

**STUDENTS' PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS
CORRELATE TO STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT IN SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN OWERRI EDUCATION ZONES OF IMO STATE**

BY

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Abstract

In this study the researcher investigated students' personnel management practices as correlate to students' achievement in senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State, Nigeria. To guide the study, two research questions were asked and two hypotheses were formulated. The study adopted a correlational research design involving simple linear method. The population of this study was 32,195 students from the 126 public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State. The researcher drew a sample of 395 respondents from 18 selected public senior secondary schools using Taro Yamane formula. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The researcher used the rating scale titled Students' Personnel Management Practices Scale (SPMPS) and Achievement Test titled: Mathematics and English Language Achievement Test (MELAT) which contained 35 items and 20 multiple choice questions. The instruments were validated by three research specialists. Reliability coefficients of 0.82 for SPMPS and 0.81 for MELAT were obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) respectively. The researcher used Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) to answer the research questions and t-test of the significance of Pearson "r" to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The result found that discipline, health services, library services and counseling services have low, positive and significant extent of relationship with students' achievement in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State. The study concluded that students' academic success is dependent on students' personnel management in areas such as library services and health services. The effective management of these practices guarantee conducive learning environment whereby improved academic achievement is possible. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that Government should as a matter of urgency make

provision for sickbays in the various schools as well as revamp the already existing ones that have no facilities or have being abandoned in order to cater for the health challenges of students whenever the need arises. This will help to ensure that the students are conversant with the rules and regulations of the school and abide strictly to them.

Keywords: Students' Personnel Management Practices, Students achievement, Senior secondary schools

Introduction

Education as a social process is focused on the teaching and learning of individuals or a group of people with the objective of producing effective citizens for a functional society. Education opens the door for all citizens to participate in development activities and when citizens are denied good education, they are excluded from the development process, which in turn puts them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their compatriots with the benefit of education. The value on the educational system explains the high premium placed on it, even in the National Policy on Education, and the huge investment made by all stakeholders which cannot be overemphasized. According to Obi (2021), education is the heart of the society, which is responsible for what we are as individuals, what the nations are and what the world looks like. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013), in the National Policy of Education, acknowledges the fact that no nation can achieve economic, social and technological progress and self-sufficiency without a good system of education like secondary education.

Secondary school education is set up for the sake of achieving a wide variety of goals. These goals according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) include preparing students for useful living within the society and preparing them for higher education. This informs the reason why both the government and the private sector commit a great deal of resources towards the achievement of these goals. According to FRN (2013), the aim of secondary education is to provide opportunity for qualitative education for primary school leavers, cater for the differences in talents of the pupils, develop Nigeria cultural heritage, produce a generation of people who respect the dignity of labour, foster Nigerian unity and to inspire its students with the desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life. However, the achievement of all these laudable aims and objectives of secondary education rest to a reasonable extent on the effective management of students' personnel practices.

Students' personnel management is one of the essential functions of the school administrator. It is defined as involving all the activities that are rendered to the students for the achievement of educational objectives apart from the normal classroom instructions. This means that student personnel administration encompasses all the curricular and co-curricular components/aspects of the school program. To Anyaogu (2016), students' personnel management is the provision of enabling environment for the teaching and learning process in order that the learning will acquire skills, knowledge and desired attitude which will enable him/her to function effectively in the society. Students' personnel management is an important area in the administration of secondary schools which seeks to provide orientation for students to facilitate adjustment to school life, aim towards self-knowledge, and self-realization. The general objectives of student personnel services are to assist students to attain maximum self-realization, become effective in their social environment, and complement the academic programme of the institution.

Students' personnel management enables the schools to perform individual and group counseling, provide placement and follow-up services which help to guarantee that students are given a conducive environment to learn. Ugomma, Ochai, and Obasi (2020) state that student personnel services are aimed at the satisfaction of learners needs in the areas of provision of administration, registration, orientation, hostel accommodation health services, results, and supervision of school programmes. Akuchie (2018) asserts that student's personnel practices are those services and functions that complement classroom instruction for the total development of the individual. Anyaogu (2016), Onye (2010), Oboegbulem (2014) and Ukpang (2015) assert that it includes assistance given to students on finance, health and safety, food and housing, variety of co-curricular activities, and recommends appropriate disciplinary actions to the school authorities concerning erring students thus serving as deterrent to other students. This study focused on four practices of students' personnel management which include health services, library services, discipline and counseling services.

Health services as a practice of students' personnel management are those services that take care of the health needs of students. Thus, the school management owes it as a duty to inculcate in students good health habits and personal cleanliness. Akerele (2021) opines that school health services are curative and preventive health services provided for the promotion of positive health status of school children and staff in a learning environment. Lucas and Gilles (2023) assert that it is universally recognized that the health of school students deserves special attention and in order to derive the maximum benefit from the educational programme, the student must be healthy physically, mentally and emotionally stable. The objectives of the services according to Achalu (2021:55) "are to understand each learner's health needs and develop high level health for each student, to prevent defects, disorders and continuously appraise a student's health, to develop in each learner positive health awareness and reduction in the incidence of diseases". Igwe (2020) is of the opinion that an emotional school environment that seek to promote the health of school students should encompass a healthful day, school feeding services, school safety programme, good aesthetic environment and good teacher/student relationship.

Library services as one of the students' personnel practices provide students with information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge-based society. According to Ekechukwu (2019), school library is an integral part of the institution's programme and not just shelves of books in a school or a periodical mobile library services but school library resources which are centrally housed in a school and organized by staff that are professionally prepared to administer its services and activities to teachers and students. Chukwuka (2015) asserts that school libraries have become sophisticated 21st century's learning environments that offer equal opportunities for achievement to all students. The school library is essential to every long-term strategy for literacy, education, information provision and economic, social and cultural development. A school library is one of the most important agencies in the school. It plays an important role in the teaching and learning process for both teachers and students. This would support student performance, specifically in the areas of literacy, technological skills, and access to resources and equipment. Thus, to benefit from the importance of school libraries, the students are expected to adhere to the guiding rules governing the library facilities which entail being disciplined. The prime objective of library facilities in schools therefore is to help each individual develop the ability to set realistic goals for themselves as well as improve academic achievement.

Students' achievement is described as the scholastic standing of a student at a given moment. This scholastic standing could be explained in terms of the grades obtained in a subject or group of subjects. Fasasi and Oyeniran (2014) state that student's achievement in both internal and external examinations especially in core subjects like English Language and Mathematics has been used to determine students' progress. English language is a medium of communication, instruction and interaction. According to Asudu (2023), foreign languages such as English Language have always bridged the communication gap among bodies, technologically, politically, culturally, socially and economically. At the secondary school level, English Language is studied as a compulsory and core subject. It is also the medium of instruction in all school subjects. Mathematics on the other hand is one of the key subjects offered in Nigerian secondary school curriculum. Due to value afforded to mathematics by the society, the subject has been made compulsory for all learners until the end of the secondary school course. Odili (2016) defines mathematics as a body of knowledge, a collection of techniques and methods, the product of human activity for solving problems.

Consequently, one of the major aspects of students' personnel management relates to their participation in the school administration. This increases happiness of school life for students, improves the discipline and morale tone of the school, develops the ideals of right conduct, self-control, co-operative efficiency and fairness and provision of training in leadership. However, students' needs were expected to also be catered for in order for proper development and improved achievement. However, several studies have been conducted on the influence of students' personnel management practices on teachers' effectiveness or on the effective administration of secondary schools (Ubana, 2018, Ayorinde, 2021, Kpolovie, Joe, & Okoto, 2023. and Achalu, 2021) but there are scanty studies on the relationship between students' personnel management practices and their achievement in public senior secondary schools which is the gap this present study attempts to fill by investigating students' personnel management practices as correlate to their achievement in senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Students' needs were expected to also be catered for in order for proper development and improved academic effectiveness. Unfortunately, many secondary schools have been experiencing students' disturbances and indiscipline, which include; stealing, smoking, pilfering, absenteeism, truancy, bullying, examination malpractices, cultism, lateness to school and moral laxity. Issues of riots and cultism are commonplace in the parlance of many secondary schools in the area of study. It is also not uncommon to see students beat up their teachers which do not account for effectiveness. As a result of these bad attitudes put forth by students, their academic performance in both classroom and standardized examinations is not encouraging. Students poor performance have drastically increased giving rise to many students engaging in examinations malpractices in even standardized examinations such as WAEC, JAMB, NECO and so on. So much has been put in place to cushion and address this menace of academic ineffectiveness in the education zone and in Imo State at large. The government has improved the structures of many schools and there has also been massive employment of teachers. Several studies have also identified different factors that influence poor academic achievement with several recommendations already made. Yet this issue still persists. This raised the

curiosity of the researcher towards solving this problem. In doing this, the researcher wonders whether there is an association between students' personnel management practices and students achievement in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate students' personnel management practices as correlate to their achievement in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State. The specific objectives include to:

1. find out the relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools,
2. ascertain the relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools, and

Research Questions

In line with specific objectives, the following research questions were posed to guide the study;

1. What is the relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools?
2. What is the relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance;

Ho₁ the relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools is not significant.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design involving simple linear method. The population of this study was 32,195 students from the 126 public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State. The researcher drew a sample of 395 respondents from 18 selected public senior secondary schools using Taro Yamane formula. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The researcher used the rating scale titled Students' Personnel Management Practices Scale (SPMPS) and Achievement Test titled: Mathematics and English Language Achievement Test (MELAT) which contained 35 items and 20 multiple choice questions. The instruments were validated by three research specialists. Reliability coefficients of 0.82 for SPMPS and 0.81 for MELAT were obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) respectively. The researcher used Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) to answer the research questions and t-test of the significance of Pearson "r" to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The researcher presented the results in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question one: What is the relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools?

Table 1: Summaries of Pearson "r" statistics used to explain the relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice (X) and their achievement in secondary schools (Y)

V	n	Σ	r	MR	DR	Remarks
X	395	6138	0.29	Low	Positive	Low Positive Relationship
Y	395	8689				

Size (n), Summation (Σ), Coefficient (r), Magnitude of Relationship (MR), Direction of Relationship (DR) and Remarks

Table 1 shows the summaries of Pearson r used to describe relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and students' achievement in secondary schools. The result shows that an index of 0.29 was realized for the relationship between the two variables (health services as students' personnel management practice and student's achievement). This positive nature indicates that an increase in one variable is likely to lead to some measure of increase in another variable and a decrease in one variable could also lead to some measure of decrease in another variable, implying a low association between the variables. Therefore, the answer to the research question is that there is a low positive relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and students achievement in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State.

Hypothesis one

Ho₁: The relationship between discipline as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools is not significant.

Table 2: Summaries of t-test of significance of simple linear correlation used to test the extent of relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools

V	n	Σ	r	α	df	t _{cal}	t _{tab}	Decision
X	395	6138	0.29	0.05	393	6.110	1.96	Reject Ho ₂
Y	395	8689						

Sample Size (n), Summation (Σ), Coefficient of Relationship (r), Alpha Level (α), Degree of Freedom (df) and t-test of Significance of Simple Linear Correlation between two Variables

In Table 2 show the result for the test of the significance of relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools. The result gave the degree of freedom as 393 and the t-calculated value as 6.110 and the t-tabulated value as 1.96. As the t-calculated value is greater than the t-tabulated value, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis; therefore, infer that the relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and students' achievement is significant in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools?

Table 3: Summaries of Pearson "r" statistics used to explain the extent of relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice (X) and their achievement in secondary schools (Y)

V	n	Σ	r	MR	DR	Remarks
X	395	5386	0.26	Low	Positive	Low Positive Relationship
Y	395	8689				

Size (n), Summation (Σ), Coefficient (r), Magnitude of Relationship (MR), Direction of Relationship (DR) and Remarks

Data in Table 3 shows the summaries of Pearson r used to describe extent of relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools. The result shows that an index of 0.26 was realized for the relationship between the two variables (library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement). This positive nature indicates that an increase in one variable is likely to lead to some measure of increase in another variable and a decrease in one variable could also lead to some measure of decrease in another variable, implying a low association between the variables. Therefore, the answer to the research question is that there is a low positive relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools.

Table 4: Summaries of t-test of significance of simple linear correlation used to test the extent of relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools

V	n	Σ	r	α	df	t _{cal}	t _{tab}	Decision
X	395	5386	0.26	0.05	393	5.303	1.96	Reject Ho ₃
Y	395	8689						

Sample Size (n), Summation (Σ), Coefficient of Relationship (r), Alpha Level (α), Degree of Freedom (df) and t-test of Significance of Simple Linear Correlation between two Variables

Data in Table 4 show the result for the test of the significance of relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in secondary schools. The result gave the degree of freedom as 393 and the t-calculated value as 5.303 and the t-tabulated value as 1.96. As the t-calculated value is greater than the t-tabulated value, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis; therefore, infer that there is a significant relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State.

Discussion of Findings

The result of this study is that there is a low positive relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State. This low relationship is a proof that the health services in public schools are very poor, some schools barely have sickbays while the schools with sickbays are not functional thereby militating against students' health as students stay back at home to receive treatment even during schools hours which could result to decline in their achievement hence, it recorded a low coefficient index of 0.29. To further buttress the result, it was established that the extent of relationship between health services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement is significant in public senior secondary schools. In consonance with the finding, Ejeh, Okenjom, and Chizi-Woko (2016) found that all the 20 student personnel services studied were available except health services and financial assistance, even though most of them are of poor quality. Factors responsible for the poor quality of student personnel services include: increase in students enrolment without proportionate increase in student personnel services; poor funding of education, poor attention to student personnel services. The present quality of student personnel services affects students in many ways such as exposing students to hazards, causing lateness to lessons. The findings therefore strengthened the fact that when there is nice and healthy school climate that meet the needs of students and teachers, there would be effective teaching and learning in the school and better academic achievement will ensue.

The study also revealed that there is a low positive relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in public senior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State. This finding implies

that a decrease in school library services would lead to decline in students' achievement which recorded a low coefficient index of 0.22 indicating that students' do not visit the school libraries to update themselves and improve on their reading habit as some could be attributed to unequipped school libraries while others could be students' inability to develop a good reading culture. The result further established that there is a significant relationship between library services as students' personnel management practice and their achievement in public senior secondary schools. In agreement with the findings, Jaja and Udumukwu (2023) found that there is a significant influence of library utilization on academic achievement of students. Similarly, Muhammad (2017) found that most senior secondary schools have no laboratories. Where they exist, they are poorly equipped. Teachers indicated reluctance and inability in conducting practical works using the few available laboratory facilities. Poor maintenance culture was also discovered among teachers. The findings therefore strengthened the fact that the school library services which are meant to improve students' achievement are abandoned or do not serve the purpose they are created for due to outdated resources and poor facilities that makes it conducive for students to improve their reading culture. This has however made students to be confined to the teachings of their teachers without getting additional knowledge that could improve their academic achievement, hence the reason adduced to low academic achievement in public senior schools in Owerri Education Zones of Imo State.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aimed to investigate the correlation between students' personnel management practices and students' achievement in senior secondary schools within the Owerri Education Zones of Imo State. The findings have illuminated the critical role effective management of student-related affairs plays in fostering an environment conducive to academic success.

The analysis of the data gathered has underscored the significance of implementing robust student personnel management practices, including but not limited to, effective health care services and library services. Where these practices were implemented effectively, a positive correlation with student achievement was observed. Conversely, deficiencies in these areas were often associated with lower academic performance.

The implications of this research are significant for school administrators, policymakers, and educators. It is evident that prioritizing and investing in comprehensive student personnel management is not merely an administrative task, but a crucial determinant of students' academic outcomes. Schools should strive to create a holistic support system that addresses the diverse needs of students, fostering their personal, social, and academic development.

Moving forward, it is recommended that:

1. Government should as a matter of urgency make provision for sickbays in the various schools as well as revamp the already existing ones that have no facilities or have being abandoned in order to cater for the health challenges of students whenever the need arises.
2. Students' should be motivated to always make use of the library services during their leisure time in school. Also, principals and librarians should ensure that there are up-to-date resources in the library in order to improve students' reading culture.

By adopting these recommendations, schools in the Owerri Education Zones, and indeed across Imo State, can enhance their capacity to nurture students and improve overall academic performance. Ultimately, this study reinforces the understanding that a well-managed student body is a key ingredient in the recipe for educational success.

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