International Journal of Scientific Research in Education, JUNE 2019, Vol. 12(2), 279-289.



ternational Journal of Scientific Research in Education (IJSRE)

ISSN: 1117-3259

Laboratory and Sports Management Practices of Educational Administrator for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the laboratory and sports management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. Two (2) research questions and 2 hypotheses were answered and tested in the study, respectively. The design of the study was the analytic descriptive survey, with the population as the 258 public secondary schools in Rivers State. These schools have a corresponding number of 258 principals, from which 181 were selected as sample to serve as participants in the study, using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument of the study was a validated 13-item scale, titled 'Laboratory and Sports Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety Scale' (LSMPEASSESS), designed by the researchers, in the modified 4-point Likert Scale model, with a reliability index of 0.82 obtained using the Cronbach Alpha model. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while ztest was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study showed that the laboratory and sport management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety include safety precautions to providing storage boxes for safeguarding laboratory equipment and regular inspection of sports facilities, to keep students fit to removing objects that cause accidents in the school. The study also established no significant difference between the mean scores of less experienced and experienced principals on the laboratory and sports management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers States of Nigeria. Consequently, it was recommended that educational administrators should constantly use their laboratory management practices to ensure the hallmark of scientific growth and development while also endeavouring to use appropriate sports management practices to minimize or prevent accidents during exercises or sporting activities.

Keywords: Laboratory, Sports, Management Practices, Educational Administrators, School Environmental Safety.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Afangideh, S. T., & Okoh, F. P. (2019). Laboratory and Sports Management Practices of Educational Administrator for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, *12*(2), 279-289. Retrieved [DATE] from <u>http://www.ijsre.com</u>.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions, the world over, are responsible for the introduction of people in society, into the knowledge, skills and values that such societies consider as their heritages. These aspects of societal heritages, for transmission to beneficiaries in schools, find expression in cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of education. While the cognitive aspect or component handles the values, norms and attitudes of a people and the cognitive sees to the acquisition of skills.

Following from the foregoing, each level of education, which is country dependent, offers subjects and courses that make the attainment of these societal feats possible, using the instrumentality of the education system. As in the case of Nigerian secondary schools, school programmes of studies, are mounted in the sciences, the arts, the social sciences and entrepreneurial subjects. In sciences, subjects like Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Agricultural Science and Mathematics are taught, with the teaching of the first four requiring both theoretical and practical approaches in classrooms and laboratories respectively. Under the arts, subjects like English language, English literature, Christian Religious Knowledge, Islamic Religious Studies, among others. Their teachings require classroom interactions between the teacher and their students. In the social sciences, subjects like Government, Economics, Geography, and Civic Education, are taught and all of them handled in the normal classroom, apart from Geography, which requires a laboratory to teach some of the aspects. Under entrepreneurial studies, subjects, such as business studies, and some technical subjects are taught both in classes in workshops.

Also, in the area of science and Physical and Health Education, teachings are done in the classrooms, on the field and in the laboratories. These various places or environs of teaching and learning in schools, have implications for school administration, as the teachers and students must be protected while interacting in the classrooms, the laboratories and on the field, in the course of teaching and learning.

In the case of the laboratories, adequate measures and strategies must be utilized to ensure the management of the laboratories, to make them safe for academic activities. For those subjects that require extra-curricular interactions outside the classrooms, as exemplified in sporting activities like football, athletics, long-jump, high jump, boxing, wrestling, among others, the various avenues for interactions between the teachers and the learners must be properly managed by school administrators in order to ensure a safe environment for teaching and learning. Based on this analogy, further presentations are based on the laboratory and sport management practices of educational administrators and they engender safe environments for teaching and learning in schools.

Laboratory Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Environmental Safety

The laboratory is a building, specially designed for the study of practical subjects. The provision and utilization of laboratories in schools will in no doubt, assist teachers and students, to effectively teach and understand the various skills, taught in various science subjects. Laboratory safety practice is important, because, it will help to reduce risks and accidents in the school. The educational administrator has an important role to play in ensuring environmental safety in the school, especially in the laboratory. The laboratory is made up of equipment that are vulnerable and are prone to accidents, if carelessly handled. Arikewuyo (2006) states that, a good safety programme, must include safety education which in its scope and ramifications include all safety precautions, to be observed in schools, especially in the laboratory. In the laboratory, there could

be incidence of fire outbreaks, burns, skin irritations, caused by exposures to some chemicals as well as offensive odours coming from some acids or bases. It is the responsibility of the educational administrator, to liaise with science teachers, to establish and enforce precautionary measures to reduce accidents in the school laboratory.

Teachers who teach science-oriented subjects are expected to observe the following precautions; wear protective clothes (Laboratory Coat) and gloves, during practical classes; facilities and equipment in the laboratory should be inspected regularly and damaged ones reported promptly for necessary action; students should be instructed on the proper methods of using equipment and facilities in the laboratory; overcrowding in laboratory classes should be avoided; in the event of an accident, the first aid treatment should be applied, depending on the degree of the accident, before the victim is taken to the hospital (Egenege, 2010). Principals as chief executives of secondary schools should ensure that adequate measures are put in place to safe guard the equipment and materials, deposited in the laboratory. The hallmark of scientific growth and development revolves around adequate knowledge of science. Hence, every effort should be geared towards improving teaching and learning of science subjects, through laboratory classes, where students will be exposed to various skills in the subjects taught.

However, the educational administrator has a role to play by ensuring effective utilization of laboratory equipment and gadgets. As an instructional supervisor, the administrator should monitor and supervise what goes on in the laboratory, provide protective materials/apparatus for laboratories, ensure the safety of laboratories, provide Collin systems and facilities to store laboratory hard wares in the school environment (Egenege, 2010). The laboratories cannot be functional without the support of knowledgeable and resourceful staff. Since the laboratory is a type of classroom, that provides practical work environment and specifically equipped to give firsthand experience to the learners, the principal should ensure that, teachers, who are committed, are given the opportunity to conduct practicals for the students. The management of laboratory equipment is under the control of the principal or the educational administrator, who assigns responsibilities to the science teachers. Laboratories contain equipment for practical learning, but most of the available ones in secondary schools are not well managed and new ones are not provided. Hence, the principal should ensure that the school is adequately staffed with sciences subjects such as biology, chemistry and physics.

A laboratory is a room or building specifically used for scientific research, experiment or analysis. Ngerem and Okorie (2017) define laboratory as a type of classroom or an environment outside the classroom that provides practical work experience to learners. It is the sum of procedures used in science subjects, such as Physics, Biology, Chemistry and among others to carry out experiment involving the use of sophisticated laboratory equipment. Laboratory equipment refers to the various tools used by scientist working in the laboratory. In secondary schools, most of the laboratory equipment were not utilized for practical learning. However, the laboratories cannot be functional on their own; they require skillful and general attention by teachers who are exposed to practical demonstration, which is central to the teaching of science.

Ngerem and Okorie (2017) believe that, science laboratory equipment provides students opportunities to learn through direct observation, aimed at experimentation. These lead to investigations to arrive at explanations that are scientifically correct or false as the case may be. The realization of the objectives of science and technology depends on the production of individuals, who can fit properly and contribute meaningful to the development of the society. Efficient management of laboratory equipment is one of the tasks facing the educational administrator, if our collective desire of transforming this country must be achieved.

Oyetakin (2011) reports that most of our science students could not pass their school certificate examinations, at normal time, due to inadequate exposures to laboratory equipment. Laboratory equipment are used for the production of scientists that come up to face the scientific and technical demands of the country, hence, they should not be treated with levity. The educational administrators should wake up from slumber and introduce measures that will enhance effective conduct of laboratory lessons in schools to ensure success in the accomplishment of all school goals.

The success or failure of any organization or business enterprise depends largely on the proper management and utilization of human and material resources, including laboratory equipment (Ngerem & Okorie, 2017). The effective management and utilization of laboratory resources rests subsequently with the educational administrator, who is the chief executive of the school. Little wonder, Babalola (2001) infers that more qualified and competent science teachers, non-teaching staff, more laboratory buildings, instructional science facilities for effective teaching and learning, special allowances for science teachers were measures that should be utilized to enhance effective teaching of science subjects.

Sports Management Practices of Educational Administrator for Environmental Safety

Sports is a complex structure which involves the utilization of physical, human and material resources, to achieve its aims and objectives. Sports management practices therefore, is the process of harnessing the available physical, human and material resources, by educational administrators to attain the set objectives in sports. In managing sports, in secondary schools, the educational administrator should establish sound sports policies, procedures and standards that should guide staff and students in the use of available sports facilities and equipment (Egenege, Nwokeji & Agwubike, 2001). Further, the scholars contend that, the administrator should co-ordinate the activities of his staff to ensure that conflicts do not arise and that every staff goes about his work without unnecessary interference. In the school, students and teachers are most often exposed to dangers of accidents, when they are in the field of play.

Egenege et al. (2001) enumerate school related accidents to include: School building accidents: These occur in the laboratories, classrooms, assembly halls; Workshops among others. There are also, school ground accidents. These are accidents that occur in the sports fields, school gardens and other areas outside the school building, but within the school compound; these category are on the way to and from school accidents: These are accidents that may occur when children are coming to or from school This categorizations imply that accidents are inevitable, but adequate measures must be provided, to forestall or minimize them.

In the school sports field, the educational administrator, in collaboration with the physical education specialist, should enforce precautionary measures, to prevent or minimize incidences of accidents, by providing for the safety of students and other individuals who participate in sport activities in the school. (Egennge et al., 2001) It is likely that, if such precautions are taken, law suits resulting from negligence will be reduced. A good educational administrator should adopt some precautionary measures. These include that instructors or physical educators should be properly trained and qualified, to perform specialized task in sports activities, the instructors must be present at all organized sports activities in the school, health examination should be given to all students, regular inspection should be made of such items as equipment, apparatuses, ropes while others check damages or deterioration, the facilities should be inspected, regularly, to avoid hazards such as broken bottles, snakes, rodents and a complete set of first aid box should be available, under the care of well-trained health personnel (Egenege, 2010).

As the administrative head of secondary education, the principal's role in ensuring safety practices in sports activities cannot be over emphasized. Little wonders, Egenege (2010) infers that, children are entrusted by parents into their care and it is expected that adequate supervision should be provided to reduce accidents to a lowest minimum. As a result, the question of liability and negligence will not arise, if committed and specialist teachers are used to organized sports activities, for the students.

In Nigeria, sports is an integral part of the school curriculum. Its activities are formally structured and organized, within the context of formal rules of behaviour. The rules can be change formally, by an official, appointed to do so. In schools, sports are organized at each level in various categories and under various names or association. At the secondary school level, intramural sports can be organized in houses, classes, colours and among others. At whatever level, sports is organized, it is designed to serve as a safety value and as an indicator of school norms and values. The management of sports, at this level, should involve all resources needed for a successful sports programme, such as qualified and dedicated staff, facilities, equipment and funds.

Management of sports involve the organization and control of human activities, directed towards the attainment of the goals and objectives of a particular sport. Omo-Osagie (2002) outlines the roles the educational administrator can play in sports management to include: the provision of adequate sports facilities, and equipment, provision of enabling environment for sports activities and prudent utilization of funds for sports programmes. However, the educational administrator should be knowledgeable enough in sports activities and must consult specialists to assist when necessary.

Statement of the Problem

Contemporarily, there is the widely held opinion that school administrators who ensure effective management of laboratories and sporting variables can provide safe environment for teaching and learning. Following from this preposition, school administrators make efforts to ensure that they manage their school laboratories and sports, with intention of providing safe environment for teaching and learning in their schools. However and surprisingly, there have been reported cases of explosions in laboratories leading to great harm among users of the laboratories. The have also been cases of injuries, suffered by teachers and students, during their interactions in sports, outside the classes, apart from the kidnap of Chibok girls in 2014 and the girls from Dapchi Girls School in 2018, all in Bornu State. There are also cases of hooliganism as students are involved in sporting activities. Following from these observations, the researchers were bothered that, with these incidents, the school may not be safe for teaching and learning, and which called to question, whether school administrators, do not properly manage laboratories and sporting activities in schools. The need to give empirical explanations to the trend is what made the researchers to contemplate of conducting the study on the laboratory and sports management practices of school administrators for safety environment for teaching and learning in our schools and secondary schools, in particular.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The study examined the laboratory and sport management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Examine the laboratory management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.
- Identify the sports management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered in the study:

- What are the laboratory management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers state of Nigeria?
- What are the sports management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of less experienced and experienced principals on the laboratory management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals in urban and rural areas on the sport management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was the analytic descriptive survey, with the population as all the 258 public secondary schools in Rivers State of Nigeria. These schools have a corresponding number of 258 principals, from where 181 were selected as sample and study participants, using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument of the study was a validated 13-item scale, titled 'Laboratory and Sports Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety Scale' (LSMPEASSESS), designed by the researchers, in the modified 4-point Likert Scale model, with a reliability index of 0.82, obtained using the Cronbach Alpha statistical model. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while z-test was used in testing the hypotheses, at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study came from the answers to the research questions and test of hypotheses. Thus:

Research Question 1: What are the laboratory management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Scores of Less Experienced and Experienced Principals on the Laboratory Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

		Less E	xperieno	ced N=8	87 E	xperier	nced N=86
S/N	Items	$\frac{-}{x_1}$	SD_1	\overline{x}_2	SD_2	$\frac{1}{x} \frac{1}{x}$	Remark
1	Observance of safety precautions in school laboratories ensures safety environment for school members	2.80	1.12	3.16	0.92	2.98	Agreed
2	School leaders emphasis on the wearing of protective materials in the laboratory ensures that school members are safe during practices.	2.79	1.02	2.84	1.03	2.82	Agreed
3	Effective monitoring of laboratory equipment ensures safety of the school environment.	2.79	1.12	3.07	0.99	2.93	Agreed
4	Providing protection for laboratory materials makes sure laboratory facilities are not exposed to danger.	3.06	1.06	3.09	0.99	3.08	Agreed
5	Provision of refrigerators helps in safeguarding laboratory equipment	3.19	1.01	3.03	0.89	3.11	Agreed
6	Providing storage boxes helps in safeguarding laboratory equipment.	3.21	0.90	3.07	0.84	3.14	Agreed
	Criterion Mean 2.50	2.97	1.04	3.04	0.94	3.01	Agreed

Data in Table 1 reveal that all the items (1- 6) had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were accepted as the laboratory management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean of 3.01, above the criterion mean of 2.50, less experienced and experienced principals agreed that the laboratory management practices of educational administrators are observing safety precautions, emphasizing on the wearing protective materials, monitoring laboratory equipment, protecting laboratory materials to avoid danger, providing refrigerators to safeguard laboratory equipment and providing storage boxes to safeguard laboratory equipment.

Research Question 2: What are the sports management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Scores of Principals in Urban and Rural Areas on the Sport Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria

		Urba	n N=59	Rur	al N=11	4	
S/N	Items	$\overline{x_1}$	SD_1	\overline{x}_2	SD_2	$\frac{1}{x} \frac{1}{x}$	Remark
7	Regular inspection of sports facilities ensures that students are involved in sporting activities that keep them fit in the school environment	2.53	1.01	2.83	1.05	2.68	Agreed
8	Provision of first aid box is a requirement for schools members' safety	2.34	0.96	2.97	1.09	2.57	Agreed
9	Enforcement of precautionary measures to minimize incidences of accidents in the school ensures safety environment.	2.75	1.04	3.16	0.97	2.96	Agreed
10	Training for sports administrators make them competent to handle sports activities with reduced accidents.	2.93	1.05	3.21	0.98	3.07	Agreed
11	Training programmes for sports instructors is an	2.81	0.99	3.11	0.89	2.96	Agreed

	assurance that the school environment will continue to be full of life						
12	Removal of objects that cause hazards in the school ensures the safety of the school	2.46	1.04	2.40	1.01	2.43	Disagreed
13	environment. Removal of objects that cause accidents in the school ensures the safety of the school environment.	2.52	1.06	2.17	1.05	2.21	Disagreed
	Criterion Mean 2.50	2.62	1.02	2.84	1.01	2.70	Agreed

Data in Table 2 show that items 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, had mean scores, above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were accepted as the sports management practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. Differently, items 12 and 13, had mean scores below the weighted mean of 2.50 and were disagreed on as the sports management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety. In summary, with an aggregate mean of 2.70, above the criterion mean of 2.50, principals in urban and rural schools, agreed that, the sport management practices of education administrators are regularly inspecting of sports facilities to keep students fit, providing first aid, enforcing precautionary measures to minimize accidents, training of sports instructors, training sports instructors to continuously keep the school environment full of life, removing objects that cause hazards and removing objects that cause accidents in the school to ensure the safety of the school environment.

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of less experienced and experienced principals on the laboratory management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Mean Scores of Less Experienced and Experienced Principals on the Laboratory Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria

Subject	Ν	$\overline{x_1}$	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Result
Less Experienced Principals	87	2.97	1.04	171	0.04	1.960	Not significant
Experienced Principals	86	3.04	0.94				(failed to reject)

Data in Table 3 show summaries of mean scores, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean scores of less experienced and experienced principals, on the laboratory management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. The z-test value, calculated and used in testing the hypothesis, stood at 0.04 while the z-critical value stood at 1.960, using 171 degrees of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance.

At 0.05 level of significance and 171 degrees of freedom, the calculated z-value of 0.04 is less than the z-critical value of 1.960. Thus, this suggests that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents. Based on these observations, the researchers failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of less experienced and experienced principals, on the laboratory management practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. **Ho2:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and rural principals on the sport management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Mean Scores of Principals in Urban and Rural Schools on the Sport Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria

Subject	Ν	\overline{x}_1	SD	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Result
Urban School Principals	59	2.62	1.02	171	1.35	1.960	Not significant
Rural School Principals	114	2.84	1.01				(failed to reject)

Data in table 4 show summaries of mean scores, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean scores of principals in urban and rural schools on the sports management practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. The z-test value, calculated and used in testing the hypothesis stood at 1.35 while the z-critical value, stood at 1.960, using 171 degrees of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance.

At 0.05 level of significance and 171 degrees of freedom, the calculated z-value of 1.35 is less than the z-critical value of 1.960. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents. Based on these observations, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals in urban and rural schools on the sport management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Laboratory Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety

The first finding of the study shown that the laboratory management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety are observing safety precautions in their laboratories, emphasizing on the wearing of protective materials in laboratories, monitoring laboratory equipment, providing protective laboratory, keeping laboratory materials out of danger, refrigerating laboratory equipment and providing storage boxes for safeguarding laboratory equipment. This finding tallies with the position taken by Akpabio (2012), Suleiman (2007), Arikewuyo (2006), Egenege (2010), Etim (2014), Ngerem and Okorie (2017). This scholars and researchers have in their scholarly expositions and researches, established, and found the identified variable as the laboratory management practices for safety within the school environment. This may be explained in the fact that in recent times, educational administrators have realized the obvious observance of managing school laboratories, equipment, since the preservance of all safety rules and regulations are geared towards the maintenance of school safety.

Amazingly, the study found no significant difference between the mean scores of less experienced and experienced principals on the laboratory management practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State in Nigeria. This is in complete disagreement with the scholars and researchers earlier cited. In the light of the above circumstance, it will be untrue and an understatement if it is said that principals' laboratory management practices do not contribute to secondary school environmental safety in schools. This current position may have been caused by the disposition of the respondents towards the research instrument and the experience gap of the respondents. The findings imply that school administrators who use appropriate laboratory management practices can always keep their schools safe for teaching and learning activities.

The sports management practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety

The second finding of the study is that sports management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety are inspecting sports facilities to ensure students are involved in sporting activities, providing first aid boxes, enforcing precautionary measures to minimize accidents, training instructors, providing training programmes for sports instructors as an assurance that the school environment will always be full of life, removing objects that causes hazards and removing objects that causes accidents in schools. This finding is in tandem with the position and views of Egenege et al. (2001), Egene (2010), John (2008), Johnson (2003), Opara (2010) and Balogun (2013). The scholars and renowned researchers have in their scholarly and empirical expositions and findings identify and found the variables as the management practices of educational administrators for environmental safety in school settings. Little wonder sports management practices are adopted to minimize or forestall accidents who participate in sporting activities.

Further, the study found no significant difference between the mean scores of principals in urban and rural schools on the sports management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. This is in total disagreement with scholars and eminent researchers earlier referred. Based on the aforementioned, it will be incorrect, if it is placed on record that principals' sports management practices cannot make a school environment habitable and safe for all teaching and learning activities. This premise may be due to the statistical tool used in data analyses, apart from the location of the respondents. This shows that sports management and sporting activities are invisible from school curriculum, since there should be a balance between work and play.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the discussions on them and their attendant educational implications on the school system and society, it is concluded that appropriate management of school laboratories and sport related activities engenders safety environment for teaching and learning in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the discussions on the findings and their educational implications and conclusion, it is recommended as follows:

• Educational administrators should constantly use their laboratory management practices to ensure the hallmark of scientific growth and development in schools.

• Educational administrators and other stakeholders in school administration should use appropriate sport management practices to minimize or prevent accidents during exercises or sporting activities.

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