



# **Students' Personnel Management and Academic Effectiveness of Secondary School Students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** This study assessed students' personnel management and academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Three null hypotheses were formulated accordingly to guide the study following a descriptive survey research design. Proportionate sampling technique was employed in selecting a sample of 1,934 students (representing 20%) from a population of 9,672 students. Students' Personnel Management and Academic Effectiveness Questionnaire (SPMAEQ) was used as an instrument for data collection. The instrument yielded reliability estimates of .86 and .93 for the independent and dependent variables using Split-half technique. The null hypotheses were all tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Correlation Matrix with the aid of SPSS v25. Findings from the study revealed among others that; students' counseling, healthcare, and discipline management respectively, are significantly related to students' academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. It was concluded generally from the findings of this study that, there is a moderate positive relationship which is statistically significant between students' personnel management and their academic effectiveness. It was recommended amongst others that; there should be adequate employment and supply of professional guidance counselors to all secondary schools to boost the psychological levels of students and make them emotionally prepared for academic and co-curricular activities in the school.

**Keywords:** Personnel Management, Students, Academic Effectiveness, Discipline, Healthcare, Counselling, Personnel

## **1. Introduction**

The primary function of the school is to educate the child such that he is not only functional, realistic and productive to himself alone, but also to the society in general. Students constitute a significant portion of any school population and are the main reason for the establishment of schools in the first place. Thus, their academic effectiveness is very crucial to all stakeholders who seeks to build the nation using products from the school system.

Students' academic effectiveness refers to the degree at which students are actively involved in school activities including their efforts to achieve the purpose for which they

were sent to school. It includes good attitudes towards punctuality, lessons, assignments, examinations and other co-curricular activities of the school. It is closely related to academic performance and can be used interchangeably. It is academic effectiveness that contributes to the academic performance of students. Academic performance refers to the extent to which those in the academic sphere have achieved their short- or long-term educational goals [1]. Thus, Student academic performance can be defined as the degree to which students are achieving the reasons or objectives for which they were sent to school

The quality of students' academic effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State has become an issue to

all concerned parties. The Government, as well as parents, invest in students as a means of providing welfare and building the leaders of tomorrow. However, with the poor academic performance of secondary school students in both classroom and standardized examinations, their effectiveness has been questioned and brought to scrutiny by those concerned. Over the years, secondary schools have been experiencing student disturbances and indiscipline, which include; stealing, smoking, pilfering, absenteeism, truancy, bullying, examination malpractices, cultism, lateness to school and moral laxity [2]. In the present time, the situation remains unchanged despite huge investment made by both parents, the government and non-governmental organizations to address these shortcomings.

Past research studies have identified several factors that affect students' academic effectiveness in various secondary schools. Some of these factors include class attendance age, learning styles or preferences, gender, class size, entry qualifications, family income, students' perception, poor discipline of students, students' attitudes, teachers qualification, the school physical environment, and the school leadership [1, 3-10]. Other studies maintained that quality assurance practices have a role to play in determining the extent of students' performance evaluation [12]. School-community relationship has also been identified as another measure that determines the effectiveness of secondary school students [13]. These studies have explored various relationships and have proffered solutions that have not been able to address the issue of poor academic effectiveness. Could it be that there are other variables responsible for this downturn of academic ineffectiveness which has not been examined? Based on this, the researcher wonders if students' personnel management has any contribution to students' academic effectiveness.

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 [14]. This means that student personnel administration encompasses all the curricular and co-curricular components/aspects of the school program. It is achieved by rendering student personnel services and constitutes very vital functions that are required for the realization of educational goals and objectives. It 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. Students' personnel management enable the schools to perform individual and group counselling, provide placement and follow-up services. 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. This study focused on three aspects of students' personnel management including students' counseling, healthcare, and discipline management.

Students' counseling management is offered to the students

who undergo problems, and needs professionals to help them overcome them. It is, therefore, a more specialized service requiring training in personality development and handling exceptional groups of individuals. The three core counseling services offered to students include educational, vocational and persona-social counseling. Guidance and counseling services are handled under the administration of student personnel. The educative process is meant to help learners develop skills and competencies that will enable them to live effective lives and at the same time contribute viably to the national economic growth. A study revealed that guidance and counseling is an integrated part of the education and so, there is need to make effort to train counselors who will be able to provide guidance and counseling services to enable education to become effective [15].

Another study showed that little relationship exists between social service and Universal Basic Education [2]. Based on the findings, the study warned that, in order to sustain the education system, both professionals and teacher counselors should leave no stone unturned in the area of adequate provision of counseling services namely; educational, vocational and personal social services [2].

The second aspect of this study is students' healthcare management which is provided for the maintenance or improvement of health via the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease, illness, injury, and other physical and mental impairments in students. This service is provided in consultation with health experts. The school role is to provide an enabling environment for these experts to discharge their duties as expected. A study showed that health and safety of both staff and students determine to a great extent, the academic performance of students, and recommended among others that health bodies should be established in secondary schools, while seminars on safety and health should be carried out periodically [16].

In a related study, it was revealed that the student personnel services were available, but inadequate and are of poor quality [17]. The constraints to the effective implementation of health services were also discovered to include poor funding of education sector, poor maintenance culture, inadequate attention to communication between students and management, careless use of facilities by students, mismanagement of funds by college authorities, poorly executed projects, among others [17].

The third aspect of this study is students' discipline management which is the practice of teaching students to obey rules, regulations and other norms of the school, and by using punishment to correct unwanted behaviors. In a classroom, a teacher uses discipline to ensure routine is maintained, school rules are enforced, and that the students are in a safe learning environment. Discipline implies conforming to the code of conduct established by the organization. In an organization discipline ensures productivity and efficiency. It encourages harmony and co-operation among employees as well as acts as a morale booster for the employees. In the absence of discipline, there will be chaos, confusion, corruption, and disobedience in an

organization [13]. Empirically, a study showed that three student personnel services: student records, admission exercise, and students' disciplinary measures, are adequate and of quality [18].

Another study found among others that the principals' provision of students' discipline contributes only 6.1% of students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Enugu State while 93.9% is contributed by some other factors [19]. The results from another study also revealed that 46 (5.6%), 214 (26.2%), 413 (50.6%) and 144 (17.6%) of the pupils had low, moderate, high, and very high discipline respectively. Discipline related positively with, and accounted for 23% of variance in the pupils' academic performance ( $R = .480$ ,  $\beta = .480$ ,  $R^2 = .230$ ,  $p < .05$ ) [20]. Other studies have also showed that disciplinary control in schools correlates with students' academic performance [3, 21-23].

Since principals are the uncompromising leaders of secondary school as well as administrators in whose hands lies the future of the students. New strategies are needed in order to provide more access to student personnel services through effective organization and management of schools. It is against this background that the researcher considered it pertinent to investigate the relationship between students' personnel management and their academic effectiveness in secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

In secondary schools, the principal is the administrator, the manager, and the chief executive of the institution. Such a person was expected to have proven quality and competence to coordinate the activities of both human and material resources. The principals were also expected to undertake all routine activities in order to accomplish numerous administrative tasks towards achieving educational objectives. Amongst their human resource management functions, school principals need to focus keenly on the students' personnel management, especially given the fact that the schools were established for the students' sake. 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 ineffective 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 Cross River 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 effectiveness 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 and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River, Nigeria.

## 3. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess students' personnel management and their academic effectiveness in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Specifically, this study sought to investigate the relationship between:

- i. Students' counseling management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.
- ii. Students' healthcare management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.
- iii. Students' discipline management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

## 4. Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the course of the study.

- i. Students' counseling management have no significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.
- ii. Students' healthcare management have no significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study

habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

iii. Students' discipline management have no significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

## 5. Materials and Methods

The design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design is used to find out what situations, events attitudes or opinions are occurring in a population. It tries to address issues of distribution of some phenomena in a population or among subgroups of a population. The focus of this design is to ascertain facts and not to establish or test a theory According to a study [24]. This design was considered appropriate because, the study purports to use the information obtained through questionnaires, in describing observed phenomena. The population of this study comprised 9,672 secondary school students distributed across all the secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone. Proportionate sampling technique was adopted by the researcher in selecting 20% of the entire population resulting in a sample of 1,934 students selected as respondents for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Students' Personnel Management and

Academic Effectiveness Questionnaire (SPMAEQ). It was a 48-item questionnaire developed by the researchers to measure the variables involved in this study. The four-point Likert scale was used. The various designations of the responses were strongly agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The reliability of the instrument was established through Split-half technique after a trial test was conducted. The instrument yielded reliability estimates of .86 and .93 for the independent and dependent variables respectively. The data obtained from the respondents were coded, scored and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The null hypotheses were all tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Correlation Matrix with the aid of SPSS v21. The results obtained from the analysis is presented below.

## 6. Presentation of Results

The results of the study were presented based on the hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The following tables present the results of the study, while below them are the interpretation of the results.

### Hypothesis 1.

Students' counseling management has no significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. The result from the analysis of data is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Pearson correlation matrix showing the relationship between students' counseling management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities ( $n = 1,934$ ).

Variables	Mean	SD	Cal. r	p-value
Students' counseling management	9.98	3.715	1	
Punctuality to classes	9.93	3.746	.605**	.000
Time management	9.88	3.706	.597**	.000
Study habits	9.88	3.782	.586**	.000
Recordkeeping	9.91	3.695	.584**	.000
Attitudes during classes	9.92	3.673	.596**	.000
Notetaking	9.89	3.724	.628**	.000
Attitudes towards assignment	9.95	3.752	.617**	.000
Examination results	9.91	3.723	.597**	.000
Attitudes towards co-curricular activities	9.92	3.721	.593**	.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at .01 level; df= 1932; Crit. r = .044.

From Table 1, the results presented show that all the p-values are less than .05 level of significance. At .05 alpha level and 1,932 degrees of freedom, the results indicate that all the calculated r values are greater than the critical r values. With these results, the null hypothesis was rejected; while the alternate hypothesis was upheld. It was concluded that; students' counseling management has a significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. The calculated r values

ranging from .584\*\* to .628\* further indicates that there was a moderate positive correlation between students' counseling management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

### Hypothesis 2.

Students' healthcare management has no significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes

towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. The result from the analysis of data is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Pearson correlation matrix showing the relationship between students' healthcare management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

Variables	Mean	SD	Cal. r.	p-value
Students' healthcare management	9.95	3.729	1	
Punctuality to classes	9.93	3.746	.605**	.000
Time management	9.88	3.706	.609**	.000
Study habits	9.88	3.782	.570**	.000
Recordkeeping	9.91	3.695	.605**	.000
Attitudes during classes	9.92	3.673	.589**	.000
Notetaking	9.89	3.724	.594**	.000
Attitudes towards assignment	9.95	3.752	.565**	.000
Examination results	9.91	3.723	.605**	.000
Attitudes towards co-curricular activities	9.92	3.721	.607**	.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at .01 level; df= 1,932; Crit. r = .044.

The results presented in Table 2 revealed that all the p-values (.000) cutting across all the variables are all less than .05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis stated above is rejected, and the implication is that; students' healthcare management has significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. The r values which ranged from .565\*\* to .609\*\* indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between students' healthcare management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time

management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

#### Hypothesis three.

Students' discipline management has no significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. The result from the analysis of data pertaining to this hypothesis is presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Pearson correlation matrix showing the relationship between students' discipline management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

Variables	Mean	SD	Cal. r.	p-value
Students' discipline management	9.95	3.693	1	
Punctuality to classes	9.93	3.746	.592**	.000
Time management	9.88	3.706	.596**	.000
Study habits	9.88	3.782	.611**	.000
Recordkeeping	9.91	3.695	.604**	.000
Attitudes during classes	9.92	3.673	.624**	.000
Notetaking	9.89	3.724	.582**	.000
Attitudes towards assignment	9.95	3.752	.590**	.000
Examination results	9.91	3.723	.609**	.000
Attitudes towards co-curricular activities	9.92	3.721	.596**	.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at .01 level; df= 1932; Crit. r = .044.

The results presented in Table 3 disclosed that the p-values (.000) are all less than .05 level of significance at 1,932 degrees of freedom. Based on these results, the null hypothesis was ignored. Consequently, the alternate hypothesis was retained and the implication is that; students' discipline management has a significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. The r values which ranged from .582\*\* to .624\*\*, indicates a moderate positive relationship between students' discipline management has significant relationship

with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities.

## 7. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study established that there is a significant relationship (which is positive and moderate) between students' counseling management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes

during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. This result may be due to the fact that; students' academic effectiveness was high in areas where there appeared to be improved students' counseling management rendered. In addition to this, many respondents indicated that there was no professional counselor in their schools; many students are not properly guided to choose a proper career. In contrast, many respondents indicated that referral services are rendered in most schools, while students with emotional problems are usually catered for.

This finding supports the conclusion from a study which revealed that guidance and counseling is an integrated part of the education and so, there is need to make effort to train counselors who will be able to provide guidance and counseling services to enable education to become effective [15]. This finding also strengthens the position held by a study which posited that; in order to sustain the education system, both professionals and teacher counselors should leave no stone unturned in the area of adequate provision of counseling services namely; educational, vocational and persona-social services [2].

The second major findings of this study revealed that; there exist a weak positive relationship which is statistically significant between students' healthcare management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. By implication, a high demonstration of students' healthcare management will lead to an improvement in the academic effectiveness of students. Conversely, poor academic effectiveness may also be predicted by inactive/inadequate student' healthcare management. In addition to this, many schools lacked medical practitioners, the few schools that have medical practitioners were not adequately equipped. Most schools refer students with first aid problems to hospitals outside the school for treatment due to the poor conditions of the medical facilities available. However, secondary schools' students in Calabar Education Zone, demonstrated a favorable attitude towards sanitation and compound cleaning.

This agrees with a study which showed that; health and safety of both staff and students determine to a great extent, academic performance, and recommended among others that, health bodies should be established in secondary schools, while seminars on safety and health should be carried out periodically [16]. Another study also revealed that the student personnel services were available, but inadequate, and are of poor quality. The study reported further that constraints to the effective implementation include poor funding of education sector, poor maintenance culture, inadequate attention to communication between students and management, careless use of facilities by students, mismanagement of funds by college authorities, poorly executed projects, among others [17].

Lastly, it was established in this study that; students'

discipline management has a significant relationship with their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. This finding may be traceable to the fact that; school rules and regulations were available in all the schools, though some principals did not enforce them. Only a few schools have a discipline management committee. Students are usually punished when they err against prescribed rules based on their responses provided. By implication, good discipline management seems to be in place which supports a study which revealed that; three student personnel services: student records, admission exercise, and students' disciplinary measures, are adequate and of quality [18]

## 8. Conclusion

It was concluded generally from the findings of this study that, there is a moderate positive relationship which is statistically significant between students' personnel management and their academic effectiveness in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities. Students' personnel management, therefore, can be used as an index to predict students' academic effectiveness. Areas where there is high students' personnel management in terms of counseling, healthcare, and discipline, students tend to be academically effective in terms of punctuality to classes, time management, study habits, record keeping, attitudes during classes, note taking, attitudes towards assignment, examination results and attitudes towards co-curricular activities; and vice versa.

Generally, it is the duty of the secondary school principal to ensure that schools' activities are triggered towards meeting the goals of the schools. When students are highly effective, the school as well as the society in general benefits from such effectiveness. When students' counselling, health, and disciplinary needs are catered for, they will become emotionally stable, healthy, and maintain acceptable attitudes in the school. Conversely, a school without such personnel services in place, will witness psychological problems, suicidal thoughts on the minds of emotionally depressed students, unhealthy students, truancy, and will not achieve set goals to a significant extent.

## 9. Recommendations

The recommendations below were made based on the findings of this study:

- i. There should be adequate employment and supply of professional guidance counselors to all secondary schools. This will ensure that students behavioral, psychological, emotional and educational needs are

- adequately catered for.
- ii. Medical centers should be provided in each school with an adequate supply of medical personnel and facilities such as vaccines, tablets, first aid equipment, and so on. This will enable the schools to handle emergency health issues of both staff and students within the school system.
  - iii. Every school principal should ensure that discipline management committee is set up and given the necessary support to function effectively. This will provide a platform for all disciplinary cases to be handled.

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