTE**: The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (DPMCC) will be used in testing the hypothesis to determine the correlation between the perception of teachers and students.

\[
r = \frac{n \left( \Sigma xy \right) - \left( \Sigma x \right) \left( \Sigma y \right)}{\sqrt{\left[ n \left( \Sigma x^2 \right) - \left( \Sigma x \right)^2 \right] \left[ n \left( \Sigma y^2 \right) - \left( \Sigma y \right)^2 \right]}}
\]
**Militant Activities and Student’s Academic Performance**

**Abie & Amadi**

**Where:**

- \( r \) = Correlation Co-efficient
- \( n \) = Total number of respondents
- \( x \) = Number of teachers who responded
- \( y \) = Number of students who responded
- \( \Sigma \) = Summation

\[
\begin{align*}
    r & = \frac{696(112) - (32 \times 31)}{\sqrt{696(118) - (32)^2 \times 696(111) - (31)^2}} \\
    & = 0.9784
\end{align*}
\]

**Interpretation**

The figure above (0.98) shows a strong positive correlation coefficient between the perceptions the teachers have about the role of militant activities in the academic achievement of students in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area with that of the students’ respondents i.e. the teachers’ and students’ respondents believe that the militant activities plays a significant role in the students in the area of study. The computed Pearson ‘\( r \)’ value of 0.9784 is greater than the table value of 0.754 at 0.5 level of significance. Thus the Null hypothesis of no significant relationship is rejected. A strong relationship therefore exist between the perception of both teachers’ and students’ respondents and so the alternative hypothesis of existing relationship is therefore accepted.

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between the mean scores of male and female respondents on the contributions of the environment in the membership of students in militant group.

**Table 6:** showing the perception of teachers and students on the roles of society in students on the academic achievement in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area.

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**Note:** The Pearson Production Correlation coefficient (PPMC) will be used in teaching the hypothesis to determine the relationship positive or negative between the perception of male and female respondents on the contributions of the environment in the membership of students in militant groups.

\[
r = \frac{n(\Sigma xy) - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)}{\sqrt{n(\Sigma x^2) - (\Sigma x)^2} \sqrt{n(\Sigma y^2) - (\Sigma y)^2}}
\]

\[
r = \frac{696(113) - (33 \times 30)}{\sqrt{698(125) - (33)^2} \sqrt{698(118) - (30)^2}}
\]

\[
r = 0.9296
\]

**Interpretation**
The computed \( r \) value of the test is 0.9296 while the table value is 0.754 at 0.5 degree of freedom.

**Decision:**
The null hypothesis of no significant relationship is therefore rejected, while the alternative hypothesis of a significant relationship is accepted. The above figure (0.93) shows a strong positive relationship between the views of male and female respondents on the contributions of the environment in the membership of students in militant groups in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area.

**Discussion of Findings**
The major findings in this chapter are summarized below;
Respondents agreed that senior secondary school students have performed poorly for the past five years in their certificate examinations. That parent/guardians are at a lost why students could still perform poorly despite the modernization of the teaching/learning processes. The research work also shows that the advent of large scale militarization of the genuine agitations of the Niger Delta which Port Harcourt City is central has contributed largely in discouraging otherwise serious students to be very consistent with their studies. That the use of weapons and other dangerous materials have increasingly made teaching and learning processes in the various secondary school compounds unsafe and unhealthy for academic development. It also reveals that both the teachers and students respondents have strong conviction that militant activities, the environment, the society other factors (not extensively discussed here) have continued to play negative roles in the teaching and learning processes of the secondary school in the area.
Under study. That the governments' (Federal, State & LGA) half measures of threat of crushing the militants, arms-buy-back, legislations etc have not successfully curb the unwholesome activities of militants whose actions have adversely affected the academic development of the area. That even the much orchestrated gains of amnesty and surrendering of arms could hardly achieve much.

**Summary**

The result of the analysis of data as presented in table 1 shows a strong positive correlation between the teachers and students perception on the negative influence of militant activities on students' academic achievement. Both teachers and students are of the opinion that militants' activities have led to students' lack of interest in academic pursuits, absenteeism, truancy, death of parents/guardians. The result of the above has been devastating as militants' activities have also brought about insecurity, disruption of teaching and learning activities abrupt closure of schools, restriction of movement and discourages academic advancement amongst the students. The result tallied with the positions of Ogbolo (2008) and Shaka (2008) who both agreed that the activities of militants have caused untold hardship on all the citizenry in Port Harcourt and beyond. They further advised that the conflict cannot be resolved through intensive military campaign as was previously envisaged by the government. They further observed that the failure of governments to address protracted development crisis that now formed the fulcrum of increasing militant activities in the Niger Delta region with the pursuit of justice and fair treatment has been the bedrock of militant agitations in the Niger Delta. Though, the government at the Federal level changed its stand on the way forward after some time into the research work, the government is now singing a new song of "AMNESTY" the results of such change has been over-exaggerated. The militant groups have for years surrounded gun of various calibers, gun boats, rocket launchers, grenades, bombs and defunct centres to the surprise of government and the generality of the members of the public. The fourteen (14) gun boats seized by the militants and later surrounded to government could have overwhelmed the authorities if the "oil war" has continued. The findings has shown that the settlement of the militants is not an end itself but a means to an end if increasingly development of the region which the agitators sees it as the foundations of the groups;

**Conclusion**

From the above findings, we conclude that militants use dangerous weapons-gun boats, guns of various calibers, rocket launchers, etc, engage in violence activities like kidnap, murder, theft, murder, stealing/robbery, protecting various camp interests, extortion, raping and maintain a close link amongst members both outside and inside the school. In the various secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area, the activities of militants have adverse impacts on parents/guardians, teachers, students, facilities and human activities in the various secondary schools and beyond. This include disruption of processes, closure of schools, destruction of infrastructure, attack on and harassment of students alike, loss and mutilation of official records, fear, insecurity and restriction of movement. The activities of militants have negatively affected the performance of...
students in their senior secondary examinations through long absence, closure etc. The work has also concluded that the population of female students is higher than their male counterparts because the various camps in the creeks are populated with young men of secondary school ages who have taken delight in the flourishing business of militancy in the Niger Delta creeks. Several measures could be applied in order to control militant activities in Port Harcourt Local Government Area. These measures include suspension, expulsion, prosecution, fining and jailing of students caught, arrest and prosecution of supporters, publication of culprits’ names, public renunciation without punishment (just like the Federal Government recently granted amnesty) proper re-orientation, discipline of wards, resuscitation of the boarding system, adequate funding of the school system, discouraging the corrupt system in the wider society, vibrant educational system, training and re-training of teachers of secondary schools, revamping the economy, reforming the electoral system and having an enlightened police force.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and subsequent conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

i. Parents/guardians should discipline their children/wards right from childhood since they remain the first teachers of their children and also support the government/school authorities in the fight against militancy and its associated vices.

ii. Parents should be cautious about their children’s activities at home and what they are taught or expose to.

iii. Parents/guardians should closely watch their children/wards with whom they move with or get associated with.

References


