

**AFRICAN JOURNAL OF  
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

**ISSN 0795 – 0063    Volume 26, Nos. 1&2, 2025**

**A JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT,  
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN**

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**MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS' PERSONNEL SERVICES AND GOAL  
ATTAINMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CROSS RIVER  
STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This study examined the relationship between management of student's personnel services and school goal attainment in public secondary schools in Cross River State. Two research questions and hypotheses were stated to guide the study. Correlation design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 281 schools. The sample of the study comprised 239 schools selected through stratified sampling technique. Instrument titled; Management of Students Personnel Services and Goal attainment Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was face validated and trial-tested using Cronbach Alpha method and reliability ranged from .75 to .87. Simple linear regression analysis was used. The results revealed that management of guidance and counselling services, enrolment services predict goal attainment. The result also showed that guidance and counselling services are essential component of a modern educational system and students are better placed in appropriate classes when enrollment services are provided. It was recommended that ministry of Education should design special guidance and counselling training programs for all principals, ensure schools are well equipped with modern sickbay and other health facilities, and ensure that students and teachers are safe and secure in schools.*

**Keywords;** students' personnel services, counselling services, student's enrolment, school safety.

**Introduction**

Secondary education plays a significant role in the success of Nigerian nation. It is the level of education that provides individual 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 Cross River State and Nigeria at large may mean ensuring a sustainable future for the Nigerian society where youths can imbibe moral values for a peaceful existence, have a functional skill to engage in gainful and productive ventures, and acquire the requisite aptitude and disposition for higher learning (Enu & Esu, 2011).

However, the increase in the number of youths without functional skills for useful living in Nigeria, the high rate of social upheaval among Nigerian youths, the poor academic performances of secondary school students in internal and external examinations, the high rate of indiscipline and moral decadence among secondary school students in the country, seem to raise concern among stakeholders and the level to which the goals of secondary education have been achieved in Cross River State. The specific goals of secondary education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education including providing all primary school teachers with opportunities for education at higher level: offering diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talent, opportunities and future roles: (FRN 2014).

Regrettably, these laudable goals outlined in the above paragraph seem not to be maximally attained in Cross River State and in Nigeria, as many youths are unemployed due to lack of employable skills, while some are involved in all kinds of social vices as a result. Many researchers and scholars have argued that in spite of laudable secondary education policies in Nigeria, youths are still idle, then do not live usefully in the society, high unemployment due to lack of functional skills, so many are involved in all kinds of social vices, some have no worth for themselves or respect the views and feelings of others (Kotinde & Yunos, 2015). It is also noted that many secondary school

student in the country finishes school without knowing anything and thus become useless and contribute to the high level of crime in the society (Suleiman, 2018. Ololube, Onyekwere & Agbor 2016). These observations seem to establish the low level at which the pre-determined goals of secondary education have been achieved in the country.

This dismal attainment of secondary school goals as observed by different researchers, appears not to be different in secondary schools in Cross River State. This was recently affirmed by Okoi, and Ofem (2024) as they observed with gross dismay of the poor performance of majority secondary school students in Cross River State in internal and external examinations. The researcher and other examination body also observes that a greater percentage of 2022/2023, 2023/2024 academic session of senior secondary school students in the state hardly do well in West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examinations, and thus only a few percentages of students can gain access to tertiary institution every year. The researcher further notes that there is a high rate of indiscipline behaviour among secondary school students, ranging from absenteeism, truancy, lateness, poor attendance in class and fighting among others. Most secondary school students are fully involved in cultism to the point that they use it to intimidate teachers who are strict in the school. Goal attainment in secondary schools is the extent to which secondary schools are able to maximize teaching and learning and the extent to which students have acquired desired learning in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. It is measured by the quality of cognitive, non-cognitive, and practical skills acquired by students. All these cognitive skills are assessed by the level of students' academic achievement in schools, which is measured by assessment scores in schools. The non-cognitive skills measure learning in the effective domain as developed by Epstein in 1977 (Stephen & Ormandy, 2019, Okoi & Etowa 2024). These effective skills are values, behaviours and attitudes of students, which are assessed here by non-cognitive attributes such as learning behaviour disciplinary behaviour, self-concept, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and so on. Similarly, skills are their psychomotor characteristics which are measured by their levels of skills acquisition in schools. (Nathan, Berahim & Ramile, 2017).

These three dimensions of goal attainment in secondary schools are the educational outcome that every secondary education system is designed to achieve in Nigeria. These three aspects of educational outcomes are adequately reflected in the broad goals of secondary education in Nigeria, which are to make individuals functional in society and to prepare them for higher learning. The cognitive skills measure students' ability to transit a higher level of learning, while non-cognitive and psychomotor skills relate to their functionality in society through the acquisition of vocational skills and good behavioural and personality attributes. These implies that goal attainment in secondary schools is akin to the quality of educational outcomes of the secondary education (Okoi & Uyimse, 2025).

However, one of the key practices in secondary schools that can shape the extent of attainment of the pre-determined goals of the system is management of student's personnel services. Students personnel services involve all the non-instructional services that are rendered by the school administrator to ensure that students here enabling environment for effective learning in schools. Mbon and Okoi (2019) noted that management of students personnel services are all the activities or services that are rendered to the students for the achievement of educational objectives apart from the normal classroom instructions and that no school system can attain its goal without effective management of students personnel services. Research has shown that management of guidance and counselling services, enrolment/placement services, medical services, students discipline services, orientation, safety and management of social services have been found to have implications for the extent of teaching and learning in secondary schools (Kuponiyi, Amoran & Omoea, 2017; Yusoff & Abdullah, 2021).

This study concentrates on only two services namely: management of guidance and counselling services and management of emolument/placements services. Schools need to ensure effective guidance and counselling service to enhance the effective functioning of the school system. Unachukwu and Okoryi (2014) submitted that guidance and counselling services offers the students and assist them with personal, educational or career goals. Guidance and counselling is one of the educational services that prompted the effectiveness of the educational system for goals attainment and guiding learners through

the learning process and thus school administrators must have adequate skills to carry out and maintain effective guidance and counselling services in schools. Yusoff and Abdullah (2021) stated that guidance and counselling services are important aspect of the school system and that it is not just for students who are involved in disciplinary issues, but also for the positive development of individuals. Amat (2019) and Okoi and Nna (2024) added that school counsellors must lead the programme, make decisions, issue guidelines, integrate program management procedure and improve motivation and counselling, evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, identify weakness and problems encountered and act to address them. Robert and Ntarangwe (2017) submitted that guidance and counselling when effectively delivered, helps to develop individuals who is more productive, happier and well-adjusted to the environment, thus when orientation and adaptive services are provided, they assist students to adjust to their school environment during the transition period.

Shaheen, Iqbal and Shaheen (2023) measured the impact of guidance and counselling services on students development at the university level. Student development was taken in three basic domains (academic, moral and social development). Six hypotheses were formulated. Their study found a positive impact of guidance and counselling services on student academic, moral, and social development.

Management of students is a very significant personnel services that must be effectively carried out for the effective achievement of the goals of the school system. Akpan, Okon and Ebuara (2015) submitted that pupils admission into schools remains a statutory function of the school administrator and that for any school system to attain its goals and objectives it must be able to enroll students/pupil in line with its infrastructural capacity and the teacher strength so that the right and enabling environment would be created for effective teaching and learning. Odigwe and Okoi (2017), Mbon and Ukpabio (2019) added that in the admission process, the school administrators should be mindful of maximal school population and infrastructure and available learning resources or facilities. This implies that school administrators must be well versed with the requisite skills to ensure effective students enrolment/placement services in schools.

Marais (2016) submitted that an overcrowded classroom has more students assigned to a classroom building than the number of students it was designed to accommodate. Moreover, the main function of an administrator in student emplacement 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 teacher's strength so as to have a good classroom environment as well as moderate student-teacher ratio for effective teaching and learning. In the same direction, 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 researcher stated that large class size is one of the problems in the educational sector that developing nations have been grappling with, and that Nigeria as a developing nation is no exception. Given the importance of secondary education as a foundation for tertiary education and national manpower development, there is an urgent need to examine how student's personnel services are managed and how such management practices influence goal attainment. This will provide insights into strategies for improving student academic and overall school effectiveness. Addressing this gap will contribute to both theory and practice by offering a more comprehensive understanding of how well managed student personnel services can drive the achievement of school objectives.

#### **Statement of problem**

The goals of secondary schools are attainable when students can maintain a high level of academic achievement in schools, transit to higher institution for higher learning, have functional or vocational skills for employability and can display moral character and other positive personality traits in schools as well as in society. The low level of goal attainment in secondary schools is quite glaring in Cross River State. The researcher observed that there is constant trend of poor academic performance among secondary school students in internal and external examinations. Some student are seen displaying a high level of indiscipline behavior and moral turpitude such as absenteeism, truancy, lateness, poor attendance in class, fighting with teachers, relationship with one another, lesbianism and lack of respect for authorities among

others, in some secondary schools in the state. The researcher also notes in many schools in the state that some secondary school students are now fully involved in cultism to the point that they use it to intimidate teachers and school principals who exercise strictness in school discipline.

This situation has been a source of wrong to many stakeholders. The government of Cross River State on her part had heightened external supervision, recruited more teachers, and renovated dilapidated structures in secondary schools in recent times, in a bid to fast track effective instructional delivery and smooth attainment of secondary education goals in the state. These issues still persist and are even more serious among the students in recent times. The researcher is prompted to raise the question: what is the relationship between the management of students' personnel services and goal attainment in public secondary schools in Cross River State?

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to examine management of students' personnel services and school goal attainment in secondary schools in Cross Rive State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought id find out whether:

1. Management of guidance and counseling service predict goal attainment in public schools.
2. Management of enrolment and placement services predict goal attainment in public schools.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guided the study.

**Ho1:** Management of guidance and counselling services does not significantly predict goal attainment in public secondary schools.

**Ho2:** Management of enrolment and placement services does not significantly predict goal

### **Methodology**

This study adopts descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of all the public secondary schools in Cross Rivers

State. The information from Cross River State secondary education board revealed that there are 281 public secondary schools. This study adopted stratified random sampling technique. The basis for stratification was educational zones in Cross River State. After which simple random sampling technique was used to select 85 percent of the secondary schools. A sample size of 239 public secondary schools were selected. Two research instruments titled "management of student's personnel services questionnaire and "Goal attainment in secondary schools' questionnaire" was used for data collection. The items on both questionnaires had four options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). A reliability estimate using Cronbach alpha reliability scale was carried out and a reliability coefficient of .75 and .87 was realized.

**Results and Discussion**

Management of guidance and counselling services does not significantly predict goal attainment in public secondary schools. The result of this hypothesis is presented below in table 1.

**TABLE 1:** ANOVA output of simple linear regression results of the relationship between management of guidance and counselling service and goal attainment in public secondary schools

Dependent Variable	Models	Source	SS	Df	MS	F-ratio	p-level
Goal attainment generally	1	Regression	10020.659	1	10020.659	112.998	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	20130.276	227	88.680		
		Total	30150.934	228			
Students' academic performance	1	Regression	1442.275	1	1442.275	106.265	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	3080.939	227	13.572		
		Total	4523.214	228			
Students acquisition of affective skills	1	Regression	1005.049	1	1005.049	51.806	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	4403.876	227	19.400		
		Total	5408.926	228			
Students acquisition of practical skills	1	Regression	925.585	1	925.585	51.721	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	4062.362	227	17.896		
		Total	4987.948	228			

**Source:** Researchers' Fieldwork, 2025

The result of table 1 implies that management of guidance and counselling services across all public secondary schools in Cross River State significantly predict the variance in goal attainment in public secondary schools.

#### **Hypothesis two**

Management of enrolment and placement services does not significantly predict goal attainment. The result of this hypothesis is presented in table 2.

**Table 2: ANOVA Output of simple linear regression results of the relationship between management of enrolment placement service and goal attainment in public secondary schools**

Dependent Variable	Models	Source	SS	Df	MS	F-ratio	p-level
Goal attainment Generally	1	Regression	11757.698	1	11757.698	145.108	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	18393.237	227	81.027		
		Total	30150.934	228			
Students' academic performance	1	Regression	1009.228	1	1009.228	65.195	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	3513.986	227	15.480		
		Total	4523.214	228			
Students acquisition of affective skills	1	Regression	1594.471	1	1594.471	94.888	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	3814.455	227	16.804		
		Total	5408.926	228			
Students acquisition of practical skills	1	Regression	1349.368	1	1349.368	84.183	.000 <sup>b</sup>
		Residual	3638.580	227	16.029		
		Total	4987.948	228			

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2025

The result of table two implies that there is a positive significant positive relationship between management of enrolment services and all the dimensions of goal attainment in public secondary schools.

#### **Discussion of findings**

The outcome of the analysis of the hypothesis which revealed that management of guidance and counselling service significantly predicted goal attainment in public secondary schools in Cross River State generally, and specifically in 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 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 Yusoff and Abdullah (2021) who stated that guidance and counseling services are important aspects of the school system and that it is not just for students who are involved in disciplinary issues, but also for the positive development of individuals. This result is not different from the opinion of Amat (2019) who added that school counsellors must lead the programme, make decisions, issue guidelines, integrate program management procedure and improve motivation and counseling, evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, identify weaknesses and problems encountered and act to address them.

The analysis of the second hypothesis which stated that management of enrolment/placement service contributed to the variance in goal attainment in public secondary schools in Cross River State, The outcome of the analysis of the hypothesis revealed that management of enrolment/placement service significantly predicted goal attainment in public secondary schools in Cross River State generally, and specifically in terms of in 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 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 Akpan, Okon and Ebuara (2015) who submitted that pupils admission into schools remains a statutory function of the school administrator and that for any school system to attain its goals and objectives, it must be able to enroll students/pupils in line with its infrastructural capacity and the teacher strength so that the right and enabling environment would be created for effective teaching and learning. This result also agrees with Mbon and Ukpabio (2019) who added 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 to for effective learning thereby leading to poor goal attainment in the school 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 (Odigwe & Okoi, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

Guidance and counseling services are crucial because they equip students with life skills, support their mental well-being and enhance academic performance and prepare them for responsible adulthood. Accurate enrollment data helps school administrators plan for teacher deployment, classroom allocation and budget distribution. This study

shows that enrollment services ensure students are better placed in appropriate classes or streams.

### Recommendations

1. Ministry of Education should design special guidance and counselling training programmes for all Principals. This will help principals to acquire adequate guidance and counselling skills that will enhance their competencies in enhancing the teaching and learning process in the schools.
2. Government should ensure that principals in the state are adequately trained in how to carry out effective students enrolment services as this will help them ensure that students are placed for effective teaching and learning.

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