

## **Management of Student Personnel Services in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions**

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the management of student personnel services in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, one research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. A 20-item questionnaire was administered to 1320 respondents, comprising 120 senior administrative staff, and 1200 students drawn from 16 tertiary institutions selected for the study. A student personnel services observation schedule was used for the on-the-spot assessment of the student personnel services that are observable. Real limit of numbers were used to interpret the results while the z-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis. The study found that all the 20 student personnel services studied were available except financial assistance, even though most of them are of poor quality. Factors responsible for the poor quality of student personnel services include: increase in students enrolment without proportionate increase in student personnel services; poor funding of education, poor attention to student personnel services. The present quality of student personnel services affects students in many ways such as exposing students to hazards, causing lateness to lectures. Some strategies that could be adopted to improve on the management of student personnel services include: the government giving special grants to tertiary institutions for the provision of student personnel services, appealing to individuals and corporate bodies to help in the provision of student personnel services. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that the education sector should be adequately funded, the private sector should be encouraged to participate actively in the provision of student personnel services, admission of students into tertiary institutions should follow approved guidelines of student personnel services.

**Keywords:** Management, Student Personnel Services, Personnel Services, Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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### **I. Introduction**

Tertiary institutions are established to achieve a wide variety of goals. These include teaching and imparting knowledge, seeking and discovering truth, disseminating research finding to all so that mankind may shed the shackles of ignorance and want, and developing manpower to induce change and progress in the society. This informs the reason why both the government and the private sector commit a great deal of resources towards the achievement of these goals. Tertiary institutions play major roles in national development especially in the development of high level manpower. However, in most cases the societal expectations in terms of goals are hardly met and part of the explanation is linked to the absence of adequate and conducive environment for effective learning. The absence of this conducive environment creates situations that constitute bottle necks to the achievement of goals and objectives of educational institution, the level notwithstanding. For the objectives of university education to be achieved, there should be adequate provision, proper allocation, and effective supervision of certain services for the students in order to ensure effective teaching and learning processes and all-round development of students. These services include student personnel services.

Student personnel services, according to Akuchie (1998), are those services and functions that complement classroom instruction for the total development of the individual. The services emphasize the intellectual, social, emotional, cultural and physical development of the individual and equally help to build the curriculum, improve methods of instruction, and develop programmes. Students' personnel services are tools in guiding and directing students to improve their personal substance in the pursuit of their careers. The provision of these services is therefore meant to meet the different aspects of human development and adjustment (Francis, 2002). The general objectives of student personnel services are to assist students to attain maximum self-realization, become effective in their social environment, and complement the academic programme of the institution. Specifically student personnel services seek to provide orientation for students to facilitate adjustment to campus life, perform individual inventory and testing to aid towards self-knowledge and self realization, perform individual and group counselling, provide placement and follow-up services, provide adequate assistance to students on finance, health, food, and housing, provide variety of co-curricular activities, approve and monitor activities of recognized student organizations, implement students code of conduct and recommend the appropriate disciplinary action to the proper school authorities (Francis, 2002).

The National Universities Commission (NUC) (1996) identified student personnel services in universities to include students' records, orientation, health services, cafeteria, hostels, financial aid, counselling

services, library, classroom facilities, instructional materials, and municipal services. This is in line with Amaizu (1998) who enumerated student personnel services to include guidance and counselling services, catering services, supervision of students' discipline, and social and emotional adjustment of students. Kalu (1997) identified student personnel services as "those non-academic duties concerned with pupils' welfare in a school setting". He further observed that pupil's personnel services refer to those services in the school system that aim at trying to understand and help to solve students' personal and social problems, and cater for their well being, solve their problems and improve their happiness. These are services that are highly personal and are related to the students' proper functioning and maintenance. Okeke (2002) defined student personnel services as those special classroom supporting services outside the curricular activities that impinge upon the maturation of the self of the students. It also enables students to develop love for school, participate actively in school activities, and stimulate regularity and punctuality in school attendance (Anukam, 2001). Student personnel administration refers to all the activities and services that are rendered to students by school and its staff, outside the normal classroom instructions for the achievement of the educational objectives. Student personnel administration embraces those services to student that support regular classroom instruction. According to Oboegbulem (2003)

*pupil personnel administration involves all the activities and services, apart from the normal classroom instruction, rendered to the students by the principals, headmasters, staff (tutorial and non-tutorial), the students themselves and even the community that are geared towards making an individual in the school an all-round educated, law-abiding citizen of his community (P,165)*

Student personnel administration can be described as all the activities of the administrator, teachers and other staff members geared towards making the students better citizens of the society in which they live. It comprises all those administrative and supervisory functions and service, other than classroom instruction, that affects the welfare of the Students. Student personnel administration as an important part of school administration include all that a school does to know and understand its students, and to help them know and understand themselves. This is true because students are not equally endowed as there exists individual differences among students due to many factors. For instance, among the student body, the star, the isolates, the rejected, the mutual pairs, and the chains and cliques (Akuchie, 1998).

Student personnel services aim at the training of the entire person to enable him or her not only to be able to read and write and calculate or to be proficient in a given job but also to enable him fit into the society for useful living. It also aim at developing and training the total man intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually to enable the learner, upon graduation, take his place in the society and contribute meaningfully to its survival. Adequate provision of student personnel services is very vital in any educational institution. Ogbonnaya (1997) explained that these services are vital to the meaningful operational apron of the school system as they contribute significantly to the day-to-day functioning of a school, particularly to learning effectiveness. Adesina and Ogunsaju in Onochie (1998), in their recognition of the need for student personnel services in universities, observed that for effective teaching and learning situations, physical facilities and educational goals should be viewed as being closely interwoven and interdependent. No matter the strength of manpower resources in the system, the educational process must require conducive physical environment and other facilities and equipment in order to function effectively and efficiently. Student personnel services rendered to students play important roles in the students wholisic development. For instance, the guidance and counseling services assist students in making intelligent and informed decisions; careers and vocational services assist students in securing jobs on graduation. Halls of residence, apart from protecting students from the sun, rain, heat and cold, represent a learning environment which has a tremendous impact on the comfort, safety and performance of the students. Medical services offer a thorough medical examination of students upon entering school and pays attention to students who have defectand chronic disorders. It offers such services as health appraisal, health counseling, correction of defects, prevention and control of communicable diseases and emergency care. The municipal services such as water, road, and electricity ensure healthy living and comfort while libraries, lecture rooms, equipment and teaching aids are part of school environmental issues that determine the wealth of the school and the extent to which educational objectives are achieved.

The word management means getting things done through others. According to Mgbodile (2003), management is leadership which is aimed at influencing group activity towards goal achievement. It is the behaviour of the man in leadership position when he is carrying out the vital functions of administration-planning, organizing, directing or controlling, coordination and evaluating activities aimed at achieving the goals of the establishment. Peretomode (1991) sees management as the social or interactional process involving sequences of coordinated events-planning, organizing, coordination and leading in order to use available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the fastest and most efficient way. Effective and efficient

management of student personnel services in universities is not only important but necessary for the achievement of the desired educational goals of inculcating the right type of values, attitudes, skills, and development of mental and physical abilities as equipment for producing good quality citizens for Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). The importance attached to student personnel services implies that they should not only be adequately provided but should also be well managed. Management of student personnel services refers to the provisions, supervision, maintenance and replacement of the facilities and services when required. The authorities of the universities are not only concerned with the planning and coordinating but also with the maintenance of student personnel services. The management of students' personnel services therefore rests on the hand of the university managements which are in position to appreciate as well as administer a school on a productive manner so as to achieve the goals and objectives of the educational system (Omu, 2006).

Today, the student personnel services in our tertiary institutions are not only appear to be inadequate but some of the existing ones are dilapidated, and constitute danger to the health of the students and the entire university communities. For instance, the hostel accommodation in the universities are unconducive and deplorable and this affect the academic performance of students and their all-round development (Akuchie, 1998). According to Mbotto (2000), today cracked/decaying walls, sagging roofs, blown-off roofs, and bushy surroundings are common phenomenon in schools. Ogbonnaya and Ajagbonwu (1997) observed that this situation does not augur well for effective teaching and learning. Okebukola (2003), while decrying the present state of student personnel services in Nigeria Universities observed that in 2001 academic year 390,077 candidates were enrolled in the Nations universities with only 11355 bed spaces available. This implies four students per bed space so that a room meant for four students would therefore take sixteen students if all the students were to be offered accommodation: NUC (1996) observed that three to four students officially live in a room meant for two and that rolled-up mattresses are stuffed into every imaginable space and that these mattresses are slept upon at night by unofficial residents commonly called squatters. In some universities students defecate by means of 'fly over' or 'shot put': fly over and shot put refer to a practice where by students defecate inside polythene bags and throw it across the fence. This is because of the poor state of the toilets as they are being used by too many students.

Akuchie (1998) observed that most of the medical centers in the campuses are at best referred to as consulting clinics because of inadequate staff personnel, and non-availability of drugs, including common routine drugs. Equally water and power supply is epileptic in most of the universities as well as transportation of students and staff from outside and within the campuses. The buses and taxis are not enough and most of the universities do not permit commercial motorcycle (motor bike) to operate within the campuses and so the staff and students of Nigerian universities are stressed by poor transportation within the campuses (Akuchie, 1998). Student activities and movement are not effectively monitored hence the universities, the cities they are located and their surrounding suburbs continually record incidents of cult activities, and murder. Equally students are known to have been involved in robbery activities within the universities and on the high ways. This is because the students are not known and are not offered counselling services (Nosiri, and Nwagbo, 2007)

The state of student personnel services in Nigerian universities made Chukwu (2001) to carry out a study on the problems of student accommodation, with focus on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The situation equally made some of the universities to set up task forces on student personnel services which recommendations informed the introduction of double-bunk beds in hostel rooms, the repair and regular maintenance of such student personnel services as spoilt toilets and bathrooms, spoilt/blocked sewage, broken - down boreholes. The recommendations of the task force equally informed the supply of water to the hostels by water tankers, the renovation of hostels and hostel facilities, and the holding of regular fora to talk to students on how to manage their environment and their lives (Chukwu, 2001). Some of the universities even set up vigilante groups to beef-up security (Okolie 2001)

From the above picture it appears that something is lacking in the quality and quantity of student personnel services in Nigerian public universities. This was not the case when Nigeria had very few universities, and very few candidates seeking admission. Such factors as increase in the number of candidates seeking admission, and the expansion of academic programmes may probably have contributed the present state of personnel services in "Nigerian tertiary institutions (Nwagwu, 2006). The present state of student personnel services is apparently affecting the students in many ways, and all the strategies adopted by the universities so far to arrest the situation appear to be yielding no significant results. It could be that more effective strategies have not been applied. This situation informs the research's interest to examine the management of student personnel services in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and evolve proper strategies for improvement.

The following research question was formulated for the study:

**1.** What is the quality of students' personnel services in federal and state universities in Nigeria?

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:

H<sub>0</sub><sub>1</sub> There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of staff, and students on the present quality of student personnel services in federal, and state universities to Nigeria

## II. Methods

The design of the study was descriptive survey. The study was carried out in all the 36 states and Abuja that is the 6 geopolitical zones, North Central, North East, North West, South East, South South and South West. The population of this study consisted of all the; students and all the senior administrative staff of the 25 federal, and 27 states Universities. There are 2,640,761 students and 67,467 senior administrative staff in the 52 universities within the six geopolitical zones of the country (Source: National Universities Commission, Abuja, January 2016; Joint Admission and Matriculation Board, Abuja January 2016).

The sample for the study is 13420 respondents for study. This was made up of 1200 final year students and 120 senior administrative staff. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 12 universities out of 52 universities because the universities are not proportionately spread in the geopolitical zones and the researcher considered it appropriate to accommodate each geopolitical zones and each of the two categories of the universities studied.

The instrument used for data collection are a questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on student Personnel (QSPS) and an observation schedule titled “Student Personal Services Observation Schedule (SPSOS). The questionnaire was a four point rating scale. The face validity of the instrument was determined by giving to experts in the field of Educational Administration and Planning and two others in measurement and Evaluation, all from the faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The Reliability of the instrument was determined by a preliminary survey was carried out at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Kogi State University Ayamgba. Using Crombach Alpha Coefficient to determine the reliability of the instrument index of 0.97 was obtained which was an indication that the instrument was reliable. The researcher with the help of six trained research assistants administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents while the observation schedule was used to assess on-the-spot the observable student’s personal services. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research question. The null hypothesis was tested using Z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

## III. Results

**Research Question:**What is the quality of students’ personnel services in federal and state universities in Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Mean ratings of staff, and students on quality of student personnel services

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	STUDENTS			STAFF			COMBINED RESULT		
		X	S D	DEC.	X	S D	DEC.	X	S D	DEC.
1.	Student Records	2.36	0.57	P Q	2.44	1.00	P Q	2.40	0.78	P Q
2.	Information materials to students	2.44	0.88	P Q	2.54	1.02	H Q	2.49	0.95	P Q
3.	Channel of communication between students and university management	2.46	0.99	P Q	2.51	1.05	H Q	2.48	1.02	P Q
4.	Admission exercise of students	3.85	0.41	VHQ	3.80	0.76	VHQ	3.82	0.53	VHQ
5.	Orientation exercise for student	2.66	1.08	H Q	2.64	1.00	H Q	3.93	1.03	H Q
6.	Financial assistance to students	1.08	1.06	VPQ	1.26	1.00	V P Q	1.17	1.03	VPQ
7.	Students disciplinary measure	2.58	0.60	H Q	2.56	0.88	H Q	2.57	0.74	H Q
8.	Medical services to students	2.40	0.97	P Q	2.50	0.71	H Q	2.45	0.84	P Q
9.	Counseling services to students	2.45	1.12	P Q	2.48	0.98	P Q	2.46	1.05	P Q
10.	Monitoring of students’ activities and organization	2.74	0.74	H Q	2.76	0.74	H Q	2.75	0.75	H Q
11.	Hostel accommodation for students	2.33	0.56	P Q	2.46	0.64	P Q	2.39	0.64	P Q
12.	Supply of water	2.56	0.96	H Q	2.60	1.04	H Q	2.58	1.00	P Q
13.	Supply of Electricity	2.46	1.08	P Q	2.50	1.00	H Q	2.48	1.04	P Q
14.	Maintenance of roads on campus	2.46	1.01	P Q	2.46	1.12	P Q	2.46	1.06	P Q
15.	Transportation for students	2.32	0.61	P Q	2.42	1.02	P Q	2.37	1.06	P Q
16.	Security services for students	2.54	0.92	H Q	2.60	1.16	H Q	2.57	1.04	H Q
17.	Co-curricular facilities	2.51	0.96	H Q	2.51	0.92	H Q	2.52	0.94	H Q
18.	Library services	2.36	0.66	P Q	2.45	1.06	P Q	2.40	0.86	P Q
19.	Classroom blocks	2.00	0.94	P Q	2.35	0.98	P Q	2.17	0.96	P Q
20.	Teaching facilities	2.45	0.84	P Q	2.52	0.96	H Q	2.48	0.90	P Q
	<b>C L U S T E R M E A N</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>P Q</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>H Q</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>P Q</b>

Data presented on Table 1 aboveshow the mean ratings and standard deviations of students and staff with regard to the quality of student personnel services in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Based on the data on Table 1 above, the students rated items 4,5,7,10,12,16, and 17 acceptable indicating that admission exercise, orientation exercise, students'disciplinary measures, monitoring of students’ activities, supply of water, security services, and co-curricular facilities are of high quality in the universities. They rated items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9,11,13,14,15,18,19, and 20, 2.44, 2.46, 1.08, 2.40, 2.45. 2.33, 2.46, 2.48, 2.32, 2.36, 2.00 and 2.45, indicating that students records, information materials to students, communication between student body and university management, financial assistance, medical services, counseling services, hostel accommodation, electricity supply, road maintenance, transportation for students, library services, classroom blocks, and teaching facilities are of poor quality.

The staff on their part rated Hems 2,3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17 and 20 thus 2.54, 2.51, 2.80, 2.64, 2.56, 2.50, 2.76, 2.60, 2.50, 2.60, 2.51, and 2.52 which means that in their opinion information materials to students, communication between the students and the university management, admission exercises, orientation exercise, students' disciplinary measures, medical services, monitoring of students' activities, water supply, electricity supply, security services and co-curricular facilities are on ground on the campuses to a high quality.

The staff however, rated items, 1, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 18, and 19, thus 2.44, 1.26, 2.48, 2.46, 2.46, 2.42, 2.45, and 2.35 which means that in their opinion students records, financial assistance, counseling services, hostel accommodation, maintenance of roads, transportation for students, library services, classroom blocks, and teaching facilities are of poor quality on the campuses. The cluster mean, are 2.45 (for students) and 2.52 (for staff)

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of staff, and students on the present quality of student personnel services in federal, and state universities to Nigeria. The z-test analysis of the responses of senior administrative staff and students on the quality of students' personnel services in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

**Table 2:** Summary of z-test for Hypothesis

Subjects	n	X	Std. Deviation	df	L s	z - calc	z - table	D e c .
Students	1200	2.45	0.84	1318	0.05	-0.44	1.96	Accept
Staff	120	2.52	0.96					

Table 2 above presents the independent z-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of students, and staff on the quality of student personnel services in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

In table two above, the calculated z-value is -0.44 at 138 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value of -0.44 is less than the critical table value of 1.96, the hypothesis is accepted. In other words there is no significant difference between the opinions of students, and staff on the quality of student personnel services in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

#### IV. Discussion

##### Quality of Student Personnel Services

With reference to research question one which dealt with quality of student personnel services, evidence from the study shows that the students, and staff share the view that admission exercise in the universities is of very high quality while orientation exercise, monitoring of students' activities, supply of water, student disciplinary measures, security services for students, and co-curricular facilities are of acceptable quality in the institutions. They equally shared the view that students' records, financial assistance to students, counseling services for students, hostel accommodation for students, road maintenance, transport services for students, library services, classroom blocks, and teaching facilities are all of poor quality in the universities. They however disagreed on the quality of some service in the universities. While the students rate information materials to students, channel of communication between students and university management, medical services to students, and supply of power to students as being of poor quality, the staff on the other hand rate them as being of acceptable quality.

The findings agreed with the observations of Ossai (2008) that seven students officially live in a room originally meant for four and that most of the hostel window louvers and mosquito nets were broken and some of the windows did not have anything to protect the students from hash weather condition, and insects. Moses (2008) also observed that power and water supply in some universities are epileptic.

The findings agreed with the findings of Ogbuji (2009) that orientation programme is carried out in schools, and that effective health care services, and municipal services are lacking in school. Okeke (2002) also noted that student personnel services are not adequately catered for by school administrators. The findings agree with the observation of Elechi (2008) that library services in our universities are poor and that current books and journals are not available, and that security is not efficient hence incidents of murder, robbery, rape, office-breaking and cult activities. Hypothesis one was accepted as postulated. The acceptance of this hypothesis is upheld since the quality of student personnel services is well known by all and sundry. This fact was buttressed by the responses of the students, and staff to research question one of the study.

#### V. Conclusion and Implications

Student personnel management is a very important aspect of the school system. Student personnel management provides facilities and the prevailing atmosphere which enables the realization of human potential and uniqueness on the basis of emotional combinations which allows for maximum sensory experience. Most student personnel services are available in Nigerian public universities. Of the 20 student personnel services considered, only financial assistance to student is not available. The present state of student personnel services is not a hopeless one as it could be controlled if some measures are adopted. The implications of the finding of this study is that student personnel services are poorly provided in Nigerian tertiary institutions. With this the

university administrators can appreciate more why students embark on protests and demonstrations about the poor state of these services. The implication for federal and state government to address the fund being allocated to the tertiary institutions and implication for society which makes use of the products of these universities in the achievement of national development, all stakeholders, including the private sector, will be moved to be more actively involved in the provisions of student personnel services in the Nation's tertiary institutions.

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