

(Wonderful Dzimiri)

Introduction

The world over, national and international legal and policy frameworks undergird the aims, provision, practice and administration of education in any country. The evolving nature of legislative policy development within the frameworks of international conventions and statutes easily lands the study of education and the law within the confines of contemporary issues in education. Arguably, a consideration of education and the law requires one to look, first, at highlights of international frameworks such as the United Nations conventions or articles that circumscribe country laws and policies on education. This is followed by a consideration of key aspects of the law governing education in a country, and here we take Zimbabwe's education law as a case. For people involved in the practice of education, and for such professionals to claim practitioner status, knowledge of other laws relating to children becomes indispensable. That is so because circumstances and scenarios that require upholding and applying such laws emerge time and again as schools and adults interact with children; the largest input in the education production process.

To illuminate the importance of knowledge of education law – and other relevant laws for that matter – and their place in the discourse on contemporary issues in education, the chapter finally turns to unveiling, from preliminary research findings within the framework of the Zimbabwe Public Service Acts of Misconduct Schedule, some important aspects of the law on education, and other laws, that are often violated in the provision, practice and administration of education in the Zimbabwean education landscape. The chapter rounds off in a conclusion that provides reflective recommendations.

Conceptual Definitions

Before delving into the discourse on Education and the Law, and to ensure readers share the same contextual meaning with the author, operationalisation of the terms 'education' and 'law' becomes pertinent at this point. People have always taken 'education' to imply a process, both formal and informal, that involves acquisition of knowledge, skills and positive attitudes that sustain a person in life. These will vary with people, formal and informal settings and, as such, education becomes a relative term in that it varies with time, place and culture.

Mention of the word law to any one denotes a government principle, regulation or rule that every citizen in a country must abide by. Violation of such law is liable to punishment imposed by government agencies such as the courts and other law-enforcement agencies, for example, the police.