



Learners' Support System and Students' Continual Enrolment in Public Universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated learners' support system and students' continual enrolment at public universities in Nigeria's south-south zone. Two research questions and two hypotheses drawn for the study. The design was correlational. The population of the study consisted of 370,119 students in the 2020–2021 academic year. A sample of 432 students were generated using Taro Yamene's method and the proportionate simple random sampling technique. The "Learners' Support System Questionnaire" and the "Students' Continual Enrolment Questionnaire" were used to gather data. The validation of the instruments was done by three experts in the fields of educational management and measurement and evaluation at the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments and the confidence value of the different segment is greater than 0.84. The recorded data were examined using descriptive statistics for the study topics, while the null hypotheses were tested using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient and the accompanying t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between scientific-cognitive, systematic, and human resource support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in Nigeria's South-South Zone. It was therefore recommended that management should provide quality learner support services to increase students' retention. Lecturers and personnel staff should ensure that the offered learner support services are substantively and proficiently used, while students should be educated on the importance of accessing and using these services, which may result in enhanced learning goals, student incorporation into the university's life cycle, and persistence in their courses.

Key Words: Learners' Support System, Students' Continual Enrolment, Scientific Support Services, Systematic Support Services

Introduction

Each year, an increasing number of people in the country pursuing higher education. When approved, these individuals contribute a range of characteristics to high schools, most notably their level of education. When evaluating student characteristics, it is suggested that the following factors be taken into account: gender, age, employment or wage stagnation, disposable income, education level, physical region, special needs, language, cultural and racial characteristics, and connectivity to digital technology. (Arifin, 2018). The main essence of university education is driven toward enabling students meet different challenges and to make sustainable connections with the changing world. Also, higher education considers Knowledge as its key focus since it is a factor that shapes the model of learning and services provided by the university. According to Hudda (2017), the tertiary institution is the gatekeeper for student development (Hudda, 2017). Development when critically viewed is beyond just putting in place goals and policies for some overt results rather the products of the potential to shape human reasoning and creativity so that consistent problem-solving solutions can be provided to upheaval and challenges that are frequently associated with life.

Educational institutions are places where students of all ages acquire new skills and knowledge: so, whether inside or outside the classrooms, these academic institutions must meet the fundamental needs of the students. Learner Support Systems (LSS) or Student Support Services relate to an institution's efforts to satisfy the needs of its students. The fact remains that support services have rightly become a great responsibility of any education systems and the grand purpose of these services is to ensure the intellectual, physical, moral and social development of the students (Hudda, 2017).

Learner support system refers to all programmes that facilitate student learning. Increased student demands necessitate fulfillment. According to Kaur (2016), learner support system is a set of conveniences and activities aimed to make the student's educational experience easier and more pleasurable. The need for admission (new student orientation programmes, student punishment), the need for survival (career service, financial), the need for counselling (educational, psychological, socioeconomic, and professional) as well as the need for enjoyment (social, sports), are some of the learners' major demands. All of these conditions must be satisfied to assure a sound education for the learners. Therefore, both academic and extracurricular support networks are necessary for students to overcome the challenges to their success. (Morga, 2012).

Students will obtain an excellent education and encouraged to continue their courses in their universities when additional assistance is provided alongside with the standard international assistance. According to Ndudzo (2013), the students' support system is a crucial function that an organization must provide to its students because of the nature of teaching and learning. According to Modebelu and Adegun (2019), a student support system helps meet the requirements of students whose performance may be hindered. Chattopadhyay (2014) also stated that the student assistance system varies throughout

universities. This indicates that the form that learner support services take on one campus may not be required on another. Regardless of the type or content of learner services and support, their function is to assist students in achieving their enrolment objective. On the other hand, the term "continual enrollment" refers to the perseverance and behaviour of students in learning information and skills in the academic programme throughout the duration of four consecutive semesters (Arifin, 2018).

This study sought to determine the impact that scientific-cognitive support and systematic support services on students' continual enrolment in higher education institutions.

Relationship between Scientific-Cognitive Support Services and Students' Continual Enrolment

The scientific-cognitive support services in relation to students' continual enrolment considered are curriculum materials, learning strategies, evaluation, and library support, among others, that enable students' life in university pleasant and encourage persistent rate.

Curriculum Materials

The curriculum is intrinsic to student success in higher education (Baik, Naylor & Arkoudis, 2015; Barrier, Quéré, & Vanneville, 2019; Evans, Muijs, & Tomlinson, 2015; Kift, 2015) and there is a view that in any discussions of curriculum, students' experiences need to be included (Bovill, & Woolmer, 2019; Darwin, 2017). It is a common knowledge that the experiences of students are incorporated into the conceptualizations of curriculum, which brings attention to the basic character of students' participation in the learning process (Hynes, 2017). The engagement function of the first year block model puts into practice the epistemological argument that interactions and how individuals and communities acquire new things are the most important factors in intellectual progress (Ambler, Solomonides and Smallridge (2021). Students are provided with the chance to take part in extracurricular activities as part of the First Year Block Model. Children are afforded a significant amount of freedom, choice, and responsibility, although with less obvious consequences. (Ambler *et al*, 2021). Understanding the theory behind the curriculum is essential for educators because it helps them to keep their ethical commitment to students by being aware of the sociopolitical and epistemological paradigms in which they work. This is why it is so important for educators to comprehend the theory behind the curriculum. It is vital that the curriculum for the first year be unified, input from key stakeholders is crucial, and early consideration of student participation is advised. The creation of courses throughout the globe is governed by a number of different governmental regulations. It is believed that higher education institutions in various regions have made an effort to differentiate their programmes by personalizing their curriculum in order to add distinctive elements into their coursework. These distinctive elements include graduate capacity majors and capstone projects. Nelson, Creagh and Clarke (2014) in their good practice guide for policy and practice in the first-year experience determine that six interconnected principles are needed to guide the development of the first-year curriculum: transition pedagogy, diversity, design, engagement, assessment, evaluation and ongoing monitoring. This study would emphasize the fact that curricular leadership may be essential for learning if it brings students to a level of empowerment and knowledge.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are defined as a set of approaches that learners use to acquire information and knowledge, such as taking notes, organizing information, summarizing and coding (Muelas & Navarro, 2015). Effective learning strategies refer to techniques and approaches learners use to achieve the acquisition, storage, retention, recall and adoption of knowledge. Cognitive learning theories consider learners as primary participants in the education process in which their role goes beyond passively acquiring information to being active participants. Consequently, students not only receive information and knowledge but also perform mental activities to process and adopt information effectively (Shi, 2017). Accordingly, learners have a wide range of sources and are free to select their learning strategies, direct their learning process and control their tendencies and emotions to serve their learning objectives (Díaz, Zapata, Díaz, Arroyo, & Fuentes, 2019). Academics claim that students are not well prepared to meet higher education requirements, and they face huge challenges in being self-regulated students (Rosario, Nunez, Trigo, Guimaraes, Fernandez, Cerezo, Fuentes, Orellana, Santibanez, Fulano, Ferreira, & Figueiredo, 2015). Students that make use of successful learning strategies are those who are able to acquire, store, remember, retain, and apply new information. It is the contention of cognitive learning theories that students actively participate in their education to a greater extent than they do when they only take in knowledge in a passive fashion. In order for students to achieve their educational objectives, they have access to a vast array of materials, feelings, and attitudes from which to choose.

According to the research done by Tomar and Jindal (2014), the following are the seven most effective learning strategies: (1) Determine which pieces of information are the most significant by isolating relevant keywords, concepts, and models. (2) Compose notes that are more likely to be referred to throughout class; doing so will assist students in recalling the information presented in the lecture. (3) Obtain relevant data pertaining to the constructivist learning technique, which relies on making connections between previously taught content and newly learned material. (4) When organizing the content and materials, make use of the specific approach and clear objectives that the students have previously set on their own. (5) Provide a concise explanation of the data obtained from the readings and any other sources, and draw appropriate conclusions. (6) To begin, divide the information into groups, and then proceed to prioritize the various relationships and conceptual descriptions. (7) You should perform regular tests to see whether or not they have retained the information and whether or not they grasp it. Further studies have attempted the classification of learning strategies into micro and macro strategies (Jimenez, Garcia, Lopez-Cepero, & Saavedr, 2017). Planning and self-regulation are the main pillars of macro-strategies while summarizing and highlighting information are related to tasks and situations that are present in micro-strategies.

According to Nikou and Economides (2019), homework is one of the main examples of a micro-learning strategy, and this explains why micro-strategies are often used among students. Vega-Hernandez, Patino-Alonso, Cabello, Galindo-Villardón, and Fernandez-Berrocal (2017) explored the differences in learning strategy utilization among students according to gender and age and found that male students preferred learning support strategies and study habits, while female students used cognitive and learning control strategies more frequently. Diaz *et al.* (2019) also revealed that studying in a group, learning through graphic expression and focusing on information synthesis are most commonly used by university students. Muelas *et al.* (2015) argued that teaching learning strategies can be a remedial solution for low student achievement, and they illustrated how to exploit brain competencies through learning strategies to improve academic achievement. Vega-Hernandez *et al.* (2017) also found the use of learning strategies had a positive relationship with perceived emotional intelligence (repair, attention and clarity).

Evaluation Support

The evaluation support services generally refer to assessment and providing effective feedback to the learner and the learning system. Assessment and proper feedback to the learner and the learning system are examples of support services. The examination focuses on the proportion of course subjects and exams, as well as the utilization of assessment techniques from the many learning styles and perspectives of the students (Mojgan & ZohrehSadat, 2021). The institution of higher education is expected to guarantee that formative assessment is implemented effectively and efficiently across the curriculum in order to improve students' academic performance and perseverance. According to Mojgan *et al.* (2021), using student survey and internal structure assessment to evaluate the efficiency of training, efficiency and effectiveness of technical system support are important services which help the learners acquire skills, be independent and grow towards lifelong learning. However, Sekyi (2013) opined that the evaluation support services give opportunity to higher education institution to use assessment tools to assess students' progress, make brief descriptions, provide spaces to respond to evaluation, review topic, and as well provide self-assessment questions. The feedback component of evaluative support services includes the pursuit of learning opportunities for students, the provision of feedback to workers and students, and the evaluation of the efficacy of formal training. (Mojgan *et al.*, 2021). In order to evaluate the participant's thought process, evaluations must be sufficiently realistic. Meanwhile, the evaluations of the students should be from different angles, and the feedback should be quick and forward and backward and backward to provide a good appraisal and improvement on students' academic performance where necessary which will enhance satisfaction and continuous enrolment of the students. The evaluations should also be so practical that the student's analysis could be measured.

Library Support

The library is the bedrock of any higher institutions that poised to have competitive edge over its competitors as it serves as the knowledge bank for the faculty and students. It is the source of skills, competence, character and excellence acquisition, in whatever disciplines, in an environment of learning such as the university. The library is the most important educational support service. A library is a place to educate oneself, find knowledge and reliable information, engage in intellectual pursuits, and obtain illumination that both enlightens the mind and conveys civilizational wisdom. A library is a sort of institution having the ability and responsibility to assist students with their informational requirements and to educate them. This is possible through the right source and the ability to use the information tools to get the right information from the right place at the right time (Alabi, 2014).

There is no concept of university without library. Hence, library is part of schools, colleges, and universities all over the world. Library use has been connected to student retention, persistence, and GPA in several studies. Murray, Ireland, and Hackathorn (2015) looked at general library use (such as logins, checkouts, gate counts, instruction, and interlibrary loan) and found a predictive relationship between library use and retention of freshmen and sophomore students. Soria, Fransén, and Nackerud (2013) studied whether library use is related to first-year student retention. Others have looked at library use and student success using methods ranging from self-reported surveys, collection of student user names at various library service points, comparison of student identification numbers to proxy logs, comparison of student enrolment data and library management system data, and correlation analysis between library material use and GPA. Just outside the realm of direct student use of the library, researchers also have found relationships between library staffing and student retention and between library expenditures and retention (O'Kelly, 2017). Although these findings are more indirect measures of library activities and student enrolment, they report a connection between well-supported libraries and student enrolment.

Relationship between Systematic Support Services and Students' Continual Enrolment

The systematic support services in relation to students' continual enrolment are an aspect of learners' support services that focused on providing the support systematic model, administrative support, management support, and legal support needed by the students to excel in their academic activities. However, these students support services are reviewed under the following categories.

Administrative Support

Admission process into universities is critical. Like any other nation, admissions information has historically been used as a predictor of academic success by most institutions and when evaluated, it may likely help identify students that may be at risk of low academic performance, as well as revolve the factors that may likely predict quality but may not be factors that predict low performance (Agboola, Adeyemi and Ogbodo, 2014). Student quality is a measure of the forces that shape student's attributes such as: their performance in academic works, study and coping skills satisfaction with course of study and ability to persist in the educational system. According to Agboola *et al.*, (2014), there is need to ensure that the quality of students are ascertained at the entry point as this will give rise to students who are widely diversified and talented in more than simply test-taking and essay writing.

It is one of the major indicators of institutional efficiency. In recent times, research studies have revealed that for most students' poor academic performance and no persistence in programmes; institutional factors such as provision of enabling school environment, adequate and quality academic staff, infrastructures and facilities for quality teaching and learning, government policy on admission and selection process among others are some of the reasons adduced for students graduating from school without acquiring the relevant knowledge and skills that are pre-requisite for assessing student quality (Agboola *et al.*, 2014). It has been revealed that retention at the first-to-second year stage is very important since students often dropped out (no further enrolment) at this stage (Rivas, Sauer, Glynn & Miller in Agboola *et al.*, 2014; Ochuba in Agboola *et al.*, 2014). The quality of students before and after their admission is a critical issue and the challenge that has been facing the university administrators as well as other stakeholders. However, little attention has been focused on the process through which the students (major input) came into the university. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in 1978 was established by the government as a central admission body to execute the policies that are concerned with admissions into Nigeria's higher institutions. Meanwhile, studies on student transition (continual enrolment) suggest that orientation should be viewed in the context of a developmental process, beginning with an elucidation of the transitional processes involved in the student life-cycle and a critical assessment of where and how orientation is needed at different stages in the student life-cycle (Morga, 2012). To build upon student life-cycle of "getting in, being there and moving on" different phases of the student experience need to be incorporated into a traditional orientation programme (Nyar, 2020).

With regards to database support as an administrative support service, managing an educational system requires careful planning and time management. Today, a school has evolved into a complex institution with multiple campuses, manifold departments, several sections and a very large number of students. For schools moving from a traditional paper-based data management system to a digital, automated system is a critical need of the hour. According to Fedena Learn (2019), a student database management system allows schools to save and access these records as needed by them, thus simplifying the work of the school administration team. A student database management system allows for easier communication between students, parents-teachers, students-teachers and even allows for the school alumni to stay connected with each other. Instead of only relying on the school diary, the teacher can send instant updates to the parents related to school events, attendance, and even disciplinary issues over email or SMS. Students can connect with each other and with their teachers over on the discussion boards to clear their doubts and collaborate over assignments.

Management Support

In higher education institution, student relationship management is crucial. It is known as customer relationship management (CRM). Adikaram and Khatibi (2016) define customer relationship management in higher education as the process of minimising the gap between the expectations and experiences of the students as customers by offering excellent services with equitable relationships at all times within the value system of the organization. It is also defined as contentment customer attitude to a service provider, or an emotive reaction to the difference among what customers anticipate and what they accept, regarding the contentment of some desires, aims or needs (Rigo, Pedron, Caldeira, & Araújo, 2016; Wali, Wright, Nwokah, & Reynolds, 2015). According to Adikaram *et al.* (2016) and Manzuma-Ndaaba, Harada, Romle, & Shamsudin (2016), services are the core of higher education institutions process and customer relationship management practices should feature in student services starting from application process, registration process, programs, learning, fees, scholarship, research, community service, and social network. Student-institution interactions have become increasingly important in generating additional value for institutions due to lifelong learning commitments students make when they join the university. Customer relationship management in higher education mainly focuses on automation and improvement of institutional processes associated with managing student relationships in areas such as recruitment, service and support (Mayanja & Tibaingana, 2020). This indicates that when higher education institutions pay attention to policies and long-term planning, provide a clear vision and roadmap for students' abilities and needs, balance in teacher-student ratio, pay attention to the ratio of employee to student including the provision of technological guidelines to students and designing specific technical guidelines for students would help the students to integrate deeply in their relationship with the lecturers, support staff and the university (Mojgan *et al.*, 2021).

Legal Support

Legal support includes ownership and legal security rules and awareness of rules. In blended learning environments as a method of distance learning by higher education institutions, compliance with copyright laws is very complex and requires great care. Plagiarism on the Internet is easy and information is plentiful, so the issue of copyright is more important. Familiarization of students with these laws and intellectual property rights as a supporting component of the e-learning system is imperative. According to Mojgan *et al.* (2021), the behaviour of instructors and teaching staff in the lawful use of resources demonstrates a pattern of behaviour for learners or students in virtual learning environments, such as traditional environments. Their adherence to intellectual property rights and publishing rights will lead learners to learn this ethical principle. In higher education environment, students require support to implement a series of rules in some places that they need instructions, regulations, and so on which they might have missed during induction.

Statement of the Problem

Students attending institutes of higher learning come from a diverse spectrum of racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as socio-economic situations. According to Gibbs (2012), when students attend universities and colleges, they bring with them the influence of their prior environments. When more people are admitted into universities on an annual basis, it is possible that greater demands will be placed on institutions in a variety of ways that might hinder students' ability to continue their education. As a consequence of this, providing outstanding service to students is essential for any university that wants to gain a competitive advantage. According to the findings of a recent study, there are a number of potential reasons why students do not finish their programmes in a particular University within the allotted amount of time. Some of these reasons include the expense of attending school, unrealistic goals, ineffective communication, a lack of specific interventions, and intellectual challenges (Iroegbu & Agboola, 2019). Additionally, it is challenging

to get admission into higher schools in Nigeria after a period of time due to the enormous number of applicants that apply each year. As a result, many people in Nigeria choose courses that are not their first choice, and because of this difficulty students may experience burnout and discontentment as a result of their enrolment in programmes in which they lack the necessary skills and capabilities. This may lead to students dropping out of university after a history of academic failure, poor involvement, poor pedagogical approaches, poor relationship development with faculty, a lack of co-curricular tasks, and a variety of other reasons. Learners' support services can avoid many of the academic, socioeconomic, and physical challenges that have an influence on students' academic achievement, satisfaction, and ongoing participation in their programmes. These issues can have an impact on students' academic success, contentment, and continuing enrolment.

Unfortunately, the provision of outstanding learner support services at higher education institutions, which is vital to students' persistence, is seldom addressed as an element of the collaborative approach to reducing students' fears or discontent. The ultimate goal is to develop methods that will help increase the number of students who choose to continue their education in their choice Universities, and particularly, the public universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between learners' support system and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. Determine the relationship between scientific-cognitive support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.
2. Determine the relationship between systematic support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

- To what extent does scientific-cognitive support services relate to students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria?
- To what extent does systematic support services relate to students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between scientific-cognitive support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between systematic support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Methodology

The correlational design was used as the research design for the study. The population of the study comprised 370,119 students in the sixteen (16) Public Universities (7 Federal and 9 State) for 2020/2021 academic session in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. (Source: University Data Management System (Portal), Academic Planning Unit of the universities under study, 2021 and website of National Universities Commission, 2022). The sample consisted of 434 students obtained using Taro Yamane's formula. The cluster sampling technique was adopted to group the Public Universities into the six (6) States of the south-south zone. The purposive sampling technique was chosen to select one Federal and one State Public University that has existed not less than ten (10) years from each State of the South-South zone. Simple random sampling technique was further adopted to select one University where there is more than one Public Federal or State University in any of the States respectively, and also for selection of the faculties and departments. By these criteria, twelve (12) Universities out of the sixteen (16) Public Universities as well as eight faculties and 48 departments were selected. In order to have a fair representation of the sampled Universities, the proportionate simple random sampling technique was used to select 11% of the students for the study from each of the sampled faculties and departments, resulting in 432 students. A self structured research instruments titled: "Learners' Support System Questionnaire (LSSQ) and Students' Continual Enrolment Questionnaire (SCEQ)" were developed for data collection and formulated on a four-point modified Likert rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points; High Extent (HE) = 3 points; Low Extent (LE) = 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE), 1 point respectively. The learners' support system questionnaire (LSSQ) had two sections; sections A and B. Section A showed the demographic data of the respondents while section B consisted of 17-item questionnaire statements relating to the two (2) research questions. The face and content validity of the instruments were validated by three experts in the field of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation of the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. The corrections made were included the final draft of the questionnaire. One hundred and twenty copies of

the questionnaire were administered to 120 students third year regular undergraduate students (60 from each of the two public universities), one federal and one state, in Abia and Ekiti states which were not part of the geo-political zone selected for the study. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items. The reliability coefficients for the two (2) clusters of Learners' Support System Questionnaire were 0.84 and 0.87 respectively, and for Students' Continual Enrolment Questionnaire was 0.85. The four hundred and thirty-four (434) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students in each of sixteen (16) selected public universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria while 402 (202 from male and 200 from female) copies of the questionnaire were fully filled and retrieved for data analysis. The research questions raised were answered using means and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the associated t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as high extent while mean below 2.50 indicated low extent. Also, the null hypotheses whose calculated value is greater than the r critical value of 0.098 was rejected while the calculated value is less than the r critical value of 0.098 was accepted.

Results

Answer to the Research Questions

Research question 1: To what extent does scientific-cognitive support services relate to students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria?

Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Scientific-cognitive Support Services and Students' Continual Enrolment in Public Universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria

S/N	Scientific-cognitive Services item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Modern library with enough current books for students support students' continual enrolment in course of study.	101 (404)	183 (549)	89 (178)	29 (29)	402 (1160)	2.89	0.87	HE
2	Laboratory with current and adequate apparatus enhance students' continual enrolment in course of study.	115 (460)	174 (522)	83 (166)	30 (30)	402 (1178)	2.93	0.89	HE
3	Well organized and management of course materials into meaningful units of study positively affects students' continual enrolment.	111 (444)	149 (447)	116 (232)	26 (26)	402 (1149)	2.86	0.90	HE
4	Audio and video presentations of course module promote students' continual enrolment in their programmes.	94 (376)	154 (462)	121 (242)	33 (33)	402 (1113)	2.77	0.90	HE
5	Application of different learning styles positively affects students' persistence in their programmes.	95 (380)	159 (477)	117 (234)	31 (31)	402 (1122)	2.79	0.89	HE
6	Proper attention to students with poor performance and personalizing student learning enhances student's continual enrolment in their courses.	71 (284)	205 (615)	102 (204)	24 (24)	402 (1127)	2.80	0.80	HE
7	Use of evaluation methods and appraisal appropriate to students' academic performance encourage students' confidence in their courses and continual enrolment.	98 (392)	156 (468)	107 (214)	41 (41)	402 (1115)	2.77	0.93	HE
8	Adequate learning activities and feedback for students enhance students' continual enrolment in the chosen courses.	85 (340)	177 (531)	92 (184)	48 (48)	402 (1103)	2.74	0.92	HE
Grand Mean		96 (384)	170 (510)	103 (206)	33 (33)	402 (1133)	2.82		HE

The presentation in table 1 indicates that the grand mean score of 2.82 of all the item-mean scores (2.89, 2.93, 2.86, 2.77, 2.79, 2.80, 2.77, and 2.74) is greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 revealing that the respondents agree that scientific-cognitive support services relate to students' continual enrolment to a high extent. This means that provision of quality scientific-cognitive support services would enhance students' continual enrolment in public Universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Research question 2: To what extent does systematic support services relate to students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria?

Table 2: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Systematic Support Services and Students' Continual Enrolment in Public Universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria

Table 3 revealed that the sum and sum of square for scientific-cognitive support services are 2723 and 2143.42 while that of students' continual enrolment are 3030 and 2086.94 respectively. The sum of product of scores on the two variables (scientific-cognitive support services and students' continual enrolment) is 1848.41. The correlation coefficient is 0.87 which is greater than the critical value of r (0.098) at 400 degree of freedom under 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between scientific-cognitive support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria is rejected. The t -value testing the statistical significance of the correlation coefficient r between the two variables presented in table 3 was $(35.29 > 1.96, P < 0.05)$. This implies that there is a positive relationship between scientific-cognitive support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between systematic support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Summary Analysis of the Relationship between Systematic Support Services and Students' Continual Enrolment in Public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Variable	N	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum(x - \bar{x})^2$ $\sum(y - \bar{y})^2$	$\sum(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})$	df	A	r_{cal}	r_{crit}	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Decision
Systematic Services(X)	402	3020	1799.94								
				1849.81	400	0.05	0.95	0.098	60.85	1.96	Sign. Rejected
Students' enrolment(Y)	402	3030	2086.94								

Result from Table 4 showed that the sum and sum of square for systematic support services are 3020 and 1799.94 while that of students' continual enrolment are 3030 and 2086.94 respectively. The sum of product of scores on the two variables (systematic support services and students' continual enrolment) is 1849.81. The correlation coefficient is 0.95 which is greater than the critical value of r (0.098) at 400 degree of freedom under 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between systematic support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria is rejected. The t -value testing the statistical significance of the correlation coefficient r between the two variables presented in table 4 was $(60.85 > 1.96, P < 0.05)$. This means that there is a positive relationship between systematic support services and students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The results from Tables 1 and 2 revealed how scientific-cognitive support services relate to students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria. The finding of the study shows that well organized and management of course materials into meaningful units and proper attention to students with poor performance and personalizing student learning, audio and video presentations of course module, application of different learning styles, use of evaluation methods and appraisal appropriate to students' academic performance, adequate learning activities and feedback for students, provision of laboratory with current and adequate apparatus, and modern library with enough current books for students enhance student's success and continuous enrolment in their courses. This finding is in line with Nelson, Creagh and Clarke (2014) who determine that six interconnected principles are needed to guide the development of the first-year curriculum: transition pedagogy, diversity, design, engagement, assessment, evaluation and ongoing monitoring. This suggests that curriculum development or organization of discipline content as well as the existence of social setup of the classroom in ways that foster student engagement is important. This finding is also in agreement with Diaz, Zapata, Arroyo, and Fuentes (2019) who stated that learners have a wide range of sources and are free to select their learning strategies, direct their learning process and control their tendencies and emotions to serve their learning objectives.

The results from Tables 3 and 4 showed how systematic support services relate to students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria. The finding of the study reveals that experienced efficient and helpful pre-commencement and admissions processes, experienced support that helped students to settle into study and transition into university, accessibility to information from the university before registration, adequate arrangements for provision of student's accommodation, provision of a clear vision and roadmap for students' abilities and needs, clear and accurate information on regulations as well as sharing rules and regulations of university, and comprehensive information from teachers to students on ways to communicate with the university are panaceas to students' continual enrolment in study and higher institution as they lead to their better academic satisfaction and success. This finding is in agreement with Agboola et al. (2014) view as submitted that through admission process students who are at risk of failure and those that are most likely to drop-out can be identified early, while the institution provides support services that can foster students' academic and social commitment and integration and affirming that student quality in terms of their academic performance, persistence and graduation rate could be predicted by examining the criteria by which students were admitted. The finding of this study further corroborates with Mojgan *et al.*, (2021) work on exploring the components of student support system in blended learning and found that when higher education institutions pay attention to policies and long-term planning, provide a clear vision and roadmap for students' abilities and needs, balance in teacher-student ratio, pay attention to

the ratio of employee to student including the provision of technological guidelines to students and designing specific technical guidelines for students would help the students to integrate deeply in their relationship with the lecturers, support staff and the university. In the light of this, students' satisfaction, better academic performance and incessant enrolment in their programmes in successful semesters would be enhanced.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it was concluded that learners' support system enhances students' continual enrolment in public universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria. Hence, its elements such as scientific-cognitive support services and systematic support services relate to students' continual enrolment to a high extent.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The management and lecturers should practically adopt quality scientific-cognitive support services with a view to enhancing students' continual enrolment. Well organized instructional course units, application of enhanced teaching-learning strategies and result-oriented evaluation activities can lead to better students' learning outcomes.
2. The management and other stakeholders should always strive to improve on the existing systematic support services. On the other hand, the opinion of the students could be sought on areas that need improvement. The contributions gotten from the students should be integrated in decision making with the purpose of encouraging students' continual enrolment

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