



## **Perceived Impact of Management of Public Secondary Schools on Students' Academic Performance in Rivers State**

<sup>1</sup>KINIKA-NSIRIM, Uchechi Access & <sup>2</sup>OKEAH, Chioma Fortune &

<sup>1</sup>Department of Educational Foundations  
Faculty of Education

River State University, Nkpolu-Orokworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria  
Phone Number: 08066760724  
E-mail: cuteaccess16@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Education,  
Faculty of Education

River State University, Nkpolu-Orokworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria  
Phone Number: 08037154253  
E-mail: okeachiomaf@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the perceived impact of management of public secondary schools on students' academic performance in Rivers State. Two (2) research questions and two (2) null hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of 7,425 public secondary school teachers. The sample size for the study was drawn scientifically by the use of Taro Yemane Formula. This yielded a sample of 380 teachers that was studied. Data were collected for the study through the administration of validated questionnaire on the respondents. The Cronbach Alpha Method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument for the study was found to be 0.84. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, the hypotheses was tested using z-test inferential statistics. Findings of the study revealed that male and female teachers affirmed to a very high extent that discipline affect students' academic performance, experienced and less experienced teachers affirmed to a high extent that improper curriculum management and compliance influence student academic performance, male and female public secondary school teachers affirmed to a high extent that lack of co-curricular activity affect students' academic performance and urban and rural teachers affirmed to a high extent that inadequate provision of instructional facilities affect students' academic performance in Rivers State. On the basis of these findings, it was recommended that government at all levels should support public secondary schools by providing modern, relevant and adequate facilities for the training of student, state ministry of education should train and re-train school heads (principals) and teachers as to make them more effective in the management of public secondary schools and in imparting knowledge, and that adequate funding should be provided by the government to enhance effective running of public secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Perceived, Impact, Management, Public, Secondary, Student Academic, Performance

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Nigerian educational system as at today allows for the Pre-nursery, Nursery, Primary, Post-primary (secondary), and tertiary education. For the purposes of this research much emphasis is however on the post primary (otherwise known as the secondary education which is divided into the junior and senior secondary respectively). Undoubtedly, School management is an essential part of any educational system. Various authorities (School authorities) at all levels are basically engaged in numerous and divers' activities with the view of ensuring proper school management at every stage of our educational system. The impact of a proper school management certainly reflects and has its effects on the standard of education, level of discipline amongst students, methods of teaching, students' performance and the frequency of awards and school ratings (locally, nationally and international). In an ideal situation the effects of proper and effective school management ensures high level of discipline amongst teachers and students. Arguably the level of discipline in both teachers and students and the methods of teaching amongst other factors relatively influence the students' academic performance. Therefore, the importance of an effective and efficient school management at all levels of education cannot be overemphasized, more importantly at the secondary and tertiary level of standard education and institutions.

The Secondary (post-primary) education indeed occupies a strategic position in the national education system. Secondary education is said to be the linking-bridge between the primary and tertiary level of education in Nigeria. According to Adeniyi, (2015) secondary education was established to achieve varieties of purpose, for example, producing 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. The basic aim of secondary education is no doubt a clear indication of its crucial place in our national development and sustainability. This in fact emphasizes its importance and vital role in national development and therefore reaffirms that the sustainability of the human resources of any nation depends quite considerably on the quality of education and students' academic performance which incidentally are products of an effective management of such institutions. Secondary education is an institution or rather a human industry established for refining human beings at their youthful age in terms of skills, productivity, behaviour and all round excellence in order to fit into the society where they belong.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government is generally empowered to prescribe minimum standards of education at all levels, and is vested with the responsibility to establish and regulate school management boards/ authorities in that regard. It is in line with such powers vested in the federal government that the National Assembly is empowered by law to make laws with respect to University education, technological education or such professional education; this power also includes power to establish an institution for the purpose of University, post-primary (Secondary), technological or professional education. This means that both the Federal and State governments in Nigeria are empowered to establish, run, regulate and manage various educational and professional institutions, including post-primary institutions (secondary schools). The power to prescribe the minimum standard of education, make laws regulating education and to establish and regulate school management boards/ authorities in that regard as vested in both the Federal and State Governments by necessary implication requires the governments' involvement in the funding and management of the various schools at all levels of education in Nigeria.

Research however reveals that the government in Nigeria (whether federal or state) was not always involved in the funding and management of schools in Nigeria. This however is because historically, the origin of standard institutions for education in Nigeria may be traceable to the foreign missionaries who came into Nigeria in the 19th Century and established schools with the Methodist Missionary Society founding the first school in 1843 (Adesina, 2010).

The author stressed further that after the first school was founded in 1843, the Anglican Communion followed suit and established chains of schools in 1847. As a result of the foregoing, majority of schools before 1960 (when Nigeria got her independence) and even shortly after, were privately owned by churches/missionaries (Ejiogu, 2010). Although the establishment of schools especially in the southern

part of Nigeria propelled the establishment of the Southern Nigeria Educational Department in 1887. However, the Nigerian government in 1970 (after the civil war) intensified the takeover of such privately owned/missionary schools and also established new ones thereafter as a means of controlling the educational standard in the country (Eton, 2014). For instance, in Rivers State of Nigeria, Edict No 3 of 1987 was enacted to legalize Rivers State government takeover of privately owned schools from their original owners. The involvement of government in the funding and management of such schools changed its status to public schools. In Nigeria today and in Rivers State in particular we have both private secondary schools and public secondary schools. Public secondary schools are such schools that were either taken over or established by the government.

A public school is basically owned, financed and managed by the government. It is the governments' (be it Federal or State governments) involvement in a secondary school that makes such secondary school a public secondary school. Because public secondary schools are established by the government, the government directly or indirectly influences its control, management, and in some cases the day to day decisions and administration of such public secondary schools. Given the involvement of government in public schools, statistics in some quarters has revealed that it is much easier to establish, run and manage a private secondary school, than it is for public schools.

As at today the private sector involvement in education, especially in the primary and post-primary (secondary school) sector is more pronounced and it has reduced the monopoly of government in the education sector. Government at all times exercises its control, rule-making powers in the management of education as well as regulates and manages public secondary schools via delegation of its powers. The finance, staffing, school calendar, curriculum, operational decisions, hours of school operation, prescription of textbooks, the appointment, promotion, discipline and determination of the career of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the school, management policies and administrative procedures including practically every details of public school administration, are delegated to various government agencies including the Minister or Commissioner for education, Teaching service commission, and local schools boards/authorities.

Furthermore, some of such powers are delegated to the school head (the Principal) including the power to control the internal organization, management and discipline within the school. In public secondary schools, the Principal is the manager, chief administrator, and the chief executive of the particular institution where he serves as a principal. Such a person is expected to be of a proven integrity, quality and competency to coordinate the activities of both human and material resources. The Principal undertakes all routine activities to accomplish numerous administrative tasks, towards achieving educational objectives for realistic future of the posterity. Principals are the uncompromising leaders of secondary schools as well as administrators in whose hands lies the future of the students. According to Ejiogu (2017), Principals are the central figure in the school and pivot on which all the administrative task areas in the school revolves especially in the area of secondary school management. Public secondary school management however, involves the application of management principles by the school head in planning, designing, developing and effective resources towards achievement of educational goals. From the forgoing, it is only proper to state that there is a growing body of literature from researchers and educationist who have made attempt to examine the relationship between management of public secondary schools and student academic performance. Educational management in public secondary school however, involves the application of management principles in planning, designing, developing and effecting resources towards achievement of educational goals (Burke, 2008).

The effectiveness of proper management of public secondary schools, according to Oni (2015), is judged by the extent to which public secondary schools generally meet the expectation of the society within which they are established. This is so because excellent educational performance of the students, forms part of the expectations of the society within which such secondary school is established. Since independence, the Nigerian government either directly or through its agents including the ministry of education, schools board/authorities and school heads (principal) has demonstrated commitment to the provision of quality secondary education, through provisions of infrastructural facilities, instructional

facilities, maintenance of schools, disciplinary measures, allocation of financial resources, provision of trained teachers, training and retraining of teachers on adequate method and establishment of quality assurance department. The government of Nigeria has also put in place guidelines for supervising and monitoring the activities of secondary schools with views to ensure that the objective of establishing secondary schools are satisfactorily achieved, yet the academic achievement of students in their internal and external examination (NECO, S.S.C.E and WAEC) is terribly low in times past (Eden, 2009).

According to Igbal and Khan (2012), academic performance refers to the quality of performance in terms of tasks and class exercises with academic content. It is considerably a level of attainment of a given standard of excellence or in other words, a qualified academic achievement. According to Yusuf (2012), achievement is the degree of ability already attained. For Eboh (2009), it is the aspect of measuring the effects of relatively standardized sets of experiences. These imply that to determine achievement requires assessment of past performance. But for students, its level can be measured and or determined based on the test scores of the subject concerned. For instance, achievement level of the public secondary school students in mathematics can be measured based on the test scores/academic performance of such a student in both internal and external examinations in mathematics. Mwet (2013), later revealed that the combination of various findings of many investigators such as: Aromolaran, Oyeyinka, Olukuntom and Benjamin (2013) and Yusu (2012) have shown that the concept can be interpreted in terms of equations: achievement equal to aptitude multiplied by experienced.  $Achievement = Aptitude \times Experience$ .

Academic achievement, according to Nwokocha and Aniadike (2005) is the level of performance that is exhibited by an individual. In other words, it can be concerned as the degree or level of success attained at the end of an academic endeavour (Musarat and Jacci, 2013). It is the extent to which one is able to accomplish a task, trade, profession, training or learning. Thus, academic achievement could be seen as the level of proficiency and knowledge demonstrated by an individual after learning has occurred. It has to do with the use of mental effort and skill acquisition. It is usually affected by several variables and therefore could be low (Iroegbu 1992). These variables include self concept, attitude, anxiety, gender, family background and learning environment of students etc.

Khata, Machtmate, Kungu, Buntat and Nordin (2011), emphasized that the yardstick for measuring ones level of academic Achievement is by assessing the academic performance of the individual “through test and systematic observation”, with this in mind, academic achievement level is said to be high when a child is able to excel in his academic activities and perform extra-ordinarily well by scoring high marks. It is consistently low when a child performs poorly in academic activities, and consistently scores very low marks in examinations. This research was therefore conducted to examine the impact of school discipline, curriculum management and compliance, co-curriculum activities and the use of instructional facilities on students’ academic performance in Rivers State.

Academic performance had been described as the scholastic standing of a student at a given moment (Ige, 2016). This scholastic standing could be explained in terms of the grades obtained in a course or group of courses standing (Ijaiya, 2009). Oke (2008) commented on this scholastic standing and argued that performance is a measure of output, and that the main output in education are expressed in-terms of learning, which are; changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes of individuals as a result of their experience within the school’s system.

Accounting for the obvious reasons behind the increase in failure rate which has continue to exert negative effects on the student’s academic performance, Egerton (2013) listed amongst others, school discipline, provision and use of instructional facilities etc as impediments to high performance of students in public secondary schools.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Research in recent times, indicates that the academic performance of public secondary school students, especially in the internal and external senior school certificate (S.S.C.E) has been on the decline. Umoh (2011), carried out a field work on West African Examination Council result of 2010 and discovered that out of 9,565 candidates that registered for selected courses, 8,106 students representing 84.75% sat for the examination, 4,218 (52.04%) got credit and the rest either got ordinary pass, failed or were absent. The

situation does not only worry government, but also parents. Observations by parents, teachers, and government shows that there seem to be the absence of adequate infrastructural facilities, insignificant provision of instructional facilities and co-curricular activities in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Under this condition, public secondary schools may not meet the objectives of establishing these institutions. To address this issue, there is need to empirically study the perceived impact of management of public secondary schools on students' academic performance in Rivers State, so as to obtain empirical data for value judgment.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study was to investigate the perceived impact of management of public secondary schools on students' academic performance in Rivers State. Specially, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which provisions and use of instructional facilities influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Ascertain the extent to which co-curricula activity influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

- 1 To what extent does provision and use of instructional facilities influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. To what extent does co-curricula activity influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which provision and use of instructional facilities influence students' academic performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which co-curricula activity influence students' academic performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed the descriptive survey research design to ascertain the perceived impact of management of public secondary schools on students' academic performance. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study was carried out in Rivers State of Nigeria and the population consisted of 7,425 public secondary school teachers. A stratified random sampling techniques was used to draw 379 teachers as the sample size of the study. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire designed on a four (4) point rating scale of: Very High Extent (4-points), High Extent (3-points), Moderate Extent (2-points) and Low Extent (1-point) respectively. The questionnaire was validated by three experts and the internal consistency of the questionnaire item was 0.92. The questionnaire was administered with the help of two trained research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS**

**Research Question 1**

*To what extent does provision and use of instructional facilities influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Teachers on the Extent to which Provision and use of Instructional Facilities Influence Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State (N = 379)**

| S/N  | Item-Statement   | Male Teachers<br>N = 160 |                 |            | Female Teachers<br>N = 219 |                 |            |
|--|--|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------|
|  |  | $\bar{X}_1$              | SD <sub>1</sub> | Remarks    | $\bar{X}_2$                | SD <sub>2</sub> | Remarks    |
| 1.   | Management of school discipline has impact on students' academic performance       | 3.76                     | 0.62            | VHE        | 3.80                       | 0.48            | VHE        |
| 2.   | The administration of punishment in school enhances student's performance.         | 3.72                     | 0.64            | HE         | 3.76                       | 0.48            | HE         |
| 3.   | School discipline brings about respect to school property                          | 3.75                     | 0.65            | VHE        | 3.79                       | 0.47            | VHE        |
| 4.   | School discipline brings about regular class attendance of students                | 3.75                     | 0.64            | VHE        | 3.79                       | 0.46            | VHE        |
| 5.   | School discipline in stills respect to teacher and other students.                 | 3.73                     | 0.59            | VHE        | 3.80                       | 0.42            | VHE        |
| 6.   | School discipline makes students come to school on time.                           | 3.90                     | 0.63            | VHE        | 3.71                       | 0.46            | VHE        |
| 7.   | School discipline makes students avoid fighting, smoking and drunkenness           | 3.77                     | 0.63            | VHE        | 3.82                       | 0.46            | VHE        |
| 8.   | School discipline makes student avoid lateness and laziness                        | 3.74                     | 0.64            | VHE        | 3.79                       | 0.49            | VHE        |
| 9.   | School discipline makes students to avoid the use of abusive language and truancy. | 3.75                     | 0.65            | VHE        | 3.77                       | 0.48            | VHE        |
| <b>Aggregate <math>\bar{X}</math> and SD</b> |  | <b>3.76</b>              | <b>0.63</b>     | <b>VHE</b> | <b>3.78</b>                | <b>0.47</b>     | <b>VHE</b> |

**Source: Field Survey (2021)**

The Table 1 above showed that all the items (1-9) had mean scores above the criterion mean on the effect of discipline on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. In summary, with a mean for male teachers of 3.76 and female teachers of 3.78 that has its aggregate of 3.77 that was above the criterion mean of 2.50, male and female teachers affirmed to a very high extent that: Management of school discipline has impact on students' academic performance, administration of punishment in the school enhances student's academic performance, School discipline brings about respect to school properly, School discipline brings about regular class attendance of students, School discipline instill respect to teacher and other students, School discipline makes students come to school on time, School discipline makes students avoid fighting, smoking and drunkenness, School discipline makes student avoid lateness and laziness, School discipline makes students to avoid the use of abusive language and truancy.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent does co-curricular activity influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State?*

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Teachers on the Extent to which Co-Curricular Activity influence Students' Academic Performance in Rivers State (N = 379)**

| S/N  | Item-Statement  | Male Teachers<br>N = 160 |                 |            | Female Teachers<br>N = 219 |                 |            |
|--|---|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------|
|  |   | $\bar{X}_1$              | SD <sub>1</sub> | Remarks    | $\bar{X}_2$                | SD <sub>2</sub> | Remarks    |
| 10.  | The lack of co-curricular activities has impact on students' academic performance.                        | 3.84                     | 0.42            | VHE        | 3.86                       | 0.44            | VHE        |
| 11.  | Experiential teaching method applied outside the classroom enhances students' academic performance.       | 3.40                     | 0.54            | VHE        | 3.60                       | 0.56            | VHE        |
| 12.  | Student taught with field trip method perform well in their studies and examination.                      | 3.83                     | 0.42            | VHE        | 3.85                       | 0.45            | VHE        |
| 13.  | Monotonous lecture method and teaching inhabit students' academic performance.                            | 3.96                     | 0.63            | VHE        | 3.99                       | 0.55            | VHE        |
| 14.  | Students who embark on excursion trip acquire knowledge that bridge the gap between theory and practical. | 3.54                     | 0.56            | VHE        | 3.56                       | 0.58            | VHE        |
| 15.  | A good co-curricular activity stimulates students' academic performance.                                  | 3.57                     | 0.54            | VHE        | 3.53                       | 0.35            | VHE        |
| <b>Aggregate <math>\bar{X}</math> and SD</b> |   | <b>3.70</b>              | <b>0.52</b>     | <b>VHE</b> | <b>3.73</b>                | <b>0.49</b>     | <b>VHE</b> |

**Source: Field Survey (2021)**

Table 2 revealed that all the items (10-15) had mean scores above the criterion mean on the effect of co-curricular activities on student academic performance in public secondary schools in Rivers State. In summary, with a mean for male teachers of 3.70 and female teachers of 3.73 that has its aggregate of 3.72 that was above the criterion mean of 2.50, male and female teachers affirmed to a very high extent that: The lack of co-curricular activities has impact on students' academic performance, experiential teaching methods applied outside the classroom enhances students' academic performance, Student taught with field trip method perform well in their studies and examination, Monotonous lecture method and teaching inhabit students' academic performance, Students who embark on excursion trip acquire knowledge that bridge the gap between theory and practical, A good co-curricular activity stimulates students' academic performance.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impact of provision and use of instructional facilities on students’ academic performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

**Table 3: Z-Test Analysis of the Mean Responses of Male and Female Teachers on the Provision of Instructional Facilities on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

| Variables       | N   | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | Df  | z-cal | z-crit  | $\alpha$ | Decision        |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|------|-----|-------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| Male Teachers   | 160 | 3.07      | 0.45 | 377 | -0.22 | ± 1.960 | 0.05     | Not Significant |
| Female Teachers | 219 | 3.08      | 0.44 |     |       |         |          |                 |

The data presented in Table 3 showed that z-calculated value of -0.22 at 377 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, is less than the z-critical table z-value of ±1.960. Since the calculated z-value of 0.22 is less than the table z-value of ±1.960, the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the impact of co-curricula activity on students’ academic performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4: Z-Test Analysis of the Mean Responses of Male and Female Teachers on the Co-Curricular Activity on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State**

| Variables       | N   | $\bar{X}$ | SD   | Df  | z-cal | z-crit  | $\alpha$ | Decision        |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|------|-----|-------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| Male Teachers   | 160 | 3.70      | 0.52 | 377 | -0.58 | ± 1.960 | 0.05     | Not Significant |
| Female Teachers | 219 | 3.73      | 0.49 |     |       |         |          |                 |

The data presented in Table 4 showed that z -calculated value of -0.58 at 377 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, is less than the z-critical table z-value of ±1.960. Since the calculated z-value of -0.58 is less than the critical table value of ±1.960, the null hypothesis was upheld.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that many factors constitute an impediment to academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The deficiencies are common in the areas of school discipline, improper curriculum management and compliance, lack of co-curricular activities and inadequate provision of instructional facilities. These deficiencies were discovered in course of investigating the management of public secondary schools and students’ academic performance in Rivers State.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government at all levels and business organizations should support public secondary schools by providing modern, relevant and adequate facilities for the training of students.
2. State ministry of education should train and retrain school heads and teachers so as to make them more effective in managing public secondary schools.
3. Adequate funding should be provided by the government to enhance effective running of public secondary schools.
4. Heads of schools (Principals) should ensure that teachers in public secondary schools adopt a more practical approach in teaching at the secondary school level. This will enhance student academic performance.

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