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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Management of Students' Personnel Services and Goal Attainment in Public Secondary Schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

Amarachi Ann Ndirika, Roseline Asuquo Okon

Department of Educational Management, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

Corresponding Author

Amarachi Ann Ndirika, Email: beautifulann4@gmail.com

Author's Contributions

All authors contributed equally to this research.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between management of students' personnel services and goal attainment in public Secondary Schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised to direct the study with corresponding hypotheses to guide it. The correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised the 94 public secondary schools in the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, from where 67 were sampled using stratified random sampling technique. A validated questionnaire was used for data collection was trial-tested using the Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability coefficients ranged from .75 to .90. Simple Linear Regression Analysis, Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression analysis and Multiple Linear Regression analysis were used for data analysis. The results of the analysis revealed that management of guidance and counselling service, and enrolment/placement service, individually and jointly significantly predicted goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Based on this result, it was concluded that to improve the level of academic performance of students, the level of students' acquisition of affective skills in the secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, principals need to ensure effective management of guidance and counselling, as well as enrolment/placement. It was recommended that Ministry of Education should design special guidance and counseling training programme for all principals, adequately train them on how to effectively manage students' enrolment/placement service.

Keywords: Management; students' personnel services; goal attainment; guidance and counselling; students' enrolment

INTRODUCTION

Secondary education plays a significant role in the success of Nigeria as a nation. It is the level of education that provides individuals with greater opportunities to acquire the basic values, morals, functional skills, competencies, and abilities for progressive and productive living. Secondary education is meant to produce a generation of youths who can think for themselves, respect the feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, and appreciate

those values that are specified under the broad national goals, as well as preparing individuals for functional living and higher learning (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Thus, effective attainment of secondary education goals in Nigeria may mean ensuring a sustainable future for the Nigerian society where youths can imbibe moral values for a peaceful existence, have functional skills to engage in gainful and productive ventures, and acquire the requisite aptitude and disposition for higher learning (Enu & Esu, 2011).

Regrettably, these laudable goals seem not to be maximally attained, as many Nigerian youths are not able to move into institutions of higher learning, live in idleness, and are involved in all kinds of social vices such as cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, and militancy as a result of frustration. In like manner, Okoi, Okoi and Eteng (2022), observed with gross dismay, the poor performance of majority of secondary students in Cross River State in internal and external examinations. Specifically, in Calabar Education Zone.

Management of Students' personnel services such as guidance and counselling as well as students' enrolment is discussed in detail, in relation to goal attainment in public secondary schools. Students' personnel services involve all the non-instructional services that the school administrator renders to ensure that students have enabling environment for effective school learning. Yusoff and Abdullah (2021) stated that guidance and counseling services, is not just for students who are involved in disciplinary issues, but also for the positive development of individuals. Robert and Ntarangwe (2017) submitted that guidance and counselling when effectively delivered, helps to develop an individual to be more productive, happier and well-adjusted to the environment. To support holistic development of students beyond academics, including their personal, social, emotional, and physical well-being, Mbon and Ukpabio (2019) warned that the school administrators should be mindful of maximal school population and infrastructure and available learning/infrastructural resources during the admission process. These services complement the academic curriculum, fostering a well-rounded education that prepares students for responsible and productive living.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary schools in Cross River State are faced with increased need for high level goal attainment, specifically in Calabar Education Zone. The goals of secondary schools are attainable when students maintain high level of academic achievement, transit to higher institutions for higher learning, have functional or vocational skills for employability, and display high moral character as well as other positive personality traits.

In a bid to improving the standard of secondary schools outputs, the government of Cross River State had renovated dilapidated structures in recent times, recruited more qualified teachers, and heightened external schools supervision, yet, the observed trend of poor academic performance among secondary school

students in internal and external examinations still calls for attention. Some students are seen displaying high level of indiscipline behaviour and moral turpitude such as absenteeism, truancy, lateness, poor attendance in class, fighting with teachers, lesbianism/homosexuality, and lack of respect for authorities among other. In some secondary schools in the Zone, the researcher also observed that some secondary school students are fully involved in cultism to the extent that they use it to intimidate teachers and administrators who exercise strictness in school discipline.

This has become worrisome for many stakeholders in the education sub-sector of the Nigerian economy despite varied measures employed to savage the situation. This study therefore sort to looks into a divergent approach, such as adopting effective management of students' personnel services to supplement the teaching and learning processes for effective attainment of secondary school goals in the Zone.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine management of students' personnel services and goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out whether:

1. Management of guidance and counselling service predicts goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State in terms of students' academic performance, students' acquisition of affective skills, and students' acquisition of practical skills.
2. Management of enrolment/placement service predicts goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to direct the study:

1. To what extent does management of guidance and counselling service predict goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State in terms of students' academic performance, students' acquisition of affective skills, and students' acquisition of practical skills?
2. To what extent does management of enrolment/placement service predict goal attainment in public secondary schools in

Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. Management of guidance and counselling service does not significantly predict goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State in terms of students' academic performance, students' acquisition of affective skills, and students' acquisition of practical skills.
2. Management of enrolment/placement service does not significantly predict goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Empirical Review

Management of guidance and counselling service and goal attainment in secondary schools

Girma (2016) examined the role of counseling in improving students' disciplinary problems in some selected high schools in Nifas Silk Lafto sub-city, Addis Ababa. The study adopted a mixed method for data collection and data analysis. Target population was 393 which comprised of 358 students, 12 principals, 20 teachers and 3 school counselor all drawn from 3 schools. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the 358 students and 20 teachers. Availability sampling was used to select Principals and school counselors. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data. The data collected through questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). While data collected using interview schedule were transcribed and organized into themes, categories and sub-categories as they emerged from the data. The study revealed that counseling services didn't adequately contribute to students' disciplinary problems as a result of inadequate facilities, high teachers' workload, lack of counseling rooms/office and lack of cooperation among staff member for providing counseling services were being used in schools. Punishments especially corporal and physical punishment were widely used to solve disciplinary cases in all school.

In a study by Okirigwe (2020) examined the influence of guidance and counseling services on students' academic adjustments in public secondary schools of Rivers State. Three research objectives and research questions were raised using descriptive survey for the study. The population of the study was 2253

respondents (12 teacher counsellors and 2241 students). Taro Yamene's formula was used to determine the 339 sample size (73 lecturers and 249 students). A 4-point rating scale questionnaire was used for data collection. Z-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and the findings revealed that guidance and counselling Services had influence on students' compliance to rules and regulation, school social environment, motivation to learn, and adaptation to physical school environment. It was concluded that Guidance and Counselling programme need to be strengthened in order to improve the academic adjustments and performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Eremie and Bethel-Eke (2020) investigated influence of guidance and counselling services on career choice and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State. The research adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 66,164 respondents. A sample size of 399 was drawn using the Taro Yamen formula, using the simple random sampling technique. A four-point rating scale questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the respondents. Means and Standard Deviations were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. It was found that there is no significant difference in the opinion of students on the extent to which educational, vocational and personal social counselling services influenced career choice and academic achievement of secondary school students in Rivers State. The study concluded that guidance and counselling services such as educational, vocational and personal social counselling programme in school assisted students to harmonize their abilities, interests and values and thereby help them to develop their full potential.

Vuleza (2021) to determine how effective guidance and counseling was in managing the indiscipline of students in public secondary schools in Bunyala sub-county, Busia County, using descriptive survey design. The population was 10 public secondary schools, 10 principals, 10 deputy principals, 20 teacher counselors and 280 peer counselors totaling to 320. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size was 201 comprising 10 principals, 10 deputy principals, 19 teacher counselors and 162 peer counselors. Questionnaire was used for data collection, and analyzed data were presented by use of charts, graphs and tables. The study found trained teacher counselors

to be effective in instilling discipline in students. Peer counselors were found to have little skills in counseling finally, guidance and counseling programme was shown to be beneficial in managing students' indiscipline. It was concluded that that and instilling good morals in students also gave rise to good academic performance especially in extra-county and county schools.

Similarly, Yusoff and Abdullah (2021) assessed the effectiveness of guidance and counselling programme in managing student's discipline in secondary schools in Malaysia. The goal of this study was to assess the performance of counsellors in addressing the disciplinary issues. It was also meant to explore how counsellors developed their approach in conducting their counselling with their student. It adopted a qualitative approach and employed an interview design. The result revealed that guidance counselling services adopted in the schools were effective in helping students to learn and adjust their behavioural patterns in line with school standards.

Shaheen, Iqbal and Shaheen (2023) measured the impact of guidance & counseling services on students' development at the university level. Student development was taken in three basic domains (academic, moral, and social development). The quantitative research design was used in the study. The population of the study was all public and private university students in Islamabad. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's sample size calculation and stratified sampling technique, 900 students were selected. A Self-developed questionnaire was used to collect the data which was analysed using regression. The study revealed that Guidance and Counseling services were significant predictors of students' academic, moral, and social development. The study also found a positive impact of guidance and counseling services on students' academic, moral, and social development.

Management of enrolment/placement service and goal attainment in secondary schools

Student enrolment is a very significant student personnel service that must be effectively carried out or designed for the effective achievement of the goals of the school system.

Ayeni and Olowe (2016) examined the implication of large class size on the teaching and learning of business education in tertiary institution in Ekiti State. The study employed survey design; the population consisted all lecturers and students in College of Education in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, University of

Nigeria, Nsukka, Ikere Campus and Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. The total populations of thirty (30) lecturers were used for the sample, while five hundred and twenty (520) final year students were randomly selected. The research instruments used in data collection were questionnaire. The findings revealed that large class size had negative implications on effective teaching and learning of Business Education in tertiary institutions.

In another study, Peter and Ligembe (2022) explored the impacts of class size and students' academic performance in Kwimba District in Mwanza, Tanzania. the researcher used interviews and questionnaires to get data from the participants. The process involved both quantitative and qualitative data which later were presented and analyzed through the aid of SPSS. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis by assigning data into themes, categories, and integration. The findings indicated that big or small class size has an impact on students' performance and that students did not perform well in big classes due to inadequate resources and ineffective classroom instructions.

Omea (2017) studied the effect of increased enrollment on learning resources in public primary schools in Masaba South Sub-County, Kisii County. The purpose of the study was to do an evaluation of selected factors on quality education in public primary schools in Masaba South sub-County, Kisii County, Kenya. The target population for this study was 82 head teachers, 112 deputy head teachers in public primary schools, from 82 primary school teachers in the South sub county. The sample constituted of 68 head teachers, 86 deputy head teachers, from the 68 sampled public primary schools. Stratified sampling was used in selecting the respondents of the study. A questionnaire, interview schedule, and document analysis were used to collect primary data. The study found that enrolment has effect of school resources which in turn affected the teaching and learning process in the schools.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The data obtained from Cross River State Secondary Education Board revealed that there are ninety-four (94) public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone. This made the total population of the study to be ninety-four (94) secondary schools.

Sampling Technique

The stratified random sampling technique was used for

this study. The entire population of public secondary schools in Cross River State, was divided into seven strata based on the seven Local Government Areas that make up the Zon. 70 percent of the secondary schools in each stratum. The sample of the study comprised 67 public secondary schools

RESULT

The result of the analysis presented in Table 5 shows that, generally, management of guidance and counselling services predicted 33.2% of the total variance in goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State.

Specifically, management of guidance and counselling services as shown in Table 5, predicted 35.5 % of the total variance in goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State in terms of students' academic performance, and 18.2 % in terms of students' acquisition of affective skills across all public secondary schools in the Zone. On a specific note, the result in Table 5 indicates that management of guidance and counselling services predicted 15.8 % of the total variance in goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State in terms of students' acquisition of practical skills.

Table 1. Summary of a simple linear regression analysis showing the extent management of guidance and counselling services predicts goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State generally, and in terms of students' academic performance, students' acquisition of affective skills, and students' acquisition of practical skills

Dependent variables	Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	SE
Goal attainment in secondary schools generally	1	.576 ^a	.332	.321	9.441
Students' academic performance	1	.579 ^a	.335	.324	3.767
Students' acquisition of affective skills	1	.427 ^a	.182	.169	4.528
Students' acquisition of practical skills	1	.398 ^a	.158	.145	4.239

a. Predictors: (constant), management of guidance and counselling services

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2025

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Management of Guidance and Counselling Service and Goal Attainment in Public Secondary Schools

The outcome of the analysis of the first research question was also established by the result of analysis of the first hypothesis which revealed that management of guidance and counselling service significantly predicted goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State generally, and specifically in terms of in terms of terms of students' academic performance, students' acquisition of affective skills, and students' acquisition of practical skills.

This result means that improvement in the extent to which principals in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State are proficient in managing students' guidance and counselling service in their schools has the tendency to increase the level of attainment of the pre-determined goals of the secondary school system in the schools holistically, and in terms of enhancing students' academic performance, improving the extent of students' acquisition of practical skills, and promoting the level of acquisition of practical

skills among students in the schools. This result is not surprising given the fact that through guidance and counselling principals are able to direct the behaviour of students at any given time in the school system, control their temperaments while dealing with them, and thus are able to harness their efforts towards achieving the goals of the school system. This agrees with Okirigwe, (2020) who found that guidance and counselling Services had influence on students' compliance to rules and regulation, school social environment, motivation to learn, and adaptation to physical school environment. Shaheen, Iqbal and Shaheen (2023) supported that Guidance and Counseling services were significant predictors of students' academic, moral, and social development. The study also found a positive impact of guidance and counseling services on students' academic, moral, and social development.

In line with this result, Mbon and Ukpabio (2019) conducted a study on management of student personnel and secondary school goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State and established that student enrolment and student discipline have significant influence on secondary school goal attainment, while

student guidance and counseling service had no significant influence on secondary school goal attainment in Calabar Metropolis. This means that apart from guidance and counselling skills, principals need other students' personnel management skills to be able to maintain effective students' discipline in schools.

However, this result may be attributed to the fact that there are adequate guidance counselors in secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. This is because without guidance counsellors, principals may find it difficult to actually carry out effective students' guidance and counseling service in schools. Principals are always occupied with administrative duties and thus sometimes have little or no time to interact with students on one-on-one basis for proper guidance. But with guidance counselors, whose responsibilities are to ensure that students are well guided to imbibe appropriate learning behavior in schools, principals are to maintain adequate students' discipline through the assistance of the guidance counselor who will have to spend more time with students to counsel and guide them. This result may also be that principals are firm in maintaining stringent disciplinary measures in the schools. This is because when principals are not strict in applying disciplinary measures in schools, no matter the level of guidance and counseling skills they display students may still exhibit undesirable behaviour knowing that they will not be punished by the principals. Sometimes, principals fail to punish some set of students because of the status of their parents and these categories students are always the ones that are prone to indiscipline in schools. When this becomes the case in school, the principal may not be able to exercise disciplinary control over students which may culminate to high level of indiscipline among students in school. This means that the effectiveness of principals in maintaining students' discipline in schools may also relate to the availability and adequacy of guidance counselors and the extent to which principals are able adopt strict disciplinary measures without fear of favour in schools.

Management of Enrolment/Placement Service and Goal Attainment in Public Secondary Schools

The outcome of the analysis of the second research question was also established by the result of analysis of the second hypothesis which revealed that management of enrolment/placement service significantly predicted goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State generally, and specifically in terms of in

terms of terms of students' academic performance, students' acquisition of affective skills, and students' acquisition of practical skills.

This result means that improvement in the extent to which principals in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State are proficient in managing enrolment/placement service in their schools has the tendency to increase the level of attainment of the pre-determined goals of the secondary school system in the schools holistically, and in terms of enhancing students' academic performance, improving the extent of students' acquisition of practical skills, and promoting the level of acquisition of practical skills among students in the schools. This result is not surprising given the fact that student enrolment is a very significant student personnel service that must be effectively carried out or designed for the effective achievement of the goals of the school system. This result supports the position of Mbon and Ukpabio (2019) that in the admission process, the school administrators should be mindful of maximal school population and infrastructure and available learning/infrastructural resources or facilities.

The direction of this result is not different from the findings of other scholars. For instance, Marais (2016) argued that an overcrowded classroom has more students assigned to a classroom-building than the number of students it was designed to accommodate. The scholar further stated that when the capacity of the classroom is exceeded, it places greater demand on the schools' existing resources and infrastructure that need to be used for effective learning thereby leading to poor goal attainment in the school. It also corresponds with the study of Peter and Ligembe (2022), who indicated that big or small class size has an impact on students' performance and that students did not perform well in big classes due to inadequate resources and ineffective classroom instructions which underscores the place of student enrollment service as a necessary activity that must be well executed for effective flow of teaching and learning activities, for effective attainment of the goals and objectives of the school system. This result is in line with the expression that the main function of an administrator in student enrolment service is to identify the school infrastructural capacity and ascertain the number of teachers in the school so that admission of students may be in line with the capacity of the school system in terms of the available school plant and teachers' strength so as to have a good classroom environment as well as moderate student-teacher ratio

for effective teaching and learning (Omea, 2017). According to them, they (over-crowded classes) do not only affect students' performance but the teachers had to face different problems such as discipline and behavioural problems, poor health and poor performance of students, put stress on teachers and increase dropout rate of students.

However, this result may be occasioned by the fact that principals in secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State have adequate control of enrolment process in their schools. This is because principals can only carry out effective enrolment and placement service when they fully involved in the process. It is no more news that enrolment and placement at secondary school level is determined by Ministry of Education without inputs from principals of various schools. Thus, students are sent to schools with placement slips and principals have no choice than to admit them into their schools. With this practice, principals sometimes find it difficult to control the quality and quantity of students they have, thereby resulting in overcrowded classrooms and consequential students' disciplinary problems. This result can also be that there are adequate resources to accommodate the increasing enrolment in the schools. This is because when principals have adequate classrooms and teachers in his school, he can decide to split over-crowded classes into smaller ones that can be easily managed by teachers so as to reduce the chances of disciplinary problems as teachers may be able to handle the small group of students effectively in the classroom. In many schools in the Zone, a teacher handles more than forty or sixty students in a class because there are no classrooms and teachers' supply is inadequate. When this is the case, no matter how careful and effective a principal is, there must surely be high level of indiscipline among students. This implies that the extent of students' discipline in schools may also relate to availability of educational resources and the extent to which principals are fully involved in the enrolment process in schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that management of students' personnel services can determine the extent of goal attainment in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. It was also concluded to improve the level of academic performance of students, the level of students' acquisition of affective skills and to improve

the level to which students acquisition practical skills in the secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, principals need to ensure effective management of guidance and counselling, enrolment/placement, medical/health, students' discipline, orientation service, and management of extracurricular service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Ministry of Education should design special guidance and counseling training programmes for all principals. This will help principals to acquire adequate guidance and counselling skills that would enhance their competencies in enhancing the teaching and learning process in the schools.
2. Government should ensure that principals in the Zone are adequately trained on how to carry out effective students' enrolment/placement service in secondary schools as this will help them ensure that students are placed in their right classes for effective teaching and learning.

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