

## Managing students' academic failure among secondary school students for high productivity in Obingwa LGA of Abia State

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### Abstract

The study investigated the management of students' academic failure among secondary school students for high productivity in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. Descriptive survey research design was used while the population of the study comprised thirty public secondary schools. A sample size of 10 secondary schools was selected from the 30 public secondary schools using stratified random sampling technique. Self-designed instrument entitled "Management Students' Academic Failure Questionnaire" (MSAFQ) was utilized. The validity of the instrument was ensured. Test retest method was used and reliability co-efficient of 0.80 and 0.83 was obtained through Cronbach Alpha Statistics. Mean was used to answer the research questions while Z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The findings include but not limited to: lack of instructional material and inability of the teachers to stimulate students are causes of academic failures among students. It is therefore recommended that the government or appropriate agency should ensure adequate supply of functional instructional resources and teachers' should do well to motivate students to learn thereby save students from incessant failures that could mar their future and life expectations.

### Keywords

Motivation and individual difference, physical factors, psychological factors, social factors.

### INTRODUCTION

Failure is one thing nobody wants to be associated with. Everybody aspires to achieve success in life the school not an exception. Incidentally, to achieve success is demanding. It requires extra efforts, more hard work, zeal and determination above all commitment. Mass failure has been a signal to this plaguing issue in education enterprise which requires critical action. It is with utmost dismay that Osayande [1] decried that 2023 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (UTME ) conducted by Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in

Nigeria had 14% pass and 86% failure thus requested every hand to be on deck to correct this anomalies. In the present dispensation, most students lack that enthusiasm and focus for academic excellence due to a number distractions emanating from home, school, peers, environment and a host of others. The students who are from dysfunctional homes (broken or divorced or violent etc.) could experience psychological, social and physical problems that could mar their academic pursuit. The school could be such that does not have adequate school



facilities and instructional materials or dilapidated school facilities thus repel the students from attending classes which could equally reflect in poor enrolment profile. The teachers' inability to guide counsel and direct students in the right direction could also pose another challenge to the students. Unhealthy peer relationship and the adverse effect of immediate environment could pose barrier to students' academic success. Failure as inability of an individual or group of individuals to live up to expectations should by all means be eradicated or reduced to the barest minimum in the secondary schools so as to raise adequate human capital needed to revamp the nation's economy.

When students are allowed to wallow in the dark, those students are doomed to fail. This is evinced when some of them start encountering poor academic performance, they become devastated, confused and in a state of higgledy-piggledy. They begin to miss school and could eventually dropout of school due to their frail nature [2]. These set of students are available for use as political thugs, banditry, insurgency, armed robbery, substance aficionado, child abuse, human trafficking, domestic service and a host of other ignominious act. All of these anti social behaviours lead to insecurity and wanton destruction of lives and properties thus upturn national growth and development. On the reverse side, when the students are committed and glued to their studies all things being equal, they are better positioned to achieve great height in academics thus shun anti social vices. They become useful not only to themselves but to the community of their abode.

It is premised on this that failure is described as an act of incapacitation, impairment or disablement to accomplish a given task. Academic failure is therefore inability to do well in academic works. This failure in education is centered on the learner/student because the student is one who is desirous to learn new knowledge, skills, values, norms and cultural beliefs. Failure is the inability of the student to acquire much desired knowledge and information for which he was sent to school. The learner is very crucial in teaching/learning process and as such should possess some qualities like willingness and capability to learn failing which the teacher could be cracking a hard nut while teaching. It is in this regard that Nkwocha et al.. [3] laid weight to the above assertion and maintained that maturation, mental set and

readiness are perceptions connected with learning. When the student's innate potential is not ripe so as to predispose the student to readiness to learn, teaching becomes nauseating and academic failure prevails. In order to avert all of these impending dangers of academic failure, this study becomes the option so as to salvage the situation.

### **Theoretical framework**

The theory for this study is the Psychological Theory of Attribution which was propounded by Heider in 1958 [4]. This theory focused on the difference between motivation of high achiever and low achiever. According to the theory, when a high achiever is motivated, his confidence is aroused thus works harder on any task relating to achievement in order to achieve more. This is because the high achiever has the belief that the success made is as a result of hard work, energy and time. On the other hand, the low achiever believe that failure is a game of chance, that it is a result of bad luck or poor examination practices which is not attributed to him as an individual. For this reason, low achievers do not aspire to work hard, not sure of their ability, shun success related task and assume that success is an ascribed status instead of that obtained by merit. Even when success is achieved by low achiever, he is not moved because he sees it as his luck shining.

The above theory is associated with the study in the sense that academic failure is the inability to perform well in educational set up. In which case, the poorly performed students fail to work hard, put in adequate efforts and time, are not motivated or aspired to perform better due to their misconception of what gives rise to success. Managing academic failure becomes the only way this set of students could be captured, re-groomed and reset their mind on the wrong notion which they already had. Through this means, the desire for success could be reactivated and reinvigorated in them by the teacher for better academic performance. It is against this background that this theory is considered relevant to this study.

The teacher is one who is bestowed with the duties of imparting knowledge, skills, morals, values and cultural beliefs to the learner. Stemming an effective teacher is one who applies knowledge of arts of teaching creativity thereby maximizes student learning, and it is characterized by the following teaching

techniques: (1) sincere regard for the learner as an individual, (2) democratic in approach, (3) must be fair and firm in his dealings thus create room for creative and inventive thinking in the learner, (4) must induce, inspire and motivate the learner and at the same time encourage and guide the learner to innovativeness and resourcefulness, (5) must be willing and enthusiastic in updating his knowledge [5], [6].

Obviously, the teacher is not just someone who is educationally qualified but one who knows the mechanism of teaching and motivates, arouses and stimulates the learner thereby brings about learning. This is imperative because the teacher takes the blame when the learner fails and takes the glory when the learner succeeds. This is the reason that the teacher has to study the learner using eclectic strategies so as to explore and terminate circumstances surrounding the learner's failure thereby encourage and promote those virtues that inspire the learner for optimal academic excellence. This is what impelled Nkwocha et al. [3] to dissect the factors that impacts on the learner as follows: psychological, individual differences, physical and social factors.

The first is psychological factors. The psychological factors lends itself to the emotional condition of the learner such as feeling of joy, sadness, worry, anxiety etc. Intellectual ability affects learners, mood, individual's reaction to circumstances, readiness, mental set and age could impact on the learner. The second is individual differences factors. Teachers should know that people have individual differences even identical twins behaves differently. This also affects their approach to learning situations. The third is physical factors. The physical factors is linked to the school physical plant such as the classroom space, furniture, ventilation, textbooks, lighting, stationary. The state of these school facilities influences the learner either positively or negatively. The fourth is social factors. Social factors involves student-teacher relationship which includes teacher's personal attributes, competency on the teaching subject, teaching skills, class management, student-student relationship and teacher-pupil interaction.

Similarly, many studies have been conducted on the reasons behind students' underachievement in education [7]. The results revealed that such factors include teachers' methods of teaching and the students' inability to

comprehend the subject matter. It is important for teachers to take note of these factors and plan ahead to avert success or failure of their students. To do this effectively and efficiently, the school personnel (both teaching and non-teaching) should be adequately qualified [8]. The trio posited that in addition to competency, the school buildings and environment should be alluring with school plants put in place and more importantly good interpersonal relationship must exist in the school milieu. This helps the teacher to properly manage students' failure for academic excellence.

On another development, Inko-Taria and Mba [9] identified the factors that inhibit learning as understated: (1) Development, this is evident when there are incidences of lack of sensor stimulation, lack of movement, lack of touch, lack of interactive creative plan and communication; (2) Electrical, this deals with insufficient water consumption, insufficient air (oxygen), extreme exposure to exterior Electromagnetic fields (EMF's) such as satellite discs, mobile phones, fluorescent lights, computer and other such devices; (3) Nutrition, insufficient amount of protein, chronic middle ear infections, absence of amino acids and fatty acids, high carbohydrate and sugar diets; (4) Medical, low birth weight babies, allergies, yeast over-growth, insufficient sleep or inappropriate diet, substance abuse, child abuse and poor vision or hearing; (5) Television, computer and video games, this has affected negatively students imaginative development and inter-relationships; (6) Inappropriate curriculum, when the curriculum in use does not bear relevance to societal needs and/or not impactful to students, they seem to lose interest thereby exhibiting signs of failures among others.

Still on the same development, Nwankwo [10] espoused that there are exterior incidents that interrupt the learner when learner comes in contact with them in any learning situation. Academic failure is the resultant effect of two factors either that it emanates from the learner or from the environment where the learner is linked to. These two factors could be influenced and/or restricted to yield befitting result which is success only if the instructor guides the learner aright and on time. Obviously, the teachers' duty is not just to teach but also to motivate, guide and encourage the students for better outcomes. This the teacher does through effective management of students'

academic failure for excellent academic performance.

Management is the ability to plan, organize, direct, coordinate activities through synchronizing both human and material resources in an organization towards goal attainment. The class teacher and/or subject teacher has institutional governance in the classroom. The teacher manages the students using their textbooks, tests, class-work, desk arrangement, democratic approach, personal attributes, teaching skills etc. in the school environment to direct students' interests and aspirations towards achieving educational goals thus excellent performance. In order to effectively and efficiently manage students' failure in schools, it is pertinent that the teacher seeks to identify the causes of students' failure so as to ascertain how to resolve it for meaningful teaching and learning. To this end, Ekechukwu [11] who described failure as a crippling/stimulus experience that either erodes the victim's self-confidence or gingers the victim to self-determination until success is achieved was optimistic that the causes of failure are as follows: (1) low intelligent quotient; (2) insufficient planning and procrastination; (3) underestimation of the work from where the examination was set; (4) poor teaching methods; (5) teachers inability to stimulate the learner; (6) poor attitudes to classwork and assignments; (7) lack of supervision to ensure quality assurance; (8) introverted behaviour or an act of solitude; (9) poor reading, study and time management habit; (10) poor parental support.

In her own submission, Asodike and Ikpitibo (2013) posited that an effective teacher is one who plans his lesson in consideration to the following factors: (1) identify and motivate the learner's potential; (2) recognize individuals specific needs; (3) acknowledge learner's with special talents and interests; (4) continually search and explore new information, knowledge, skills etc; (5) vary strategies and skills according to individual's differences in learning ability and interest; (6) encourage and stimulate students; (7) show and entice students with creativity and sense of initiative; (8) ensure alluring and good classroom management. the author also outlined the factors supportive of effective teaching aside acquisition of knowledge of students mentioned above as follows: (1) well knowledgeable in his area of discipline, (2) heterogeneous in the use of teaching skills as the occasion demands,

(3) teacher's relationship with the colleagues and students through democratic dispensation in the classroom, (4) firm and healthy personal traits, (5) have passion for the profession.

Following the same trend, Agabi, Onyeike, and Wali [12] reaffirmed that the teacher as a model must possess the following attributes; motivator, facilitator, develops and sustains desire to learn, fairness and equity in all class evaluation, establish emotional link with the learner, knowledge provider and in-locoparentis. This is to ensure that the learner is better positioned for excellent academic performance.

Management practices in students' academic failure include mind resetting/re-structuring which is a psychological treatment referred to as cognitive therapy [13]. This is a situation where a student has claimed to be a failure or never-dowell. The teacher could through emotional link approach the student and convince the student that he could do better if he accepts that concept and vigorously pursues that course. Real life examples could be used to restore the student to normalcy and better academic excellence. Another management style is coaching or extra-lesson. In the course of the teacher's diagnosis test in the classroom, it could be discovered that a student lacked the basis for the class in which he finds himself or it could be that the subject teacher had little or nothing to offer.

The teacher could assist through engaging the poor performers with extra lesson aside from the normal class. Through this means the learner is brushed up and begins to do well. The teacher should also make the lesson interesting and enticing [12], to enable the students concentrate and be attentive in class. When the lesson is boring and uninteresting, some of the students may fall asleep or resort to noise making. Some could take permission to loiter about in the school premises. The teacher should not exceed the time allotted for the lesson period as that could be over-stretching the students' capacities thus lead to failure.

Another failure management technique is the reduction in the use of punishment. Most students lose concentration and attentiveness at the sight of cane thus confused throughout the lesson period. The implication is that nothing is learnt at the end of the lesson period. Sequel to this, teachers should not brandish cane during teaching/learning experiences to call for attention and focus for better inculcation of knowledge.

In their own part, Inko-Tariah and Mba [9] acknowledged the following as the key elements in helping students with learning difficulties to avert impending failures as follows. Firstly, observe the signs; teachers should diagnose their students both academically and otherwise to ascertain challenging areas that are affecting their academic backwardness and assist them as such. Secondly, Scrutinize particular difficulties; any identified sign of academic failure should be explored specifically to its logical conclusion. Psychological tests could be administered to determine the level of such identified problem, pros and cons dissected to facilitate the help for the student. Thirdly, seek expertise assistance; In the event of the problem needing external person, the teacher should feel free to involve the person so as to make use of every possible means in helping the students. The professionals could be guidance counsellors, psychologists, therapist, parents etc. Fourthly, develop programmes; students should be given opportunity to acquire, develop and utilize skills learnt from their various subjects. These skills include cognitive reasoning, decision-making skills, communication skills and spirit of team work as a skill.

Management of academic failure is very crucial in schools because most students fail not because they are dullards, but because they are not being guided properly while in school. It could also be that the areas of their interests and talents are not being exposed to them, they therefore fumble in academic work other than that which they desire and long for. It is for this reason that school managers should include clubs and society in schools to elicit students' areas of interest. These include dance group, choir group, athletics, young farmers, art group and many more. This is because a student may not be good in one area could turn out to be the best in another area.

Agabi et al. [12] gave credence to the above declaration when the trio asserted that good classroom organization and proper usage of instructional aids makes for effective teaching and learning. This according to their perceptions helps visual impaired students placed in front, maintain class discipline that could foster concentration, instil gender tolerance which could be cause of distractions and ensure sitting arrangement conforms with the physical height of the students to avert blocking their views and checking of deviant move. The instructional

materials or teaching aids should be used to concretise abstract terms for easy understanding by the learners. An organized classroom reduces truancy, loitering, noise making, and reading novels when lesson is on-going, chewing gum, distracting others, name calling, eating in the class during lesson, quarrelling and even fighting in the midst of active lesson. This in turn makes for excellent academic performances thus exterminate failure in Nigerian secondary schools.

Apparently some academic failures could be traced to the home/family, peer influence, environment where the child is raised/lives. The family socio-economic status could cause failure among learners due to non-acquisition of necessary study materials, non-payment of school fees/other user fees, arbitrary feeding habits etc. Literate level of the family determines the amount of support the learner receives from the family. Literate parents are very supportive unlike the non-literate ones. The dynamic nature of the family is another cause, be it healthy or unhealthy family have positive or negative impact on the learners' behaviours [14].

Peer influence also plays significant role in the academic behaviour of the peers. The saying "tell me whom you go and I will tell you whom are" applies to this peer influence. Intelligent peers promote each other's academic performance. Reverse is the case when the peers are chunk of undesirable elements. The environmental factor has a role to play in the academic and moral behaviour of the learner which could be positive or negative. Environment filled with people of questionable character is bound to produce academic failures unlike environment filled with responsible and civilized people that gives rise to intellectual giants. However, research has shown that some successful students have been discovered among criminally minded environment [15] but on rare occasions.

It is the desire of every parent or guardian that investing in their children through education should be reaped graciously afterwards. This is the spirit most parents and guardians sponsor education of their children even at their own expense. The researcher is bothered by the rate of students' massive failure in secondary schools which has birthed examination misconduct and other anti-social vices that have even permeated into the tertiary level of education thus crumbling every effort to meet up with the world best

practices in this transcended technological transformation in terms of human capital production. What are the hopes of these children and their parents if these academic failures remained unchecked? What of the nation's economy that would be unfavourably affected? These are what prompted the researcher to investigate the perception of teachers and students on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State. This is with the intention to excavate the major cause of this educational quagmire that is fast crippling the aim and objectives of education so as to proffer lasting solution that begets high productivity for a viable human capital production.

### **Purpose of the study**

This study was aimed at managing students' academic failure among secondary school students for high productivity in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State. Specifically, the study is set out to determine: (1) The teachers' and students' perceptions on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State, (2) The teachers' management antics employed to tackle academic failures among students in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State.

### **Research questions**

Following the purpose of the study, this study seeks to find answers to the following research questions: (1) What are the teachers' and students' perceptions on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State?; (2) What are the teachers management antics to tackle academic failures among students in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State?

### **Hypotheses**

In line with the above research questions, the understated null hypotheses were streamlined: (1) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers and students on their perceptions on the causes of students' academic failure in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State, (2) There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the teachers and students on the teachers management antics to tackle academic failures among students in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

Descriptive research design was used. The population of the study comprised thirty public secondary schools. Simple random sampling technique was used to select sample size of 10 secondary schools.

### **Participants**

Again from the selected 10 secondary schools, 100 students (30% of both male and female) and 50 teachers (1:4 for male and female) were selected using stratified random sampling technique from 5 mixed schools and 5 singleton schools, and a total of 1500 people. The secondary school students used are the Senior Secondary School (SSS) 1-3 ages between 15-18 years.

### **Research instruments**

The instrument entitled "Management of Students' Academic Failure Questionnaire" (MSAFQ) which was self-designed was employed. This has two parts A and B. Part A is for demographic data while part B is for the elements of the research problems.

The validity of the instrument was ensured. Test retest method was used to ascertain the consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of 0.80 and 0.83 was obtained through Cronbach Alpha Statistics. These reliability coefficients were considered sufficient since they fall within high indices described by Creswell [16].

### **Data analysis tools**

The instrument was a modified Likert type scale of SA--A--DA--SDA. SDA=Strongly disagree, DA=Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly agree. The criterion mean is 2.5 derived from codes and numerical values of SA=4, A=3, DA=2, SDA=1 therefore,  $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$ . Mean was used to answer the research questions while Z-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant with the z-critical of 1.96. The yardstick for retaining the null hypothesis is when the z-calculated is less than the z-critical otherwise the null hypothesis testing is rejected. Administration of the instrument was carried out by the researcher as well as three trained research assistants. Out of 1500 copies of questionnaire distributed, a total of 1386 were retrieved and used for data analysis.

## RESEARCH RESULT

Following the data collected from the participants, the data were coded and weighted for result analysis as understated.

### The teachers' and students' perceptions on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools

The mean scores of the respondents (N=1386) on the teachers' and students' perceptions on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of data on the teachers' and students' perceptions on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools

Item statement	Teachers' Mean	Decision	Students' Mean	Decision
1. Classroom mismanagement	2.0	Disagreed	3.0	Agreed
2. Lack of instructional materials	3.0	Agreed	2.8	Agreed
3. Family background	3.3	Agreed	2.2	Disagreed
4. Poor teaching methods	2.0	Disagreed	2.5	Agreed
5. Teachers inability to stimulate learners	2.4	Disagreed	3.0	Agreed
6. Students leave the class frequently without permission	2.6	Agreed	2.8	Agreed
7. Students sit and back the class	2.8	Agreed	2.3	Disagreed
8. Reading other materials when lesson is on-going.	2.5	Agreed	2.4	Disagreed
9. Students sleep in the class during lesson	2.8	Agreed	2.5	Agreed
10. Students do not have good interpersonal relationship with the teacher	2.6	Agreed	2.0	Disagreed
Cumulative mean	2.60		2.54	

The first finding of this study is that both respondents in their perception agreed that on the teachers and students' perceptions on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State. Both teachers and students agreed that items with serial numbers 2, 6 and 9 are causes of academic failure with the grand mean scores of teachers (2.60) and students (2.54). The teachers agreed that items 3 (mean=3.3), 7 (mean=2.8), 8 (mean=2.5) and 10 (mean=2.6) are also causes of academic failures to the disagreement of the students looking at items 3 (mean=2.2), 7 (mean=2.3), 8 (mean=2.4)

and 10 (mean=2.0). The teacher disagreed that items 1 (mean=2.0), 4 (mean=2.0) and 5 (2.4) are causes of academic failures. On the other hand, the students agreed on their own that items 1 (mean=3.0), 4 (mean=2.5) and 5 (mean=3.0). Students also disagreed that items 3 (mean=2.2), 7 (mean=2.3), 8 (mean=2.4) and 10 (mean=2.0) are causes of academic failures among secondary school students. Cumulative mean yielded 2.6 for the teachers and 2.54 for the students.

In line with the research questions, hypotheses (1) were tested using *z*-test statistics, the results of the analysis are in Table 2.

Table 2. Z-test of difference between the mean scores of teachers' and students on their perceptions on the causes of students' academic failures in secondary schools

Variables	Mean	SD	D/F	Z-Cal.	Z-Crit.	Sig. level	Decision
Teachers	2.60	0.68	1,385	0.98	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.
Students	2.54	0.66					

Note: *SD*=Standard deviation, *D/F*=Degree of freedom, *Z-Cal.*=*Z*-calculated, *Z-crit.*=*Z*-critical, Sig. Level=Significant level.

Table 3 shows *z*-test of no difference between the mean scores of teachers and students as 2.6 and 2.54 with *SD* of 0.68 and 0.66 which depicts homogeneity in their scores respectively. Degree of freedom is 1,385, *z*-calculated is 0.98 with the

*z*-critical of 1.96 with 0.05 level of significance upon which the hypothesis was tested. Since *z*-cal is less than *z*-crit, the hypothesis testing is not rejected. Thus there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents on

their perception of the causes of students' academic failure in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State.

### The teachers' management antics employed to tackle academic failures among students in secondary schools

The mean scores of the respondents (N=1386) on the teachers' and students' perceptions on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Description of data on the Participants on the teachers' management antics to tackle academic failures among secondary school students

Item statement	Teachers Mean	Decision	Students Mean	Decision
1. Students that failed to answer questions correctly are encouraged and stimulated.	2.6	Agreed	2.3	Disagreed
2. Good arrangement of seats and chairs in the class.	2.4	Disagreed	2.2	Disagreed
3. The teacher makes use of different teaching methods.	3.0	Agreed	2.5	Agreed
4. The teacher calls students by names when asking questions in the class.	3.0	Agreed	3.0	Agreed
5. Assignments are given, marked and reviewed regularly.	2.3	Disagreed	2.0	Disagreed
6. Teacher encourages class participation.	2.8	Agreed	2.5	Agreed
7. The teacher attends to students according to their individual differences	2.5	Agreed	2.5	Agreed
8. The teacher uses extra lesson for slow learners	2.0	Disagreed	2.2	Disagreed
9. Good classroom interpersonal relationships	2.5	Agreed	2.4	Disagreed
10. Good use of available of instructional materials	2.6	Agreed	2.5	Agreed
Cumulative mean	2.57		2.41	

Table 3 shows the teachers and students responses on the teachers' management antics to tackle academic failures among secondary school students in Obingwa LGA of Abia State. Both teachers and students agreed that items 3, 4, 6, 7, and 10 with mean scores of 3.0, 3.0, 2.8, 2.5, and 2.6 and 2.5, 3.0, 2.5, 2.5, and 2.5 respectively are management antics applied by teachers in curbing academic failures among secondary school students. Both disagreed that items 2, 5 and 8 with means scores of 2.4, 2.3 and 2.2 for

teachers and 2.2, 2.0 and 2.2 for students are management antics applied by teachers. While the teachers agreed that item 9 is management antics, the students disagreed that it is not with the mean scores of 2.5 and 2.4 respectively. The cumulative mean remains 2.57 and 2.41 for the teachers and students accordingly.

In line with the research questions, hypotheses (2) were tested using z-test statistics, the results of the analysis are in Table 4.

Table 4. Z-test of difference between the mean scores of the participants on the teachers' management antics to tackle academic failures among secondary school students

Variables	Mean	SD	D/F	Z-Cal.	Z-Crit.	Sig. level	Decision
Teachers	2.57	0.56	1,385	1.98	1.96	0.05	Sig.
Students	2.41	0.9					

Note: SD=Standard deviation, D/F=Degree of freedom, Z-Cal=Z-calculated, Z-crit.=Z-critical, Sig. Level=Significant level.

Table 4 above presents the z-test statistics between the mean scores of the participants on the teachers' management antics to tackle academic failures among secondary school

students in Obingwa LGA of Abia State. Mean scores of 2.57 with SD of 0.56 and 2.41 with SD of 0.9 for both teachers and students, the d/f yielded 1,385, z-cal. of 1.98 against z-crit. of 1.96



at 0.05 level of significant. Since the  $z$ -cal. is greater than the  $z$ -crit., the hypothesis testing is thus rejected and declared that there is significance difference between mean scores of the participants on the teachers' management antics of students' academic failure in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State.

## DISCUSSION

The first finding of this study revealed that the respondents agreed that items with serial numbers 2, 6 and 9 which stipulated lack of instructional materials, students leave the class without permission and students sleep in class during lessons are causes of academic failure with the cumulative mean scores of teachers (2.60) and students (2.54). The participants differed on seven items: while teachers disagreed that class management, family background, poor teaching method, and teachers' inability to stimulate the students among others are the perceived causes of academic failure among students in Obingwa LGA of Abia State, Nigeria, the students disagreed. The disparity here could be that teachers may not be meeting the students' needs while feeling they are effectively managing the class while the students due to lack of organization during teaching/learning encounter emanating from unmet needs failed to measure up. This could be the reason why Inko-Tariah and Mba [9] advised that teachers should diagnose their students both academically and psychologically to ascertain challenging areas that are affecting their academic backwardness and assist them as such. The corresponding hypothesis which is the second finding shows that there is no significant difference between teachers and students mean scores on their perception on the causes of academic failures in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State with  $z$ -cal. of 0.98 which is less than  $z$ -crit. of 1.96. Close monitoring of students is a good avenue to mitigate students psychological, social, economic and family problems which have been hitherto hampering their academic performance so as to get them ready for studies just like Ndata [14] rightly put that family be it healthy and unhealthy one has impact on the students' academic performance which could be positive or negative. There is no doubt that school facilities provision sufficiency both in quality and quantity and effective management of students' behaviour could breed enhanced academic performance.

This is similar to what Agabi et al. [12], Ndata [14], Nwankwo [13], and Pentang [17] advocated that adequate supply and usage of instructional facilities, good classroom management and stimulation of learners have positive and obvious implications for the overall academic performances by reducing incidences of truancy, noise making, irregular class attendance and underachievement among students. The corresponding hypothesis testing on table 3 which is hypothesis 1 indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the of the respondents on their perception of the causes of students' academic failure in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State.

The second finding from the result of analysis revealed that while teachers agreed with the cumulative mean of 2.52, the students disagreed with 2.41 that developing emotional link with the students through encouraging the poor academic ones, close interpersonal relationships, use of good and eclectic teaching methods and good use of instructional materials among others are causes of academic failure among students. The corresponding fourth finding indicates that there is significant difference between the teachers and students mean scores on their perceptions on the teachers' management antics in tackling academic failures among students with the  $z$ -calculate of 1.98 which is greater than  $z$ -critical of 1.96. In essence, these findings are in concord with what the likes of Asodike [5], Ekechukwu [11] and Nwankwo [13] discovered in the past that cognitive restructuring and good class organization spurs academic excellence among students thus minimizes drastically deviant behaviours, lack of interest, passiveness in class, poor school attendance, low grades, failures, dropout and general poor school enrolment. Creation of emotional link is only achievable when there amiable interpersonal relationship with the teacher this is why Lawal, Oduwaiye, and Murtala [8] laid weight on the above elucidation thus contended that interpersonal relationship in school is of essence when it comes to students' high academic performance. The trio maintained that deficient school/classroom climate could negatively affect the students' learning.

On the contrary, Onyekuru and Thompson [15] argued that some criminal elements in school achieve academic excellence in school but on rare occasions. This however does not rule out the fact that academic underachievers mainly embrace

crime and its related behaviours. By this injunction, every student should be encouraged, motivated and cajoled to study hard for improved academic achievement. The matching hypothesis on table 4 which is hypothesis 2 declared that there is significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents on the teachers' management antics of students' academic failure in secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the causes of academic failures include inadequate instructional materials, teachers' inability to stimulate students and students deviant behaviours among others while teachers management tactics in tackling academic failures is poor as class works and assignments are not regularly marked and reviewed, no extra lesson for the weak students and absolute lack of emotional link. This has resulted to frustrations,

failures and dropout which could lead to missing school and poor enrolment rate. The study is limited to the teachers and students perceptions of the causes of students' poor academic performance in Obingwa Local Government of Abia State, Nigeria while language assessment and policy among others were not captured.

In view of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made. Firstly, the concerned authorities should make concerted efforts to supply needed educational resources to schools while the teachers should ensure they improvise instructional materials where possible. This is to ensure that students comprehend with ease the subject matter for academic excellence. Secondly, teachers' management tactics/skills in tackling academic failures among students should include engaging the weak students in extra lesson, marking and reviewing assignments and class works regularly and above all generating emotional link that creates an avenue for mental restructuring and mind resetting for a better academic performance.

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