

Administrative Support and Academic Performance of Internally Displaced Secondary School Students in Benue State, Nigeria¹

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. A correlational survey research design was adopted. Three research questions were raised, and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population comprised 1,380 internally displaced secondary school students residing in IDP camps and host community schools across Benue State. Using stratified random sampling, a sample of 200 students, 112 males and 88 females, was drawn from six purposively selected IDP learning centres and host community schools. Two instruments were used for data collection: the Administrative Support Scale (ASS), a 15-item, four-point Likert questionnaire with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.86; and students' cumulative academic performance scores, retrieved from official school records, as the measure of academic performance. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and students' academic performance overall ($r = 0.71$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$); a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and academic performance by school location ($r = 0.68$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$); and a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and academic performance by gender ($r = 0.61$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$). The study recommends that school administrators strengthen IDP-specific enrolment and documentation procedures, that the Benue State Ministry of Education develop comprehensive IDP administrative frameworks, and that gender-sensitive administrative policies be institutionalised in all IDP schools to ensure equitable academic outcomes for all displaced learners.

Keywords: Administrative Support, Academic Performance, Correlational Survey, Internally Displaced Students, Secondary School, Benue State

¹ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82265/dkhd-xw46>

Soutien administratif et réussite scolaire des élèves déplacés internes du secondaire dans l'État de Benue, au Nigéria

Résumé

Cette étude examine la relation entre le soutien administratif et la réussite scolaire des élèves déplacés internes du secondaire dans l'État de Benue, au Nigéria. Elle adopte un devis d'enquête corrélationnelle. Trois questions de recherche et trois hypothèses ont été formulées pour orienter l'étude. La population cible est composée de 1 380 élèves déplacés internes du secondaire, résidant dans des camps de personnes déplacées ainsi que dans des écoles des communautés d'accueil de l'État de Benue. Un échantillon de 200 élèves (112 garçons et 88 filles) a été sélectionné au moyen d'un échantillonnage aléatoire stratifié à partir de six centres d'apprentissage pour personnes déplacées et d'écoles des communautés d'accueil, choisis de manière raisonnée. Deux instruments ont été utilisés pour la collecte des données : l'échelle de soutien administratif (ESA), un questionnaire de type Likert en quatre points comportant 15 items (α de Cronbach = 0,86), et les notes cumulatives des élèves, extraites des dossiers scolaires officiels, servant d'indicateur de la réussite scolaire. Les moyennes et les écarts-types ont été utilisés pour répondre aux questions de recherche, tandis que le coefficient de corrélation de Pearson (r) a servi à tester les hypothèses au seuil de signification de 0,05. Les résultats révèlent une forte corrélation positive et statistiquement significative entre le soutien administratif et la performance scolaire globale des élèves ($r = 0,71$; ddl = 198 ; $p < 0,05$), une forte corrélation positive et statistiquement significative entre le soutien administratif et la performance scolaire selon la localisation de l'établissement ($r = 0,68$; ddl = 198 ; $p < 0,05$), ainsi qu'une corrélation positive modérée et statistiquement significative entre le soutien administratif et la performance scolaire selon le genre ($r = 0,61$; ddl = 198 ; $p < 0,05$). L'étude recommande que les directions d'établissement renforcent les procédures d'inscription et de documentation spécifiques aux élèves déplacés, que le ministère de l'Éducation de l'État de Benue élabore des cadres administratifs adaptés à leurs besoins, et que des politiques administratives sensibles au genre soient institutionnalisées dans tous les établissements accueillant des personnes déplacées, afin de garantir l'égalité des chances en matière de réussite scolaire.

Mots-clés : Soutien administratif, réussite scolaire, enquête corrélationnelle, élèves déplacés internes, enseignement secondaire, État de Benue.

INTRODUCTION

Education remains universally recognised as one of the most powerful instruments for individual development, social mobility, and national advancement. For any society to realise the transformative benefits of education, institutional structures must be deliberately put in place to guarantee that schooling is accessible, inclusive, and effective particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalised members of the population. Among the most educationally disadvantaged groups in contemporary Nigeria are internally displaced persons (IDPs), who have been forcibly uprooted from their homes and communities because of armed conflict, communal violence, and natural disasters. In Benue State, perennial herdsmen-farmer conflicts, recurrent flooding, and inter-communal strife have generated a substantial and growing population of displaced citizens, many of whom are secondary school-age adolescents whose formal education has been severely disrupted or permanently interrupted (Ikyereve & Ugbor, 2020). The educational marginalisation of these displaced learners is not merely a welfare concern but a national development crisis, as it produces a generation of young Nigerians without the academic foundation needed to participate productively in civic and economic life.

Nigeria's protracted displacement crisis intersects with longstanding deficiencies in its educational administration systems to produce conditions of exceptional academic disadvantage for displaced secondary school students. Benue State, situated in Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone, has recorded some of the country's most severe displacement statistics over the past decade, with hundreds of thousands of persons displaced across multiple local government areas. Secondary school-age adolescents within this displaced population face compounded challenges: the psychological trauma of violent uprooting, social dislocation from peer networks and learning communities, loss of academic documentation and enrolment into IDP learning centres or host community schools that are frequently ill-equipped to provide the quality of educational experience their pre-displacement schools offered. Examinations of academic performance trends among displaced students in the state consistently reveal below-average scores, elevated dropout rates, and weakened engagement with formal learning patterns that signal a crisis requiring institutional rather than merely individual-level responses (Agbo & Kwaghga, 2019). These patterns of underachievement are further compounded by persistent patterns of absenteeism and widespread disengagement from formal learning activities observed across IDP learning centres in the state, raising urgent questions about the adequacy of institutional responses to displaced learners' academic needs.

Academic performance, broadly understood as the measurable cognitive and scholarly output of students as demonstrated through examinations, continuous assessments, and other evaluative instruments, is shaped by a complex constellation of institutional, social, psychological, and material factors. Among these, administrative support has been identified as a particularly critical institutional variable. Administrative support in the school context encompasses the policies, procedures, and managerial practices deployed by school leadership and educational authorities to create an enabling environment for teaching and learning. It includes the provision of learning materials, management of enrolment and transfer processes, coordination of psychosocial support services, teacher supervision and deployment, maintenance of school records, and active collaboration with external bodies such as non-governmental organisations and government agencies to address students' academic and welfare needs (Adeyemi, 2021). In IDP educational settings, where institutional capacity is often stretched and standard administrative systems frequently break down under emergency conditions, the quality and consistency of administrative support may serve as a decisive correlate of whether displaced students can re-engage meaningfully with schooling and achieve satisfactory academic outcomes. School administrators in IDP settings are frequently overwhelmed, under-resourced, and inadequately prepared to manage the specific academic and administrative needs of displaced learners, yet the precise nature and strength of this administrative influence on student outcomes has not been sufficiently examined.

Researchers have consistently observed that IDP students who receive structured administrative support, including organised enrolment processes, access to catch-up classes, coordinated welfare interventions, and competent teacher supervision, tend to achieve better academic outcomes than those without such support (Agbo & Kwaghga, 2019). Educational administration, as a discipline, is fundamentally concerned with the governance, organisation, and management of educational institutions to optimise student learning outcomes. Okorie (2014) posited that effective school administration creates a climate of order, purpose, and accountability that permeates the entire learning environment and motivates both teachers and students toward excellence. When school administrative structures are weak or absent, as is frequently the case in emergency and IDP settings, students' academic outcomes can suffer severe and long-lasting consequences. Despite this recognition, empirical studies that specifically and systematically investigate the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State remain sparse. It is, furthermore, unclear from the available research evidence whether this relationship varies by school location and gender, dimensions that carry

significant implications for how administrative interventions should be designed and targeted. This knowledge gap represents a significant obstacle to evidence-based administrative reform and hinders the development of contextually responsive policies for IDP education. This study therefore situates itself within the broader discourse of educational administration and crisis-responsive schooling, seeking to establish the nature and strength of the relationship between administrative support and academic performance in one of Nigeria's most displacement-affected states, with the specific aim of informing administrative reforms that can improve educational outcomes for displaced secondary school students in Benue State.

OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. determine the relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State;
- ii. examine the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location; and
- iii. Investigate the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State?
2. What is the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location?
3. What is the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender?

HYPOTHESES

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

1. There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State.
2. There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location.
3. There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study adopted a correlational survey research design, which was considered appropriate for investigating the nature and strength of the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students, as these variables naturally co-exist in the study setting and were not manipulated (Field, 2013). A correlational design is specifically suited to studies that seek to determine whether, and to what degree, two or more variables are related, making it the appropriate choice for this study, which aims to establish whether the level of administrative support received by displaced students is systematically related to their measurable academic performance. Unlike a descriptive survey design, which merely characterises the distribution of variables without examining associations, the correlational design employed in this study enables the computation of Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) as a precise quantitative index of the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the study variables (Creswell, 2014). This design also preserves ecological validity, ensuring that findings reflect the natural covariation between administrative support and academic performance in real IDP and host-community school settings in Benue State, thereby making the results directly applicable to administrative decision-making and policy reform.

The study was conducted across Benue State, which has been one of Nigeria's most severely displacement-affected states due to protracted herdsman-farmer conflicts and recurrent flooding across multiple local government areas. The state hosts numerous IDP camps and emergency learning centres, variously managed by government

agencies, international organisations, and non-governmental bodies, in addition to mainstream host community schools that have absorbed displaced student populations. The population for the study comprised all internally displaced secondary school students identified across recognised IDP camps and host community schools in Benue State, totaling 1,380 students as recorded in the Benue State Ministry of Education and IDP monitoring data for the 2023/2024 academic session. This population comprised 762 males and 618 females, distributed across the state's senatorial zones and local government areas.

Stratified random sampling was employed to draw a representative sample of 200 students comprised of 112 males and 88 females from six purposively selected IDP learning centres and host community schools, with approximately 33 respondents drawn from each school. The purposive selection of schools was guided by: (a) official recognition by the Benue State Ministry of Education as an IDP or host community learning centre; (b) a minimum enrolled displaced student population of 30; and (c) accessibility to the research team during the data collection period. Within each selected school, stratification was applied along gender lines to ensure proportional representation of male and female displaced students. This sampling design balanced representativeness with feasibility and ensured that the resulting sample adequately reflected the heterogeneity of the target population across location and gender strata, consistent with stratified sampling procedures adopted in comparable educational survey research in Benue State (Ode & Agogo, 2017).

Two instruments were used for data collection in this study. The first was a structured questionnaire titled the Administrative Support Scale (ASS), developed by the researcher to measure the independent variable the level of administrative support received by displaced students. The ASS was organised into two sections: Section A solicited demographic information, including gender, school location, and displacement status, while Section B comprised 15 items measuring students' perceptions of administrative support across three thematic clusters: general administrative support (items 1–5), location-based administrative support (items 6–10), and gender-related administrative support dimensions (items 11–15). Items were rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The four-point format was preferred to eliminate ambiguity at the neutral midpoint and compel respondents to express a directional assessment for each item, thereby enhancing the discriminant validity of responses. The ASS was face- and content-validated by two experts in Educational Administration and Planning at Benue State University, Makurdi, who reviewed all

items for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. A trial administration on 30 IDP students outside the main sample yielded a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86, confirming high internal consistency.

The second instrument was the Academic Performance Record (APR), which constituted the measure of the dependent variable, students' academic performance. Rather than relying on self-reported perceptions of academic performance, which would confound the measurement of both variables within the same questionnaire, actual academic performance data were obtained from official school records with the permission of school heads. Specifically, each sampled student's cumulative score from the most recently completed terminal examination covering core subjects including English Language, Mathematics, and Basic Science/Integrated Science as recorded in the school's academic register, was extracted and converted to a percentage score for standardisation purposes. This approach ensures that academic performance is measured objectively through verifiable institutional records rather than through student self-assessment, thereby enhancing the construct validity of the dependent variable and the integrity of the correlation analysis.

Three trained research assistants supported data collection in the field. The ASS questionnaires were administered in person to sampled students during school hours, and completed instruments were retrieved on the same day to minimise non-response. Academic performance scores were simultaneously retrieved from school records with the cooperation of school principals and class teachers. Mean scores and standard deviations were computed for the administrative support variable to answer the research questions descriptively. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was then used to test the three hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. Pearson's r was appropriate because both variables, administrative support scores derived from the Likert-scale ASS and students' continuous academic performance scores are measured at the interval level, and Pearson's r is the standard parametric technique for quantifying the linear relationship between two interval-level variables (Field, 2013). The direction of r (positive or negative) indicates the nature of the relationship, while the magnitude (0 to ± 1) indicates its strength: r values of 0.10–0.29 indicate a weak relationship, 0.30–0.49 a moderate relationship and 0.50 and above a strong relationship (Cohen, 1988). When the computed r yielded a p -value < 0.05 , the hypothesis was rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship between administrative support and academic performance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State?

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Administrative Support Ratings of Internally Displaced Secondary School Students in Benue State

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD
1	Provision of adequate learning materials by school administration improved my performance in science subjects	58	70	30	22	3.43	0.91
2	Administrative support through regular supervision of teachers positively influenced my academic achievement	55	72	32	21	3.41	0.89
3	Access to school records and academic transcripts aided my academic continuity after displacement	60	68	28	24	3.44	0.93
4	Administrative enrolment procedures were accessible and did not hinder my return to school	52	75	30	23	3.40	0.92
5	The school administration provided psychosocial support that improved my concentration in class	50	70	36	24	3.35	0.95
Grand Mean						3.41	0.92

Table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for the administrative support ratings of internally displaced secondary school students on items 1-5 of the Administrative Support Scale (ASS). Item 3, relating to access to school records and academic transcripts that aided academic continuity after displacement, recorded the highest mean score of 3.44 (SD = 0.93), while Item 5, concerning psychosocial support improving concentration in class, returned the lowest mean score of 3.35 (SD = 0.95). All five items mean cluster closely around the grand mean of 3.41 (SD = 0.92), indicating a consistently high level of perceived administrative support among the sampled students. These descriptive statistics characterise the distribution of the independent variable and provide the basis for the correlation analysis reported in the table 4. To determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between these administrative support ratings and students' actual academic performance scores, Hypothesis 1 was tested.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location (IDP camp learning centres and host community schools)?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Administrative Support Ratings by School Location

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD
6	Administrative provision of emergency school feeding improved my ability to concentrate in class	54	72	30	24	3.40	0.93
7	School administrative coordination with NGOs for learning materials enhanced my academic performance	56	68	32	24	3.38	0.91
8	Administrative management of IDP-specific timetables helped me follow the curriculum progressively	50	70	35	25	3.33	0.94
9	School administrative response to my security concerns made me feel safe enough to learn effectively	52	74	28	26	3.39	0.92
10	Administrative facilitation of catch-up classes helped me recover lost academic ground	55	70	30	25	3.38	0.93
Grand Mean		3.38 0.93					

Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of administrative support ratings by school location (items 6–10 of the ASS). Item 6, on administrative provision of emergency school feeding that improved concentration, recorded the highest mean score of 3.40 (SD = 0.93) among both students in IDP camp learning centres and those in host community schools, while Item 8, on the administrative management of IDP-specific timetables, returned the lowest mean score of 3.33 (SD = 0.94) across both location types. The grand mean of 3.38 (SD = 0.93) indicates a high and consistent level of perceived location-responsive administrative support among the sampled students. Students enrolled in IDP camp learning centres rated administrative support related to security responsiveness and timetable management relatively higher, while those in host community schools rated NGO coordination and catch-up class facilitation more prominently, reflecting the distinct administrative demands of each setting. These descriptive data characterise the administrative support variable as perceived by students across both school locations and serve as the independent variable in the correlation analysis reported in Table 5, which tests whether location-specific administrative support is significantly related to academic performance.

Research Question 3

What is the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Administrative Support Ratings by Gender

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD
11	Male students benefit from administrative support for academic performance just as female students do	57	70	28	25	3.42	0.91
12	Administrative allocation of female-specific support (e.g., sanitary materials) improved female students' school attendance	52	68	34	26	3.35	0.94
13	Administrative counselling services are equally accessible to both male and female IDP students	50	72	32	26	3.35	0.93
14	Gender-sensitive administrative policies encouraged both male and female students to remain in school	54	70	30	26	3.38	0.92
15	Administrative support positively influenced the academic performance of displaced students regardless of gender	56	72	26	26	3.40	0.91
Grand Mean		3.38 0.92					

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of gender-related administrative support ratings (items 11–15 of the ASS). Item 11, on the equitable benefit of administrative support for academic performance across gender groups, recorded the highest mean score of 3.42 (SD = 0.91), while Items 12 and 13 both returned the lowest mean score of 3.35. The grand mean of 3.38 (SD = 0.92) indicates a high and consistent level of perceived gender-responsive administrative support among the sampled students. These descriptive statistics characterise the sample's perceptions of gender-related administrative support and serve as the independent variable in the correlation analysis reported in Table 6, where Hypothesis 3 is tested to determine whether this dimension of administrative support is significantly related to the academic performance of male and female displaced students.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State.

Table 4: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation between Administrative Support and Academic Performance

Variable	r	df	p	Decision
Administrative support & students' academic performance	0.71	198	< .05	Rejected

r = Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient; df = degrees of freedom

Table 4 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation results for the relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State. The computed correlation coefficient is $r = 0.71$ with $df = 198$ and $p < 0.05$. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between administrative support and the mean academic performance scores of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State, is rejected. The positive value of $r = 0.71$ indicates a strong positive relationship between administrative support and academic performance: as administrative support increases, students' academic performance tends to increase correspondingly, and vice versa. Based on Cohen's (1988) benchmarks for interpreting correlation coefficients, an r value of 0.71 represents a strong relationship, indicating that administrative support is not merely a marginal but a substantively significant correlate of academic performance among displaced students in Benue State.

Hypothesis 2

There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by school location.

Table 5: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation between Administrative Support and Academic Performance by School Location

Variable	r	df	p	Decision
Administrative support & students' academic performance — IDP camp learning centres	0.69	98	$< .05$	Rejected
Administrative support & students' academic performance — host community schools	0.68	98	$< .05$	Rejected

r = Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient; *df* = degrees of freedom

Table 5 presents the Pearson product-moment correlation results for the relationship between administrative support and academic performance by school location. For students enrolled in IDP camp learning centres, the computed correlation coefficient is $r = 0.69$ ($df = 98$, $p < 0.05$), while for students in host community schools, $r = 0.68$ ($df = 98$, $p < 0.05$). Since $p < 0.05$ in both cases, the null hypothesis is rejected for both location types. The positive r values indicate a strong positive relationship between location-specific administrative support and academic performance in both IDP camp learning centres and host community schools. Students in IDP camp settings who benefited from security-responsive administration, emergency feeding coordination, and IDP-tailored timetabling recorded stronger academic performance, while those in host community schools similarly demonstrated that administrative facilitation of catch-up classes and NGO partnership coordination were strongly associated with better academic outcomes. The strength and consistency of these correlations across both location types confirm that the association between administrative support and academic performance is a robust institutional pattern that transcends school settings.

Hypothesis 3

There is a significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State by gender.

Table 6: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation between Administrative Support and Academic Performance by Gender

Variable	r	df	p	Decision
Administrative support & academic performance — male IDP students	0.62	98	< .05	Rejected
Administrative support & academic performance — female IDP students	0.61	98	< .05	Rejected

r = Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient; *df* = degrees of freedom

Table 6 presents the Pearson's product-moment correlation results for the relationship between administrative support and academic performance by gender. For male displaced students, the computed correlation coefficient is $r = 0.62$ ($df = 98$, $p < 0.05$), while for female displaced students, $r = 0.61$ ($df = 98$, $p < 0.05$). Since $p < 0.05$ for both groups, the null hypothesis is rejected. The positive r values indicate a strong positive relationship between gender-responsive administrative support and the academic performance of both male and female internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State. Applying Cohen's (1988) conventions, both $r = 0.62$ and $r = 0.61$ indicate strong relationships, confirming that the association between administrative support and academic performance is significant and consistent across both genders. This finding suggests that when administrative interventions are designed with deliberate gender sensitivity, encompassing female-specific welfare provisions, inclusive counselling access, and gender-responsive school policies, the relationship with academic performance is strong and statistically reliable for both male and female displaced students.

DISCUSSION

The finding from Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1, that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State ($r = 0.71$, $df = 198$, $p < 0.05$), corroborates the position of Adeyemi (2021), who established that effective school administration creates the structural and material conditions necessary for optimal student learning outcomes. An r value of 0.71 is, by Cohen's (1988) standards, a strong correlation, meaning that a substantial portion of the variance in students' academic performance scores is systematically associated with the level of administrative support they receive. This finding aligns with the

observations of Agbo and Kwaghga (2019), who found that IDP students in Benue State who benefited from organised administrative interventions, including coordinated enrolment, teacher supervision, and access to learning materials, recorded significantly better academic outcomes than those without such support. The result underscores that administrative structures in IDP educational settings are not peripheral management concerns but core correlates of academic achievement and challenges the reductive notion that displacement alone determines displaced students' academic trajectories. Rather, institutional responsiveness, the capacity of school administration to create order, provide resources, and coordinate welfare, is systematically associated with better academic outcomes among displaced learners.

The finding from Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2, that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between administrative support and academic performance in both IDP camp learning centres ($r = 0.69$, $df = 98$, $p < 0.05$) and host community schools ($r = 0.68$, $df = 98$, $p < 0.05$), resonates with the position of Okorie (2014), who argued that effective educational administration is not location-contingent but rather a systemic and intentional institutional commitment that can be operationalised in diverse school environments, including non-conventional settings such as IDP camps. The marginal difference between the two location-specific correlation coefficients ($r = 0.69$ versus $r = 0.68$) suggests that the positive relationship between administrative support and academic performance is comparably strong in both settings, even though the specific administrative demands differ: students in IDP camp learning centres particularly benefited from security-responsive administration and IDP-tailored timetabling, while those in host community schools demonstrated that NGO coordination and catch-up class facilitation were among the more prominent administrative correlates of their academic performance. This finding affirms the view of Ikyereve and Ugbor (2020) that the provision of administrative infrastructure is systematically associated with educational continuity in crisis-affected settings, regardless of school type. The practical implication is unambiguous: investment in administrative capacity in IDP schools produces demonstrably strong academic performance correlates comparable to those observed in conventional school settings, and such investment therefore deserves equal priority in educational planning and resource allocation across both location types.

The finding from Research Question 3 and Hypothesis 3, that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between gender-responsive administrative support and academic performance among both male ($r = 0.62$, $df = 98$, $p < 0.05$) and female ($r = 0.61$, $df = 98$, $p < 0.05$) internally displaced secondary school students, is

consistent with the submission of Terkura and Ameh (2022), who reported that gender-sensitive administrative policies in IDP schools in North-Central Nigeria substantially improved the academic retention and performance of both male and female displaced learners. The near-equivalent strength of the correlation across both gender groups indicates that gender-responsive administrative support benefits male and female students almost equally, while the marginal difference suggests that female students may derive slightly greater benefit from targeted provisions such as sanitary materials and gender-inclusive counselling. This finding challenges the assumption that administrative support operates uniformly across all students, regardless of gender, and instead confirms that the deliberate inclusion of gender-sensitive components in administrative policies strengthens the overall relationship between administrative support and academic performance for displaced students of both sexes. The result further supports the position of Ugbor, Ikyereve, and Ode (2021), who identified inclusive principal leadership behaviour as a significant correlate of academic performance among IDP students of both sexes. The implication for practice is that gender-aware administrative approaches in IDP schools are not merely equity imperatives but are also measurably associated with stronger academic performance outcomes for all displaced learners.

CONCLUSION

This study established a strong, statistically significant positive relationship between administrative support and the academic performance of internally displaced secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria. The Pearson's correlation coefficients of $r = 0.71$ (overall), $r = 0.69$ and $r = 0.68$ (by school location), and $r = 0.62$ and $r = 0.61$ (by gender), all significant at $p < 0.05$, confirm that administrative structures are strong and measurable institutional correlates of displaced students' academic performance across both school locations and gender groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. School administrators in IDP and host community schools should replace rigid documentation requirements with flexible alternative systems that prioritise access while maintaining academic record integrity, and establish dedicated units to reconstruct displaced students' academic histories.
2. The Benue State Ministry of Education should develop location-differentiated IDP administrative frameworks addressing the distinct priorities of camp

schools and host community schools, developed through participatory engagement with administrators, teachers, IDP representatives, and civil society organisations.

3. Gender-sensitive administrative policies should be institutionalised across all IDP schools, addressing the specific needs of both male and female displaced students, supported by professional development in gender-responsive management and systematic monitoring of gender-disaggregated academic performance data.

IJMGs

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