SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES AND STUDENTS DROPOUT MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CALABAR EDUCATION ZONE, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

OBONO, EBRI EMMANUEL; MBA EDET AKOH
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT
CROSS RIVER UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
PHONE NO: 08034174560
Email: brimanuel10@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigates the relationship between School Support Services and Students' Dropout Management in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was based on three specific objectives. Three research questions and null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study towards achieving these objectives. Survey research design was adopted in the study. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select two hundred and fifteen (215) senior secondary school students that were used as respondents in the study. A questionnaire titled "School Support Services and Students' Dropout Management Questionnaire (SSSSDMQ)" was used to collect data in the study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test all the hypotheses at .05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. Result of the analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between School Support Services and Students' Dropout Management. Based on the result, it was recommended that school managers should provide health services, counselling services and scholarship services in schools to support students who are in need of these services to complete their education.

Keywords: School Support Services, Dropout Management, Health, Services, Counselling Services, Scholarship Services.

1. Introduction

Education is a profitable venture that every nation that want to grow humanly, technologically, economically, socially and politically could invest on. Through education, relevant skills and knowledge are acquired, while mental, physical and social abilities are developed to enable individual live successfully and contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Nigeria educational system is structured into three stages of primary,

secondary and tertiary or higher education. Among these stages of education, secondary education has be regarded by many researchers and scholars as the most sought after because of its critical roles in preparing individuals for useful living within the society and for higher education. This is line with Iyioma in Undiyaundaye and Obono (2020) who noted that secondary education received primary school leavers and processed them for middle manpower or higher education.

Any individual who had acquired education up to secondary school level is deemed to have been educated because he/she have acquired the relevant skills and knowledge for the growth and development of the society. However, the problem that constantly confronts secondary education over the years is student's dropout. Students who could have complete their secondary education and proceed to higher education or contribute to the nation's manpower have dropped out of school as a result of many factors including family, economic, school and health factors.

Every student is expected to complete his/her education at any level with the stipulated curriculum before leaving. Any students who do not complete the prescribed curriculum before leaving, consequently, the money, time and other resources spent on the student becomes wasted, and what the society could have achieve from the student upon completion of his/her education remain unachievable. School dropout is a situation where a student discontinues schooling or withdrawn from school before completing the prescribed period of schooling. Eteng (2018) noted that school dropout is when a child is withdrawing from school before completion.

Several studies have been carried out to ascertain the causes of school dropout among secondary school students. For instance, Edet and Ekegre (2010) observed that the changing nature of the family affects schooling. Brown and Park (2014) reports that poor and credit constrained children are three times more likely than other children to drop out of school. Adebule (2014) explained that psychological problems are potential sources of trouble in learning. On their part, Ogbemodia and Aiasa (2013) disclosed that lack of good home foundation for children is the cause of school dropout.

Most parents who do not have money to pay their children school fees and other charges usually withdrawn their children from school and engaged them in other trades to earn a living. When a student fails to pay his/her fee, such a student may be forced to drop out of school because of the pressure from the school authority. Some students also dropout of school as a result of minor illness that would have been handle in school health facilities. Many students who dropped out of school do not go back to school again or engages in any meaningful activity to earn a living, rather, they engaged in activities that constitutes societal problems, such as stealing, kidnapping, robbery, prostitution and many others.

School managers have responsibility of providing school support services to curb the menace of students' dropout from secondary schools. School support services are wide range of services provided in the school system to support or assist vulnerable and disadvantaged students to overcome their economic, family and health barriers to education. Provision of School support services help students to complete their education without dropping out. There are many services that are be provided in the school system to help the students complete their education in a particular school system. These include, school health services, school counselling services, school scholarship service among others.

School health services are an aspect of school support services that are provided in schools to improve the health of the school children. It

concerned with the evaluation of student's health, control of communicable diseases and supervision of the health of the school children. School health services are services of the medical and health personnel applied in the school environment to improve the health and wellbeing of the students. These services are developed in different ways round the globe but the fundamentals are constant, including early detection of diseases, correction, prevention or amelioration of diseases, disability and abuses from which school age children can suffer (Mishra, 2015).

According to Bains and Diallo (2016), evidence exist that when school health services are available, students are more likely to access health care and thus eliminating health barrier to education. Bersemin, Garbers, Gaarde and Santelli (2016) report that the quality of health services is reflected in positive health and educational outcome in disadvantaged children. Mishra (2015) posited that school health services may have an important role in supporting school children with chronic illness such as diabetes. According to the authors, integrating health care needs in the children may help them to stay in school and prevent them from missing classroom teaching and other school activities. On their part, Akani, Nkaniginiekene and Oruambo (2013) disclosed that school health services are designed to ensure that school children are healthy as possible to obtain maximum benefit from education.

School counselling services is another aspect of education support services provided in schools to provide assistance to students to enable them discover themselves and the world around them. Many students dropped out of school due to psychological and emotional factors arising from unpleasant situations they found themselves especially at home. Counselling services assists these students emotionally and psychologically to overcome their problems and

concentrate in their education. Okobiah and Okoromadu in Oyinloyo and Obasaro (2011) viewed counselling services as a broad range of activities, programmes and services geared toward assisting individuals to understand their problems, the world and develop adequate capacity for decision making. Oyinloyo and Obasaro (2011) stated that counseling services help to enhance the psychological ability of school children to be able to derive necessary benefits from what the school system is out to offer. According to the authors, an attempt to use the tool of counselling in the provision of needed help and assistance will enable school children adjust to the school system.

There are a lot of uncertainties at home and in school that always creates stress and frustration to the students resulting in school dropout. This, Ezembu (2011) pointed out that changes in our educational system, difficulty in textbooks, use of library and adjustment to teaching, not knowing how to study or how to choose subjects combination and also not knowing how to prepare for examination causes stress to the students and affect the standard of their performance and eventually school dropout. Hence the need for counselling services in schools.

School scholarship service is a financial assistant given to disadvantaged but brilliant students which is non-refundable to enable them complete their education. Education is an investment that requires a lot of financial commitment to be educated. Many students who dropped out of school is as a result of lack of financial resources to meet the cost of education. Ikpi (2014) disclosed that school scholarship service enable brilliant but poor students to stay in school and complete their education. According to the author, school scholarship provides succor to the students and enhances learning effectiveness.

It can be deduced at this point that education support services has connection with school

dropout management. It was based on this premise that this study was carried out to investigate the relationship between school support services and dropout management in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

2. Statement of the problem

The importance of secondary education to educational development and manpower provision cannot be overemphasized. This explained why the government is constantly developing and implementing policies and programmes to ensure that every Nigeria citizen acquires education up to secondary school level. Regrettably, in spite of government efforts, the problem of school dropout among secondary school students in Nigeria and in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State still persist.

Many students may drop out of school due to financial, health and psychological challenges. While some of these dropped out students took to other trades to earn a living, many engages in criminal activities within the society. Today, the society is plagued with criminals who dropped out of school due to some challenges. It is observed that while the government is putting in more effort to address school dropout among students, school managers are not doing enough in terms of providing education support services such as school health, counselling service and school scholarship to assist poor and disadvantaged students in completing their education.

Hence, the question of whether school support services relate with students' dropout management in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State formed the problem of this study.

3. Purpose of the study

The study investigates the relationship between school support services and students' drop out management in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study investigates the relationship between:

i. School health services and students' drop out management.

ii. School counseling services and students' drop out management.

iii. School scholarship services and students' drop out management.

4. Research questions

The following research questions guided the study.

i. What is the relationship between school health services and students' dropout management?

ii. How does school counselling services relate to students' dropout management?

iii. How does school scholarship service relate to students' dropout management?

5. Statement of research hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated in the study.

i. There is no significant relationship between school health services and students' dropout management.

ii. School counselling services does not have any significant relationship with students' dropout management.

iii. School scholarship services does not have any significant relationship with students' dropout management.

6. Methodology

The study adopts survey research design. It is a research approach that tallows the research to collect opinions from a proportion of a given population and generalize result in the entire population at the end of the study (Idaka and Anagbogu 2012).It was carried out in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The zone comprised of seven Local Government Areas including, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Biase, Calabar Municipal, Calabar South, Bakassi and Odukpani Local Government Areas. The

population of the study was made up of senior secondary school three (SSS3) students in the study area. According Cross River State secondary education board (2022), there are a total of two thousand one hundred and fifty (2150) SSS3 students in the seventy (70) public secondary schools in the zone. The schools were stratified according to their Local Government Areas. One school was selected from each of the Local Government Area. Two hundred and fifteen (215) students were selected as sample for the study. Sample students were selected from each school according to their population.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "School Support Services and Students' Dropout Management Questionnaire (SSSSDMQ). The instrument was content validated by three experts in measurement and evaluation and subjected to test of reliability using fifty (50) students who were not part of the main study. Data obtained was analyzed with Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability coefficient ranged 0.78, 0.82 and 0.86 which is considered good enough to make the

instrument statistically reliable for use in the study. Data collection exercise was carried out by the researchers, out of two hundred and fifteen (215) questionnaires distributed, two hundred (200) were returned and used in the analysis. Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom.

7. Presentation of results

The result of the data analysis is presented hypothesis-by-hypothesis as shown below.

7.1 Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between school health services and student's dropout management. The independent variable in this hypothesis is school health services categorized as X while the dependent variable is school dropout management categorized as Y. To test this hypothesis, Pearson's product moment correlation was employed as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson's product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between school health services and students' dropout management (N=200)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig
Sch. health serv.	200	28.23	4.704	.620*	.000
Students' dropout management	200	28.62	4.616		

*P<.05, df= 198

The result presented in table 1 shows that the calculated r of .620 is significant at .05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis which state that there is no significant relationship between school health services and students' dropout management was therefore rejected. In other words, there was a significant relationship between school health services and students' dropout management.

7.2 Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between school counselling service and students' dropout management. The independent variable in this hypothesis is school counselling services categorized as X while the dependent variable is school dropout management categorized as Y. To test this hypothesis, Pearson's product moment correlation was employed as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson's product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between counselling services and students' dropout management (N=200)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig

Sch. counselling serv.	200	29.78	3.42	.510*	.000	
Students' dropout management	200	33.61	4.219			

*P<.05,df= 198

The result presented in table 2 shows that the calculated r of .510 is significant at .05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis which state that there is no significant relationship between school counselling services and students' dropout management was therefore rejected. Hence, there was a significant relationship between school counselling services and school dropout management.

7.3 Hypothesis three
There is no significant relationship between school scholarship services and student's dropout management. The independent variable in this hypothesis is school scholarship services categorized as X while the dependent variable is school dropout management categorized as Y. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation was employed as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Pearson's product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between school scholarship services and students' dropout management (N=200)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig
Sch. scholarship	200	42.31	3.51	.453	.000
Students' dropout management	200	52.70	4.12		

*P<.05, df= 198

The result presented in table 3 shows that the calculated r of .453 is significant at .05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis which state that there is no significant relationship between school scholarship services and students' dropout management was therefore rejected. Hence, there was a significant relationship between school scholarship services and school dropout management.

8. Discussion
8.1 Hypothesis one
Result of hypothesis one revealed that there is significant relationship between school health services and students' dropout management. This result is in agreement with Bains and Diallo (2016) who reports that when school health services are available, students are likely to access health care and this eliminating health

barrier to education. The result also agrees with Willaim and Lee in Mishra (2015) who disclosed that integrating health care needs to the children may help them to stay in school and prevent them from missing classroom teaching and other school activities.

8.2 Hypothesis two
Result of hypothesis two revealed that there is significant relationship between school counselling services and students' dropout management. This result aligned with Oyinloyo and Obasaro (2011) who disclosed that an attempt to use counselling services in the provision of needed help and assistance will enable school children adjust to the school system. The result also supported Okwara (2019) who revealed that school counselling services has significant relationship with adolescent educational achievement.

8.3 Hypothesis three

Result of hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant relationship between school scholarship services and students' dropout management. This result collaborated with Ikpi (2014) who reports that school scholarship services enable brilliant but poor students to stay in school and complete their education. That school scholarship provide succor to the students and enhances learning effectiveness. Similarly, the result agrees with Okpotum (2017) who reports that provision of school scholarship services has significant influence on students' academic performance.

9. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were reached;
Provision of school health services is significant in managing school dropout.
Availability of school counselling services is significant in managing school dropout.
Provision of school scholarship to students will enable school management to curtail school dropout.

10. Recommendations

Based on the results and the conclusion, the following recommendations were made;
i.   School health services should be provided in schools to ensure that students with health need are attended to in school to prevent them from dropping out of school.
ii.   School managers should have made counselling services available in schools to assist students emotionally and psychologically to overcome their problems that may lead them to drop out of school.
iii.   Scholarship should be given to poor and brilliant students' who need financial support to complete their education.

References

Adebule, A. D. E. (2014). Influence of home environment on academic performance of secondary school students in agricultural science in Adamawa State, Nigeria. *Journal of Research method in Education,* 4(4), 46-53.

Akan,, N. A. Nkanginiene, K. E. &Oruambo, R. S. (2013). School health programmes. A situational revisit.*Journal of Pediatrics,* 28(1), 1-6.

Bains, R. M. &Diallo, A. F. (2016). Mental health services in school based health centre systematic review of *Journal of School. Nursing,* 32(1), 2-9.

Bersemin, M. Garbers, S. Gaarde, D. &Santelli, I. (2016). Assessing the impact of school-based health centres on academic achievement and college preparation effort. *Journal of school nursing,*32(4) 241-245.

Brown, F. and Park, A. Ekegre, E. (2010). Parental socio-economic status, family type and school dropout in Ewutu Education Circuit, Winneba, Ghana: Implication for counselling. *Journal of Academic Leadership,* 8(4), 11-34.

Cross River State Secondary Education Board (2023). Students' publication bulletin. Calabar: Ministry of Education.

Eteng, S. W. (2018). Effective educational planning: A panacea for educational wastage. Inc. P. Akpan, E. S. Uko& R. O. Osim (Eds). Educational planning in Nigeria: Principles and practice Calabar: University of Calabar Press.

Ezembu, H. I. (2011). Effective guidance and counselling services in Nigeria schools. panacea for the achievement of qualitative and functional education.

Nigeria Journal of Teacher Education and Teaching 9(1), 84-91.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). National policy on education Lagos: NERDC.

Idaka, I. I. and Anagbogu, G. (2012). Research design. In J. A. Isangedighi (ed) essentials of research and statistics in education and social science. Calabar: Eti-nwa Press.

Ikpi, O. K. (2014). Education support services and learning effectiveness of secondary school students in Cross River State Thesis Work. Ebonyi State University.

Mishra, I. M. (2015). School health services. New Delhi: Jaypee Brothers Publishers.

Ogbemodia, J. S. and Aisa, A. D. (2013). The long term effects of divoce on children. Psychiatric Review, 3(1), 349-360.

Okpotum, K. I. (2014). School support services and students' academic performance in Benue State Thesis Work, Benue State University.

Okwara, S. U. (2019). School services and adolescent's educational achievement in Imo State. These work, Imo State University.

Oyinloye, O. A. and Obasaro, G. B. (2011). Guidance and counselling for emotional stability and improve learning outcome among primary school pupils'. Nigeria. *Journal of General Studies* 2(1), 132-138.

Undeyaundeye, F. A. and Obono, E. E. (2020). Quality assurance indices and academic staff productivity in colleges of education in Cross River State. Conference paper, presented at the international conference on Advance Education. Held on Dubai, United Arab Emirate on 1st August 2019.