

**ASSESSMENT OF PRINCIPAL'S ROLE ON THE PROVISION OF  
STUDENTS' SERVICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CROSS RIVER  
STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract:** This study was on assessment of principal's role on the provision of students' services in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study has two objectives which are; Evaluate principal's role on the provision of guidance and counselling service and assesses principal's role on the provision of library service in secondary schools in Cross River State. Two research questions, two null hypotheses asked and formulated respectively. Related literature was reviewed along with fourteen (14) empirical studies. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. A total of 387 respondents were sampled from the total population of 2,3667, through the use of research advisor (2006). A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The data collected were presented in tables and analysed using weighted means to give the responses of respondents to the research questions. The nine null hypotheses were tested using One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the bio- data of the respondents. The findings of the study among others were that: most principals provided offices and assigned teacher(s) for counselling services in secondary schools in Cross River State and that most secondary schools do not have standard school library, where they exist, they are been managed by the school principals in secondary schools in cross river state. It was recommended among others that; all secondary schools in cross river state should be provided with guidance and counselling offices with the required facilities and trained personnel and the government and other stakeholders should collaborate in the provision of library and it's facilities in secondary schools. The study concluded that Principals of secondary schools as administrative heads are in the best position to use resources under their control to achieve set goals of the school are founded on the principle of providing students services which helps to foster the development of students' competencies, life skills and habit of academic excellence.

**Key words:** Principal's role, provision of student's services, guidance and counselling services, Library services and secondary schools

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Education is an important instrument for national development because it contributes significantly to the economic, social, political and technological advancement of every society. The attainment of educational goals in secondary schools depends not only on classroom teaching and curriculum implementation, but also on the availability and effective provision of students' services (Ajowi & Simatwa, 2015; Suleiman et al., 2019). Students' services are supportive services provided within the school environment to facilitate the total development of learners academically, socially, emotionally, morally and physically. These services complement classroom instruction and help students to adjust properly to school life, develop positive attitudes towards learning and become responsible members of society. Without adequate students' services, the objectives of secondary education may not be fully realized (Ejionueme, 2015; Ogbiji & Koko, 2019).

The school principal occupies a central position in the administration and management of secondary schools. As the chief executive officer of the school, the principal is responsible for coordinating both academic and non-academic activities to ensure the achievement of educational objectives. The principal provides leadership, supervises staff and students, interprets educational policies and ensures that facilities and services necessary for effective teaching and learning are adequately provided. According to Chukwuemeka (2018), the role performance of principals includes policy implementation, staff and students' welfare, maintenance of school facilities, communication, decision-making and fostering effective school-community relationships. These responsibilities are essential for enhancing commitment and effectiveness within the school system (Chukwuemeka, 2018).

Students' services in secondary schools include guidance and counselling services, library services, health services, orientation services, recreational services and other support systems designed to improve students'

welfare and academic achievement. Mogbo (2019) observed that principals play important roles in students' services by helping to maintain discipline, monitoring students' attitudes towards studies and promoting hard work and learning among students. The effectiveness of these services largely depends on the commitment and administrative competence of school principals because they coordinate the human and material resources needed for implementation (Mogbo, 2019; Ajowi & Simatwa, 2015).

Guidance and counselling services have become increasingly important in secondary schools due to the numerous academic, emotional, social and behavioural challenges faced by students. Guidance and counselling assist students in understanding themselves, making appropriate career choices, overcoming personal problems and improving academic performance. Suleiman, Kamilu and Mahmood (2019) noted that guidance and counselling services help schools address emerging challenges associated with information and communication technology, academic advising and the demands of the global knowledge economy. Similarly, Chukwuemeka (2018) maintained that effective guidance and counselling services contribute significantly to students' academic progress and discipline maintenance in schools. The principal therefore has the responsibility of creating an enabling environment for counselling services through the provision of offices, facilities, time allocation and support for counsellors (Suleiman et al., 2019; Chukwuemeka, 2018).

The school library is another essential students' service that supports effective teaching and learning in secondary schools. Library services provide students and teachers with access to books, journals and other information resources necessary for academic development and intellectual growth. Idris, Oji and Abana (2012) explained that library services are designed to assist users in retrieving relevant information for learning and research purposes. Arua and Chinaka (2011) further observed that library operations are service-oriented and play a vital role in promoting reading culture and independent learning among students. The principal influences the effectiveness of library services through planning, supervision, allocation of funds and encouragement of students and teachers to utilize available library resources. Hay and Henri (2010) asserted that principals determine the effectiveness of school library services through decisions relating to staffing, service hours and provision of support facilities (Idris, Oji & Abana, 2012; Arua & Chinaka, 2011; Hay & Henri, 2010).

Despite the importance of students' services in secondary schools, many schools in Cross River State appear to experience inadequacy in the provision of guidance and counselling as well as library services. Ogbiji and Koko (2019) observed that students' services in many secondary schools are either inadequate or poorly managed, thereby affecting students' academic performance and general development. Many schools reportedly lack standard libraries, current instructional materials and qualified personnel to manage counselling and library services effectively. Consequently, students face difficulties in coping with academic and personal challenges, while poor access to learning resources contributes to poor academic achievement (Ogbiji & Koko, 2019; Ochogwu, 2019).

The inability of many principals to provide effective students' services has raised concerns among educators, parents and government stakeholders. Although principals are expected to provide leadership in the implementation of students' services, observations indicate that many secondary schools still lack adequate counselling units, functional libraries and trained personnel to manage such services. This situation may negatively affect students' academic performance, discipline, career development and overall educational outcomes.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to assess principals' role in the provision of students' services in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Evaluate principals' role in the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Cross River State.
2. Assess principals' role in the provision of library services in secondary schools in Cross River State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the roles of principals in the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Cross River State?
2. What are the roles of principals in the provision of library services in secondary schools in Cross River State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

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

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the opinions of principals, teachers, students and Ministry of Education officials on principals' role in the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Cross River State.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the opinions of principals, teachers, students and Ministry of Education officials on principals' role in the provision of library services in secondary schools in Cross River State

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain information from a representative sample of the population and describe existing conditions regarding principals' role in the provision of students' services in secondary schools in Cross River State. According to Amin (2005), descriptive survey research design is concerned with finding, describing and interpreting existing phenomena, conditions or relationships among variables. The design was therefore suitable for assessing principals' role in the provision of guidance and counselling as well as library services in secondary schools.

### **2.2 Area of the Study**

The study was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria. The state has several public secondary schools distributed across the educational zones of Calabar, Ugep, Ikom and Ogoja. The choice of the area was based on the observed inadequacy in the provision of students' services in many secondary schools within the state

### **2.3 Population of the study**

The population of the study covered all students (prefects) in public senior secondary schools, Teachers, Principals and MOE officials in Cross River State. Available data from Cross River State Secondary Education Board (2017) reveals that there are about two hundred (271) public secondary schools in Cross River State with population of one thousand six hundred and twenty six prefects(students) (1626), twenty-one thousand six hundred and eighty teachers (21680), two hundred and seventy-one (271) Principals, and ninety (90) MOE officials. Therefore, the total population is twenty three thousand six hundred and sixty-seven (23667). Details of the population are shown on Table 1

**Table 1: Population of the Study**

| <b>s/n</b> | <b>Educ . Zone</b> | <b>Principals</b> | <b>Teachers</b> | <b>Students</b> | <b>MOEs</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>1</b>   | Calabar            | 94                | 7170            | 564             | 30          | 7858         |
| <b>2</b>   | Ugep               | 51                | 3920            | 306             | 15          | 4292         |
| <b>3</b>   | Ikom               | 66                | 5420            | 396             | 25          | 5907         |
| <b>4</b>   | Ogoja              | 60                | 5170            | 360             | 20          | 5610         |
| <b>5</b>   | <b>Total</b>       | <b>271</b>        | <b>21680</b>    | <b>1626</b>     | <b>90</b>   | <b>23667</b> |

**Source: Cross River State Secondary Education Board (2023)**

### **2.4 Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample of the study comprised of twenty-eight principals (28), two hundred and forty seven (247) teacher, ninety (90) students (prefects), and thirteen (13) MOE officials which amounts to a sample size of three hundred and seventy eight (378) respondents for the study. The sample size was obtained by relying on research advisor (2006) which suggested that a population of 2300 to 25000 should have a corresponding sample size of 378. On this basis, a sample size of 378 was adopted for the study

However, in distributing the sample size according to the respondents, purposive sampling technique was used. The justification for using this technique according to Awotunde and Ugudulunwa (2004) is that the technique permits a researcher to select a sample that appears to him/ her as being representative of the entire population. Details of the distribution of the sample size is shown on Table 2

**Table 2: Sample of the Study**

| s/n | Educ . Zone  | Principals | Teachers   | Students  | MOEs      | Total      |
|-----|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 1   | Calabar      | 9          | 116        | 30        | 5         | 160        |
| 2   | Ugep         | 5          | 21         | 10        | 2         | 38         |
| 3   | Ikom         | 8          | 65         | 30        | 3         | 106        |
| 4   | Ogoja        | 6          | 45         | 20        | 3         | 74         |
| 5   | <b>Total</b> | <b>28</b>  | <b>247</b> | <b>90</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>378</b> |

### 2.5 Instrumentation

A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used for data collection. It consists of two parts 1 and 2; part 1 consist of demographic information about the respondents while part 2 contain items statement related to the research questions of the study. In constructing this instrument Likert scale used to rate responses to the items on the questionnaire. The scale was ranked 5 for Strongly Agreed (SA), 4 Agreed (A), 3 is for Undecided (U), 2 for Disagree (D) and 1 is for Strongly Disagree (SD).

### 2.6 Method of Data Collection

The researcher administered copies of the questionnaire directly to the respondents with the assistance of research assistants. The respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire, after which the completed copies were retrieved for analysis.

### 2.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the respondents was organised and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and weighted mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for the research questions was based on a criterion mean of 3.0, where mean scores equal to or above 3.0 were accepted, while mean scores below 3.0 were rejected. The hypotheses were tested by comparing the p-value with the 0.05 level of significance

## III. RESULTS

### 3.1 Research Questions

**Research Question One: What is principal role on the provision of Guidance and Counselling Service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State?**

**Table 3: Mean score of respondents on the provision of Guidance and Counselling Service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State, details of the responses are captured on Table 3**

| S/N | Item statement   | Respondents | N   | Mean |
|-----|--|-------------|-----|------|
| 1   | School Principals motivate students to attend counselling sessions.                    | Principals  | 28  | 4.5  |
|     |  | Teachers    | 239 | 4.5  |
|     |  | Students    | 90  | 3.9  |
|     |  | MOE         | 13  | 4.1  |
| 2   | There is supportive atmosphere for students to participate in Guidance and Counselling | Principals  | 28  | 3.9  |
|     |  | Teachers    | 239 | 4.5  |
|     |  | Students    | 90  | 4.2  |
|     |  | MOE         | 13  | 3.5  |
| 3   | Principals provide adequate space for counselling to take place.                       | Principals  | 28  | 3.9  |
|     |  | Teachers    | 239 | 4.0  |
|     |  | Students    | 90  | 4.0  |
|     |  | MOE         | 13  | 3.0  |
| 4   | Principals supervises counselling sessions.  | Principals  | 28  | 3.7  |
|     |  | Teachers    | 239 | 3.9  |
|     |  | Students    | 90  | 3.1  |
|     |  | MOE         | 13  | 3.5  |
| 5   | The principal avails adequate time for guidance and counselling.                       | Principals  | 28  | 3.2  |
|     |  | Teachers    | 239 | 3.0  |
|     |  | Students    | 90  | 2.9  |

|    |   |            |     |     |
|----|---|------------|-----|-----|
|    |   | MOE        | 13  | 3.1 |
| 6  | Principals ask teachers to refer students with needs for counselling.                                     | Principals | 28  | 3.8 |
|    |   | Teachers   | 239 | 4.5 |
|    |   | Students   | 90  | 3.4 |
|    |   | MOE        | 13  | 3.6 |
| 7  | Students often seek counselling without compulsion.   | Principals | 28  | 4.0 |
|    |   | Teachers   | 239 | 3.9 |
|    |   | Students   | 90  | 4.2 |
|    |   | MOE        | 13  | 3.6 |
| 8  | School management offers referral services for students who require further attention.                    | Principals | 28  | 3.6 |
|    |   | Teachers   | 239 | 2.1 |
|    |   | Students   | 90  | 2.2 |
|    |   | MOE        | 13  | 2.2 |
| 9  | Principal gives opportunities to counsellors to acquire more knowledge about guidance and counselling.    | Principals | 28  | 2.8 |
|    |   | Teachers   | 239 | 2.2 |
|    |   | Students   | 90  | 1.8 |
|    |   | MOE        | 13  | 2.9 |
| 10 | Principal invites experts to address issues such as examination malpractice, career choice and drug abuse | Principals | 28  | 3.9 |
|    |   | Teachers   | 239 | 3.6 |
|    |   | Students   | 90  | 3.2 |
|    |   | MOE        | 13  | 3.5 |

Table 3 revealed the view of principals, teachers, students and MOE officials on the provision of Guidance and Counselling service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State. Item 1 shows the responses of respondents on whether School Principals motivate students to attend counselling sessions. From the responses of the respondents, the item statement was accepted by all the respondents with the mean score of 4.5, 4.5, 3.9 and 4.1 respectively. Item 2 shows the responses of respondents on whether there is supportive atmosphere for students to participate in Guidance and Counselling, the mean scores of the respondent show that the item was accepted by all the respondents with the mean scores of 3.9, 4.5, 4.2, and 3.5 for principals, teachers, students and MOE Officials respectively. Item 3 was to find out if Principals provide adequate space for counselling to take place. The responses of the respondents showed that all the respondents decision mean were accepted i.e. principals 3.9, Teachers 4.0, students 4.0 and MOE 3.0. Item 4 was on whether Principals supervises counselling sessions. The mean scores of 3.7, 3.9, 3.1 and 3.5 were obtained from the responses of the respondents, implying that all the respondents accepted the item statement. Item 5 is on whether the principal avails adequate time for guidance and counselling. The item was also accepted by the respondents with the mean scores of 3.2, 3.0, 2.9 and 3.1 for principals, teachers, students and MOE respectively. Similarly, item 6 was accepted by the respondents with the mean scores of 3.8, 4.5, 3.4 and 3.6 for principals, teachers, students and MOE officials respectively. Item 7 was to find out whether students often seek counselling without compulsion. The mean score showed that the item was accepted by all the respondents; with the decision mean of 4.0, 3.9, 4.2 and 3.6 for principals, teachers, students and MOE accordingly. Item 8 was on whether school management offers referral services for students who require further attention and was rejected by three of the respondents and accepted by one with the mean scores of 3.6, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.2 accordingly. From item 9, the decision mean of the respondents were found to be 2.8, 2.2, 1.8 and 2.9. Item 10 was on whether Principal invites experts to address issues such as examination malpractice, career choice and drug abuse, the item was accepted with the mean score of 3.9, 3.6, 3.2 and 3.5 respectively.

**Research Question Two: Do principals play role in the provision of library service in secondary Schools in Cross River State?**

**Table 4: Mean score of respondents on the provision of library service in secondary Schools in Cross River State, details of the responses are captured on Table 4**

| S/N | Item statement  | Respondents | N   | MEAN |
|-----|---|-------------|-----|------|
| 1   | There is provision of school library in secondary school. | Principals  | 28  | 3.4  |
|     |   | Teachers    | 239 | 1.7  |
|     |   | Students    | 90  | 3.8  |
|     |   | MOE         | 13  | 2.5  |

|    |  |            |     |     |
|----|--|------------|-----|-----|
| 2  | Principals plan library resources.   | Principals | 28  | 4.0 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 3.6 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 3.2 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 3.5 |
| 3  | Principals give orientation to students on the benefits of using the school library.         | Principals | 28  | 4.3 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 3.5 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 4.1 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 3.9 |
| 4  | Principal allocates adequate time for library use in the school timetable.                   | Principals | 28  | 4.0 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 3.0 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 4.2 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 4.0 |
| 5  | Principals supervises activities of the school library.                                      | Principals | 28  | 3.8 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 3.3 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 2.2 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 3.9 |
| 6  | Principals monitor the progress of the school library.                                       | Principals | 28  | 2.6 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 4.1 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 4.3 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 2.3 |
| 7  | Principals free students and teachers to access the library during school hours.             | Principals | 28  | 3.9 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 3.6 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 3.2 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 3.5 |
| 8  | Principals plan in-service training for school Liberian.                                     | Principals | 28  | 2.2 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 2.9 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 2.9 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 2.6 |
| 9  | Principals manage and provide leadership in pursuit of the library aims and objectives.      | Principals | 28  | 3.3 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 2.6 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 2.8 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 3.5 |
| 10 | Principals collaborate extensively with teachers towards the improvement of library services | Principals | 28  | 4.0 |
|    |  | Teachers   | 239 | 3.7 |
|    |  | Students   | 90  | 3.9 |
|    |  | MOE        | 13  | 3.6 |

Table 4 revealed the view of principals, teachers, students and MOE officials on the provision library service in Senior Secondary Schools in Cross River State. Item 1 shows the responses of respondents on whether there is provision of school library in secondary school. From the responses of the respondents, the item statement was accepted by all the respondents with the mean score of 3.4, 1.7, 3.8 and 2.5 respectively. Item 2 shows the responses of respondents on whether principals plan library resources. The mean scores of the respondent show that all the items were accepted with the mean scores of 4.0, 3.6, 3.2, and 3.5 for principals, teachers, students and MOE Officials respectively. Item 3 was to find out if Principals give orientation to students on the benefits of using the school library. The responses of the respondents showed that all the respondents decision mean were accepted i.e. principals 4.3, Teachers 3.1, students 4.1 and MOE 3.9. Item 4 was on whether Principal allocates adequate time for library use in the school timetable. The mean scores of 3.7, 3.9, 3.1 and 3.5 were obtained from the responses of the respondents. Item 5 is on whether Principal Principals supervises activities of the school library. The item was also accepted by the respondents with the mean scores of 3.8, 3.3, 2.2 and 3.9 for principals, teachers, students and MOE respectively. Similarly, item 6 was accepted by the respondents with the mean scores of 3.6, 4.1, 4.0 and 2.3 for principals, teachers, students and MOE officials respectively. Item 7 was to find out whether Principals free students and teachers to access the library during school hours. The mean score showed that the item was accepted by all the respondents; with the decision mean of 3.9, 3.6, 3.2 and 3.5 for principals, teachers, students and MOE accordingly. Item 8 was on whether Principals plan in-service training for school Liberian and was rejected by all with the mean scores of 2.2, 2.9, 2.9 and 2.6 accordingly. From item 9, the decision mean of the respondents were found to be 3.3, 2.8, 2.2 and 3.5. Item 10

was on whether Principals collaborate extensively with teachers towards the improvement of library services. The item was accepted with the mean score of 4.0, 3.7, 3.9 and 3.65 respectively.

### 3.2 Hypotheses Testing

The null hypotheses were tested using one way Analysis of variance (ANOVA). This was determined at 0.05 level of significant and statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. In all, five hypotheses were tested and acceptability or rejection of the Null Hypothesis was determined by comparing the p-value against the significant set by the study (F-value at 0.05). Hypothesis is therefore rejected if the p-value is less than the level of significance set by the study.

#### Hypothesis I

**Hypothesis I (HO<sub>1</sub>) : There is no significant difference in the opinion of Principals, Teachers, Students and Ministry of Education officials on Principal Role on the Provision of Guidance and Counselling Service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State.**

**Table 5 : Summary of the One Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Principal Role on the Provision of Guidance and Counselling Service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State.**

| <b>Guidance &amp; C</b> | <b>Sum of Squares</b> | <b>df</b>  | <b>Mean Square</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>Sig.</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Between Groups          | 35.587                | 2          | 17.793             | 30.958   | 0.063       |
| Within Groups           | 205.189               | 368        | .575               |          |             |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>240.776</b>        | <b>370</b> |                    |          |             |

From table 5, the F-value is 30.958 and the P-value is 0.063 at 0.05 levels of significance. Since the P-value is greater than the level of significance set for the study, the hypothesis is therefore retained, thus, there is no significant difference in the opinion of Principals, Teachers, Students and Ministry of Education officials on Principal Role on the Provision of Guidance and Counselling Service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State

#### Hypothesis II

**Hypothesis II (HO<sub>2</sub>): There is no significant difference in the opinion of Principals, Teachers, Students and Ministry of Education officials on Principal Role on the Provision of library Service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State.**

**Table 6: Summary of the One Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Principal Role on the Provision of Library Service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State.**

| <b>Library faculties</b> | <b>Sum of Squares</b> | <b>Df</b>  | <b>Mean Square</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>Sig.</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Between Groups           | 30.445                | 2          | 15.223             | 12.726   | 0.061       |
| Within Groups            | 345.566               | 368        | .968               |          |             |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>376.011</b>        | <b>370</b> |                    |          |             |

From table 6, the F-value is 12.726 and the P-value is 0.061 at 0.05 levels of significance. Since the P-value is greater than the level of significance set for the study, the hypothesis is therefore rejected, thus, there is no significant difference in the opinion of Principals, Teachers, Students and Ministry of Education officials on Principal Role on the Provision of library Service in Secondary Schools in Cross River State.

## IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that principals play significant roles in the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Cross River State. The study showed that most principals motivate students to attend counselling sessions, provide supportive environments for counselling activities, allocate

spaces for counselling and supervise counselling sessions within their schools. This finding agrees with Suleiman, Kamilu and Mahmood (2019) who observed that effective guidance and counselling services in schools depend largely on the support provided by school principals. The authors emphasized that principals create enabling environments for counsellors to function effectively through supervision, provision of facilities and encouragement of students to participate in counselling programmes. Similarly, Chukwuemeka (2018) maintained that guidance and counselling services contribute significantly to discipline maintenance, academic improvement and career development among students when school administrators provide the necessary support.

The finding further indicated that principals encourage teachers to refer students with emotional, academic and behavioural challenges for counselling. This implies that principals recognize the importance of counselling services in promoting students' welfare and academic adjustment. The result supports the view of Mogbo (2019) who noted that principals contribute to students' services through monitoring students' attitudes to learning, promoting discipline and ensuring that students receive adequate support services. The finding also aligns with Ajowi and Simatwa (2015) who stated that school principals are responsible for guiding students and ensuring the effective implementation of students' support programmes within the school system.

However, the study also revealed that many principals do not adequately provide referral services for students requiring specialized counselling attention, while opportunities for counsellors to acquire additional professional knowledge are limited. This suggests inadequacy in professional development and external support systems for counselling services in secondary schools. The finding corroborates the observation of Ogbiji and Koko (2019) that students' services in many secondary schools in Cross River State are inadequate and poorly managed due to lack of facilities, trained personnel and administrative commitment. The inability of principals to support continuous professional training for counsellors may negatively affect the quality of counselling services rendered to students.

The findings of the study also showed that principals play notable roles in the provision and management of library services in secondary schools. The study indicated that principals plan library resources, orient students on the importance of using the library, allocate time for library use and collaborate with teachers towards improving library services. This finding is consistent with Idris, Oji and Abana (2012) who explained that library services are designed to assist students and teachers in accessing relevant educational information necessary for effective learning and research activities. The finding also agrees with Arua and Chinaka (2011) who emphasized that school libraries are service-oriented facilities that promote reading culture, independent learning and academic development among students.

The study further found that principals supervise library activities and permit students and teachers to access library facilities during school hours. This indicates that principals recognize the importance of library services in enhancing effective teaching and learning. Hay and Henri (2010) asserted that principals largely determine the effectiveness of school library services through decisions relating to staffing, support services, supervision and resource allocation. Similarly, Eric (2009) maintained that educational administrators influence the effectiveness of instructional services through proper supervision and implementation of school policies.

Despite these efforts, the study revealed that many secondary schools in Cross River State do not have standard libraries and where libraries exist, they are poorly managed and inadequately equipped. The study also showed that principals rarely organize in-service training programmes for librarians. This finding agrees with Ochogwu (2019) who observed that instructional and research resources in many Nigerian schools are characterized by poor availability and limited accessibility. The inadequacy of standard libraries and lack of professional development opportunities for librarians may hinder students' academic performance and limit effective utilization of library resources. The finding also supports Ogbiji and Koko (2019) who noted that inadequate students' services continue to affect the quality of secondary education in Cross River State.

The hypotheses tested in the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the opinions of principals, teachers, students and Ministry of Education officials regarding principals' role in the provision of guidance and counselling services as well as library services in secondary schools in Cross River State. This implies that respondents shared similar perceptions concerning the extent of principals' involvement in the provision of these students' services. The uniformity in respondents' opinions may be attributed to the common experiences and realities existing within public secondary schools in the state regarding the availability and management of students' services

## **V. CONCLUSIONS**

Principals of secondary schools as administrative heads are in the best position to use resources under their control to achieve set goals of the school are founded on the principle of providing students services which helps to foster the development of students' competencies, life skills and habit of academic excellence. Students'

services in secondary school involve all the activities and services that are rendered to the students for the achievement of educational objectives which are not the normal classroom instructions.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forth:

1. All secondary schools in cross river state should be provided with guidance and counselling offices with the required facilities and trained personnel. This will go a long way to improve the standard of students' performance.
2. Most of the secondary schools in cross river state are begging genuine attention, the government and other stakeholders should collaborate in the provision of library and it's facilities in secondary schools.

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