

MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS' PERSONNEL SERVICES AND SUSTAINABLE SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CALABAR EDUCATION ZONE OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between management of students' personnel services and sustainable secondary education. The study area was Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State Nigeria. Two null hypotheses were formulated to direct the study. The survey design was adopted for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample seven hundred and ten (710) senior secondary two (SS II) students from a population of 6131 students for the study. The instrument for data collection was a 4-point response type scale, developed by the researchers and titled "Management of Students' Personnel Services and Sustainable Secondary Education Questionnaire (MSPSSSEQ)". The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.78 using Cronbach alpha reliability method. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson's product moment correlation statistics and the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that management of students' personnel guidance/counseling and recreational services significantly correlated with sustainable secondary education. Premised on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the provision and effective management of students' personnel guidance/counseling and recreational services had a positive impact on sustainable secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. It was therefore recommended among others that both the government and school administrators should work together to provide essential facilities for effective management of students' personnel services to enhance sustainable secondary education.*

KEYWORDS: Students, Personnel Services, Sustainability, Secondary Education

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development has assumed much relevance not only to environmental and biodiversity issues but also to education practice. Education for sustainability is the practice of learning how to achieve global and local sustainable communities. It is a vision of education that seeks to balance human's needs and economic wellbeing with cultural traditions and respect for the earth's natural resources. The desired outcome is to inform and engage citizenry with the social, economic and ecological literacy, creative problem-solving skills and commitment necessary to enhance sustainable life in the present and in the future.

Sustainability of secondary education means the ability of secondary schools to survive in this period of global competitiveness through effective management of students' personnel services. This means that sustainable development is a process in which the exploitation of resources, direction of investment, orientation of technological development and institutional changes are made consistent with the future as well as the present (Akpan, 2005). Education

for sustainable development is relevant to learning at all levels of education including secondary education and has to be integrated into the teaching-learning process. According to Otomewo (2011), secondary schools have been speculated to be dysfunctional as a result of several problems both within and outside the school system.

In Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, the proper and result-oriented management of secondary education for sustainability is what most stakeholders in education desire and agitate for. Unfortunately, the learning environments in most public secondary schools are poor and not conducive for effective teaching and learning. There are insufficient infrastructural and instructional facilities such as functional libraries, laboratories, recreational facilities, well equipped classrooms and workshops. In some secondary schools, teaching-learning takes place in dilapidated buildings. Furthermore, teachers' use of appropriate instructional strategies such as experimentation and inquiry in teaching is yet to reach an appreciable level. Percy-Smith (2009) pointed out that to ensure sustainability in secondary education; schools should adopt practical and experimental learning method which will enable the learners to act on their learning in respect of sustainable life styles. Thus, if sustainable secondary education is seen as a cultural practice rather than simply a set of skills and knowledge, it will enable students to be actors of change as well as learners. This fact was supported by Higgs and Macmillan (2006) who asserted that to ensure sustainable education, sustainability should be addressed through individual staff and teachers as role models. These would promote both learning about sustainability and adoption of sustainable behaviour. This means that, to actualize sustainable secondary education these indices of sustainability must be given proper attention.

Another dimension of sustainable secondary education has to do with the relevance of curriculum contents to the learners. If the curriculum is relevant to students' life and future, the students would be interested in learning about sustainability. There may be the quest for knowledge leading to more sustainable lives. They would develop more positive attitudes to learning, better behaviour, regular attendance, improved standards and achievements. This depicts that sustainability is a significant factor in improving teaching and learning in schools. Gayford (2009) stated that in most successful secondary schools, sustainability is an integral element of a well planned curriculum alongside special events and activities, which are experienced both within and outside the classroom and these enhance students' attitudes toward learning.

However, the extent to which sustainable secondary education can be achieved depends greatly on the management of students' personnel services. Students' personnel services involves all the activities and services that are rendered to students for the achievement of the educational objectives. It takes into account the provision and management of library services, guidance and counseling services, health services and recreational services and so on. The absence or poor management of students' personnel services in secondary schools can have a negative effect on the products of the educational process vis-a-vis sustainable secondary education. It is against this background, that the researchers were motivated to investigate the relationship between students' personnel services and sustainable secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The sub-variables of students' personnel services considered in this study were guidance and counseling services, and recreational services. While the sub- variables for sustainable secondary education include learning environment, instructional strategies and curriculum relevance.

Statement of the Problem

The proper and result-oriented management of secondary schools for sustainable development in Cross River State and Calabar Education Zone in particular is what most stakeholders in education would desire and have been agitating for. Unfortunately, the learning environment appears not to be supportive of education for sustainable development. Educators as well as members of the public, tend to blame this on ineffective management of student personnel services. There is paucity of infrastructural and instructional facilities such as recreational facilities, guidance and counseling facilities, laboratory materials and equipment. Moreover, teachers' use of appropriate instructional strategies such as enquiry, practical and experimental methods to capture the interest of the learners is yet to reach an appreciable level. There is the issue of curriculum relevance in secondary schools. The curriculum content does not seem to be relevant to students' life and future despite the introduction of entrepreneurial studies at all levels of education in Nigeria. Therefore, there is no quest for knowledge that would lead to more sustainable lives.

Despite effort of Cross River State government to make extra-curricular activities compulsory for every student in secondary schools and that there must be reports from school principals to the Ministry of Education at the end of each event, with evidence, yet the problem of managing student personnel services effectively to enhance sustainable secondary education still persists. Thus, it is pertinent to raise the question: How does management of students' personnel services relate to sustainable secondary education in Calabar education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to find out the relationship between students' personnel services and sustainable secondary education in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Specifically, the study sought to find out the extent to which management of:

- (i) Guidance and counseling services relate to sustainable secondary education.
- (ii) Recreational services relate to sustainable secondary education

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- (i) Management of guidance and counseling services does not significantly relate to sustainable secondary education.
- (ii) There is no significant relationship between management of recreational services and sustainable secondary education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Management of Guidance/ Counseling Services and Sustainable Secondary Education

One of the variables of students' personnel services that could impact on sustainable secondary education is the provision and management of guidance and counseling services. According to Adegoke (2004), counseling services entail the idea that the client understands himself better. Counseling involves something more than a solution to an immediate problem. Counseling itself is supposed to maintain a personal stability interview of repeated challenges. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) categorically stated that professionals be trained to facilitate

the guidance/counseling services to enhance sustainable secondary education. In 2010, the Cross River State Ministry of Education established the department of guidance/counseling services in the Secondary Education Board, to over-see these services in all public secondary schools in the state, including schools in Calabar education zone

One of the most important roles in educational guidance and counseling is facilitation of the smooth transition of children from home to school, from primary to secondary school, from secondary to post-secondary educational institutions and to the world of work (UNESCO, 2000). Hick and Holden (2012) researched into young people's views about the future and found strong evidence that, regardless of age, the environment is a consistent theme in their concern about the future and that providing collaborative, positive and supportive learning environment is vital in helping students to rise and deal with their concerns.

Carey and Harrington (2010) carried out a study on the impact of school counseling on students' educational outcomes in Nebraska and Utah high schools. Stepwise hierarchical linear regression and simple regression procedures were used for data analysis. The results of the study showed that effective management of school counseling services significantly related to a range of students' outcomes including mathematics proficiency level, increased reading proficiency level, lower suspension rates, lower disciplinary rates, increased attendance rates, higher graduation rates and increased students' performance. It could be deduced from this result that effective management of school guidance and counseling services can enhance the sustainability of secondary education.

House and Hayes (2002) in their study reported that the implementation of contemporary school counseling programmes could be difficult without the appropriate amount of support from administration and faculty. Many times, school counselors were told what to do by administrators who failed to understand the contribution the school counselors would make to the school. The tasks that school counselors were asked to perform varied from state to state, district to district and even school to school. Beale (2002) pointed out that one factor that contributed to the difficulty guidance and counseling programme implementation was the pressure on school counselors to perform non-counseling duties. Some of the duties that had historically been assigned to the school counselor were data entry, clerical record keeping, registration and scheduling of all new students, coordinating or administering cognitive, aptitude and achievement test, responsibility for signing excuses for students who are tardy or absent, performing disciplinary action, sending home students who are not appropriately dressed, teaching classes when teachers were absent and computing grade-point averages (Chandler, 2006). These hindered the success of guidance and counseling services and hence sustainable secondary education. House and Hayes (2002) pointed out that the successful implementation of guidance and counseling programmes depended on support from stake holders to achieve sustainable secondary education. Ngumi (2003) stated that even the trained teachers did not cover sufficient courses in guidance and counseling to enable them effectively renders the guidance and counseling services. This also posed hindrance to sustainable secondary education.

Lasker and Weiss (2003) conducted a research on students' attitudes towards guidance and counseling. They found out that students have a somewhat negative attitude towards guidance and counseling services and this negatively affected the attainment of sustainable secondary education. While in another study, Sink (2005) conducted a survey on the provision of guidance and counseling services. He reported lack of time as a handicap in the provision of guidance and counseling services and a hindrance to sustainable secondary education. He pointed out

that most teachers were overloaded and often suffers from professional burnout. In an earlier study by Dahir (2001), it was reported that there was lack of counselling facilities which hindered effective management of guidance and counseling services and sustainable secondary education. Acheing (2003) maintained that without a private accommodation for delivery, counseling services and sustainability would not be effective in the secondary schools. Beside, Kiragu (2002) recommended that, most school counselors' offices did not have the basic guidance and counseling facilities such as reference books, guidance and counseling manual and career resource materials to enhance effective discharge of their responsibilities.

Management of Students' Recreational Services and Sustainable Secondary Education

Recreational services which involve all extra-curricular activities occupy a very important place in the instructional programme of secondary education. Educationist, psychologists and sociologists attach great importance to these activities for they help to foster children psychosomatic and social development (Bhullar, 2002). They foster creative abilities and provide opportunities for self expression. Extra-curricular activities as an integral part of a school programme lend themselves to enriching students' learning and enlivening the school atmosphere. The Office for Standard in Education (OFSTED, 2009) pointed out that students acquire many subtle learning like human values, beliefs, manners and thinking patterns through hidden curriculum which is also manifested in extra-curricular activities and improved learning outcome.

Vaidya (2002), conducted a study on the effects of extra-curricular activity participation on the academic achievement of secondary school students. The study sample consisted of 123 high school students who participated in interscholastic soccer during the first quarter of the school year but were not involved in any extracurricular activity during the second quarter. The results of the study indicated that participants had higher grade points average in the first quarter (i.e., during soccer season) than in the second quarter (outside soccer season) and the students' attendance was also found to be higher during the soccer season. The finding of the study also showed that total extra-curricular activity participation was positively correlated with global absenteeism, senior-year education aspirations, academic track, college attendance, parental aspirations and senior occupational aspirations. In general, the study conducted on high school athletes showed a significant positive effect of extra-curricular involvement on students' academic achievement.

A similar study by Borhade (2002) showed that students suffering from high anxiety got relieved of it through regular participation in extra-curricular activities. Participation in these activities improves self-esteem, self-satisfaction, personal worth and emotional adjustment. The study also revealed that participation in co-curricular events, especially in sports, yoga, field visit, social services and drama helped in reducing the anxiety level of the participants. Lasker and Weiss (2003) reported about recreational activities that, even with the most satisfactory school-room conditions, students needed a more direct outlet for their tendencies. The co-curricular activities provided them freedom and opportunities for expressing themselves outside the tight formalities of the school academic programmes. It is more important for the emotional and social health of the students to enhance sustainable secondary education. These activities provided opportunities for self-expression and outlets for the flow of surplus energies of the students. Thus, extra-curricular activities were valuable for developing proper attitude, habits, interest and ideals among students (Schneider 2002). In a study by Bawa and Kalpana (1993), it was reported that before the execution of New Education

System Plan, extra-curricular activities in the school of Nepal was not well organized as a regular school programme due to the lack of implementation of systematic school curriculum.

The literature so far reviewed has shown clearly that most of the empirical studies were done in the western countries, basically on the impact of guidance/ counselling services and recreational activities on students' academic achievement and other students' educational outcomes. Additionally, no study was found to have sustainable secondary education as the dependent variable. The review of literature also revealed that no study on management of students' personnel services and sustainable secondary education had been carried out in Nigeria and Cross River State in particular. This study therefore, sought to fill this gap.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was survey design because the study involved the use of a representative sample from a population and the drawing of inferences based on analysis of available data. The population of the study comprised 6131 senior secondary two students (SSII) in the study area. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 735 SSII students for the study.

The instrument for data collection was titled "Management of Students' Personnel Services and Sustainable Secondary Education Questionnaire (MSPSSSEQ)". The instrument was designed by the researchers with the help of experts in Measurements and Evaluation. The instrument consisted of section A and B. Section A sought respondents' demographic information such as sex, age, class etc. While section B was a 4-point modified Likert scale. The sub-variables of students' personnel services were guidance and counseling services and recreational services. Sustainable secondary education had three sub-variables namely learning environment, instructional strategies and curriculum relevance. Each of these sub-variables was measured using 6 items which gave a total of 30 items. Each item had four response options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) to Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The respondents were required to tick one of the four response options against each item to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the item.

In order to determine the reliability of the research instrument, a trial test was carried out. The instrument was administered on 60 SSII students who were not part of the study sample. Cronbach alpha reliability estimate of the test instrument was done in order to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The result of the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate gave a reliability coefficient of 0.78. This value was high enough to be considered good for the research instrument.

The copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researchers with the help of three trained research assistants. At the end of the exercise, out of seven hundred and thirty five (735) copies of questionnaire administered, seven hundred and ten (710) were successfully completed and retrieved from the respondents and use for data analysis.

RESULTS/FINDINGS**Hypothesis 1**

Management of guidance and counseling services does not significantly relate to sustainable secondary education.

The data for this hypothesis were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation statistics. The results of the analysis were as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Guidance and Counseling Services and Sustainable Secondary Education (n=710)

Variables	\bar{X}	SD	R-Value
Guidance and counseling Services (x)	15.35	3.08	
Learning environment (y ₁)	17.10	3.31	.08*
Instructional strategies (y ₂)	16.76	3.08	.35*
Curriculum relevance (y ₃)	14.64	4.01	.02

* Significant at .05, critical $r = .062$, $df = 708$

The result of the analysis presented on table 1 revealed that the calculated r-values for learning environment (0.08) and instructional strategies (0.35) were higher than the critical r-value of .062 at 0.05 level of significance with 708 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result indicated that management of guidance and counseling services had a significant positive relationship with sustainable secondary education in terms of learning environment and instructional strategies. The positive nature of the r-values depicted that the more effective the management of guidance and counseling services, the higher the sustainable secondary education tended to be and vice versa. The data on table 1 also revealed that there was no significant relationship between management of guidance and counseling services and sustainable secondary education in terms of curriculum relevance.

Hypothesis 2

Management of recreational services does not significantly relate to sustainable secondary education.

The data for this hypothesis were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation statistics. The results of the analysis were as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Recreational Services and Sustainable Secondary Education (N=710)

Variables	\bar{X}	SD	r-value
Recreational services (x)	16.34	2.91	
Learning environment (y ₁)	17.10	3.31	.17*
Instructional strategies (y ₂)	16.79	3.08	.38*
Curriculum relevance (y ₃)	14.64	4.01	.13*

* Significant at .05, critical $r = .062$, $df = 708$

The result of the analysis presented on table 2 revealed that the calculated r-values for learning environment (0.17), instructional strategies (0.38) and curriculum relevance (0.13) are higher than the critical r-value of .062 at .05 level of significance and 708 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result depicted that, management of recreational services had a significant positive relationship with sustainable secondary education with regards to learning environment, instructional strategies and curriculum relevance. The positive nature of the r-values showed that the more effective the management of recreational services, the higher sustainable secondary education tended to be and vice versa.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

One of the findings of the study revealed that management of students' guidance and counseling services significantly correlated with sustainable secondary education. The positive nature of the correlation coefficients showed that the more guidance and counseling services are effectively managed in secondary schools, the higher the level of sustainable secondary education. The possible explanation for this finding is that guidance and counseling services help the students to be more conscious of themselves in order to bring about sustainable life style and behaviour and this will enhance sustainable secondary education. This finding revealed the fact that the government of Cross River State is proactive to the provision of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools.

The present finding is in consonance with the work of Acheing (2003) that reported that effective counseling services for students is a prerequisite for sustainable secondary education. The finding is also in agreement with the work of House and Hayes (2002), which reported that school counselors promote students' achievement if they provide a well-articulated developmental counseling programme with attention to equity, access, and support services. Thus, if school counselors engage in appropriate counseling duties that involve not only counseling, but also collaboration, school leadership and student advocacy, sustainable secondary education can be achieved. This implies that school counsellors are greatly involved in students' counseling services such as attitude towards learning, students scheduling and study habits including responsibilities associated with the master schedule to bring about sustainable secondary education (Chandler, 2006).

However, the present finding is at variance with the work of Kiragu (2002) who reported that, most school counselors' offices do not have the basic guidance and counselling facilities such as reference books, guidance and counseling manuals and career resource materials to help the counselor in the discharge of their duties for promoting sustainable secondary education. The finding of this study is also at variance, with the research report of Chandler (2006) that in developing countries, secondary school counsellors are not given opportunities to perform their counseling duties.

Another finding of the study revealed that management of recreational services significantly correlated with sustainable secondary education. The positive nature of the correlation coefficients showed that the more recreational services are provided and effectively managed in the secondary schools, the higher the level of sustainable secondary education. This finding could be attributed to the government renewed commitment to the provision of recreational facilities in secondary schools. The involvement of students in recreational activities such as sports and games complements students' classroom learning and develops in them the spirit of

teamwork. This finding can also be attributed to the contribution of the Cross River State government in making it compulsory for every student to take part in extra-curricular activities in secondary schools. The inclusion of extra-curricular activities as a component of the school curriculum and government commitment in funding of sporting activities in secondary schools must have contributed immensely to the present research finding.

The present finding is in agreement with the work of Vaidya (2002) who reported that in schools where extra-curricular activities formed an integral part of the school programme and participation made compulsory for both teachers and students, sustainable secondary education was enhanced. The present finding is also in line with the research finding of Borhade (2012) which found that in effective schools, students suffering from high anxiety got relieved of it through regular participation in extra-curricular activities. However, the present finding is at variance with the work of Bawa and Kalpan (1993), who reported that co-curricular activities in the school of Nepal was not well organized as a regular school programme due to lack of systematic implementation of secondary school curriculum and this affected students' study habit and school effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Premised on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that students' personnel services significantly correlated with sustainable secondary education in Calabar education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. In other word the provision and effective management of guidance and counseling services and recreational services have significant positive impact on sustainable secondary education. Therefore, these personnel services should be given priority attention by both educational administrators and the government because the more student personnel services are provided and efficiently administered, the higher the level of sustainable secondary education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government and school administrators should provide guidance and counseling services in the secondary schools of Calabar education zone of Cross River State. Adequate funds should be provided for procurement of facilities for affective implementation of guidance and counseling services for sustainable secondary education.
2. Sports and other related recreational services should be provided by government to enhance sustainable secondary education in Calabar education zone of Cross River State. The government and institutional administrators should work hand-in-hand to ensure that recreational facilities both in quantity and quality are provided in schools. These facilities should be properly managed to enable students to derive maximum benefits from recreational services.

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