

## Management of Students' Diversity for Academic Competitiveness in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

**Torukwein M. DAVID-WEST**  
Department of educational management  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,  
[torukweindavidwest@yahoo.com](mailto:torukweindavidwest@yahoo.com)

---

### Abstract

This study assessed the management of students' diversity for academic competitiveness in secondary schools in Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. This study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 15,601 teachers and principals in 247 secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample size of seven hundred and fifty-four (754) respondents was drawn randomly from 74 secondary schools (that is, seventy-four (74) principals and six hundred and eighty (680) teachers) using stratified random sampling technique. This sample size represented 13.5% of the population. The instrument used in this study was the questionnaire tagged "Management of Students' Diversity Questionnaire (MSDQ)" developed by the researcher. The instrument was validated by experts in educational management and the reliability yielded an index of 0.83. Mean was used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that the strategic approaches of managing students' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State include: ensuring that the school curriculum, leadership/management practices promote and affirm the principles of diversity, monitoring the school environment to control the attitudes and behavior of students, promoting and affirming diversity in all aspects of work practices and interactions with students, parents and staff, using the curriculum materials and other resources available to support the multicultural policy; modeling appropriate behavior and promoting a climate of mutual respect among students' and participating in cultural awareness, anti-bullying and other curriculum-linked strategies aimed at increasing respect for diversity. It was concluded that the dimensions of students' diversity and management in secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State include commitment to understanding and responding to students' diversity; development of appropriate cognitive and academic goals for students with different abilities; recognizing the influence of subtle racial, class, gender and cultural biases on the student outcomes by the staff, formalized multicultural/multiethnic curriculum course of study; and the use of variety of assessment procedures that reflect the students' diversity by the teachers. It was recommended among others that secondary education institutions should create curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to experience genuine racial, ethnic, cultural and religious integration to interact in meaningful ways and learn from each other if diversity is to have a positive educational impact.

**Keywords:** Strategic Management, Students' diversity management, academic competitiveness, students' diversity policy.

---

### INTRODUCTION

Diversity is used to describe political entities (neighborhoods, student bodies, etc.) with members who have identifiable differences in their backgrounds or lifestyles. Diversity is a commitment to

recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristics that make individuals unique in an atmosphere that promotes and celebrates individual and collective achievement (Henze, 2002).

The enormous demographic changes in Nigeria make it imperative for each classroom teacher and school administrator to have a sophisticated understanding of the increasing racial, ethnic cultural and social-class diversity in the schools. The school organization that is becoming very diverse in terms of people and their qualities suggests for administrative style that will harness the contributions of academic staff and students. Schools today are increasingly diverse in nature and at the same time, teachers are being held to higher levels of accountability for students' performance (Stephen & Bayer, 2004). Due to the diverse nature of school system, teachers and administrators for schools of today and tomorrow should acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to work with students from diverse cultural groups and help them develop more positive attitudes.

The Nigerian society has always been ethnically and culturally diverse, and at no point in our history was there an assimilation in which the various groups relinquished their identity. Students' diversity may include not only students of differing races, ethnic origin, gender and age, but also those of differing physical and learning ability, sexual identity, lifestyle, religion and others. Recognition of diversity in the society and in academics has already resulted in significant and much needed curricular changes (Nwachukwu, 2002). Students who attend schools with a diverse population can develop an understanding from different backgrounds and learn to function in a multicultural and multiethnic environment.

Hence, Diversity brings significant educational benefits to students, teachers and administrators as well as the wider community. It enables the creation of learning environments enriched by different life experiences, varied perspectives, dynamic interchange, flexibility and creativity. The skills and attitudes acquired by students in this environment are the same as those needed for the new worlds of work and community life-building (Nwachukwu, 1998). School generally is a system that model students' behavior to accommodate mutual respect, harmony and tolerance among them. However, it is unlawful for schools to discriminate against a person on the ground of race or ethnicity.

The essence of managing students' diversity is to create a system that will work for all. It is an aspect of change management where administrators and teachers are involved as change agents. They learn to manage prejudice culture, socioeconomic status and religions. Teachers and administrators also need to restructure schools to be able to deal effectively with the nation's growing diversity and to prepare future citizens who will compete in a global world economy that will be knowledge and service oriented (Banks, 1994).

Strategies for managing students' diversity give effect to the principle of "equal employment opportunity" and to achieve a workforce that reflects the diversity of the broader community. Diversity strategies within the school include actions that enable target groups who experience disadvantage in having access to opportunities in educational training and employment.

### **Policy on Students' Diversity**

The Department of Education, Employment and Training in (2001) points out within each school community, the commitments of members in managing cultural and linguistic diversity as follows:

**School Councils:** School councils are committed to:

- Ensuring that the contents of the school's charter, particularly the school profile, codes of practice and the student code of conduct reflect the Department's managing diversity and multicultural education policies.
- Promoting and affirming the values of diversity among members of the school community.
- Contributing to school strategies to prevent racism and value cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Encouraging and facilitating the participation by parents in school community activities and decision making, taking into account the special needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Ensuring that the educational policies of the school promote and nurture self-esteem and acknowledge and build on the life experiences of all students.
- Ensuring that all of the school's current and future policies are consistent with these guidelines.

**Principals:** Principals are committed to:

- Ensuring that the school curriculum, leadership and management practices promote and affirm principles of diversity.
- Making available to staff, students and members of the school council copies of these guidelines so that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- Participating in Department training on diversity management and discrimination and facilitating professional development and training opportunities for staff.
- Making available to staff the curriculum materials and professional development opportunities associated with the Multicultural Policy.
- Monitoring the school environment in terms of racist attitudes and behaviours and overseeing the school's efforts to eliminate racism, ethnicity and discrimination.
- Ensuring that there are appropriate procedures in place for dealing with complaints and implementing the Department's local complaints resolution procedures when appropriate.
- Modeling appropriate behavior and promoting a climate of mutual respect.
- Making available translations of the schools diversity and equal policies including complaints processes to ensure they are accessible to staff, students and parents from language backgrounds other than English, as appropriate.

**School staff:** School staff are committed to:

- Promoting and affirming diversity in all aspects of their work practices and interactions with students, parents and staff.
- Using the curriculum materials and other resources available to support the Multicultural Policy where appropriate.
- Making use of available professional development opportunities where appropriate.
- Modeling appropriate behavior and promoting a climate of mutual respect.

**Students:** Students are expected to:

- Abide by the Student Code of Conduct, in particular the principles with the elimination of discrimination based on difference of culture, race and gender.
- Participate in cultural awareness, anti-bullying and other curriculum-linked strategies aimed at increasing respect for diversity.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is dependent on the system's theory propounded by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1950), who founded the system's theory and continued to write about systems until his death in 1972 contended that it is an inter-related, interdependent and inter-connected part of an whole, such that the interaction of any part (subsystem) affects the whole system. The principal cannot function alone in the school system, and therefore needs other stake holders like the teachers, non-teaching staff, students, the host community, Schools Board/Ministry of Education as well as parents in the effective administration of the school. Ignoring one part of the system leads to eminent collapse of the system. Therefore, the school system is viewed as a whole and not in parts for the attainment of coveted educational goals. It is expected that the school managers and teachers develop and implement strategic approaches to employ in managing these students.

Since the goal of every school is to transform students to become better citizens in the society, therefore their differences must not deny them the opportunity of being transformed. Multicultural education can only thrive if quality teachers and administrators who are trained in the issue of diversity are employed in service to produce quality output that will function effectively and efficiently in the society.

### **Strategies for Managing Students' Diversity**

Rosado (2007) stresses that diversity management is not a new issue in educational management. He says that historic colonizing empires like Spain, Portugal, England, and United States of America. Germany, Japan etc. have managed diversity most effectively and efficiently He further asserts that managing diversity is an ongoing process, which a diverse population brings to an organization, community or society, to create a wholesome and inclusive environment that is safe for differences celebrates diversity and maximize the full potential of all in a cultural context where everyone benefits.

Diversity management is a tool for capturing the diversity dividend. Diversity management focuses on managing the difference within a school workforce, capitalizing on the benefits of diversity and minimizing workplace challenges. Diversity management contributes significantly to the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Henze (2002) points out the ways diversity management can produce diversity dividend, which include:

- Improving the efficiency of human resource management functions;
- Fostering superior decision-making, problem-solving, creativity, and innovation key factors in the creation of knowledge companies;
- Developing cross-cultural capabilities that facilitate operations in culturally complex environments at home and abroad; and

- Implementing new product/service developments and new sales/marketing strategies for diverse customer bases.

Williams (2003) advises school leaders to implement a broad range of strategies for managing Students' diversity to improve teaching and learning. Effective diversity management leads to improved individual and organizational performance. This is due to the powerful influence of diversity on problem solving, decision—making, innovation and creativity.

Multiculturalism as all act of managing diversity is an inclusive process where no one is left out. The presence of multiculturalism is nothing more than the act of managing diversity in a total quality manner. It is the only option open to educators in an ever increasing culturally and pluralistic environment. There are different approaches to managing students' diversity. However, Banks, (1993) identified three major approaches curriculum reform, achievement, and inter—group education approach:

- Curriculum Reform Approach: is a process that involves additions to or changes in the content of the school curriculum. The primary goal of this approach is to incorporate the voices, experiences and struggles of ethnic, cultural and gender groups into the curriculum. Examples of practices that can be included in the curriculum are celebration of cultural heroes and holidays, diverse culture content workshops for teachers and administrators.
- Achievement Approach: is an approach of managing students' diversity whereby a set of goals, theories, and strategies are designed to increase the academic achievement of low-income students, students of colour, women, and students with disabilities. The major goal of this approach is to increase the academic achievement of students from different ethnic, cultural and gender groups. Examples of practices to be included in this approach are programs that match teaching styles with the learning styles of students, language programs that incorporate the language and culture of Nigerian students, etc.
- The Inter-Group Education Approach: is the inculcation of knowledge, idea designed to help students develop democratic inter-group attitudes and values. The primary goal is to help students develop more positive attitudes towards people from different racial, cultural and gender group. Another goal is to help members of marginalized groups to develop more positive feelings toward their own groups. Examples, cooperative learning strategies and techniques, etc.

Managing and valuing diversity is a key component of effective school management. State of Victoria Department of Education and Training (2002) focused on improving the performance of organizations through recognition of diversity and promotes practices that enhance the performance of all students. The significant demographic changes require that school administrators review their management approaches to ensure high levels of performance among students. Effective management of students' diversity in secondary school system requires school administrators to re-evaluate their approaches in handling the identified dimensions of student's diversity.

Planning, leadership style and motivation have also been identified by some authors as strategies for managing students' diversity in schools:

**Planning strategy:** Thomas (1996) developed a comprehensive 4-step management process which could be adapted to suit planning as a strategy. Namely:

- Find out the exact problems by identifying differences that would affect system.
- Analyze the diversity mixture by identifying the elements of the mixture.
- Check for diversity tension.
- Review action options — a review of what is being done to address the problems and how well the chosen approach is working.

Table 1: Diversity paradigm’s action options

Option	Action
Tolerance	Address diversity by fostering a room-for-all attitude.
Building relationship	Fostering quality relationship characterized by acceptance and understanding among components.
Mutual adaptation	Address diversity by fostering mutual adaptation in which all components change somewhat for the sake of achieving common objectives.

Source: Roosevelt Thomas Jr. (1996), *Managing and Redefining Diversity*, Georgia: JAIMAC Newsletter.

### Leadership as a Strategy

Leadership style in a multicultural school should be such that can effectively deal with diversity. Gardenswartz and Rowe (1995, p. 1) describes the leadership style as catalytic, these authors went ahead to identify some qualities of a catalytic leader which include:

- **Tolerance for ambiguity:** Leaders should have an inner strength to tolerate confusion and anxiety that arises from not having an immediate answer being able to tolerate the excesses of the student falls here.
- **Valuing difference:** a catalytic leader sees difference as an asset and builds on them.
- **Capitalizing on change:** The leader is proactive anticipating situations and events and getting ready for the consequences.
- **Belief in the ability and wisdom of all:** The leader solely relies on the Pygmalion Effect, that what one believes about others capabilities has a great effect on the actual behavior or performance of those others. To manage diversity effectively, the school teachers who are the catalytic leaders here must have positive believe in the capabilities of their students.
- **Initiating, using and giving feedback effectively:** The leaders build a strong foundation of trust and openness between the students and them.

### Motivation as a Strategy

David-West and Karegon (2017, p. 344), it is inner state that energizes activates a person and direct behaviour towards achieving a goal. It is obvious that motivation is a sort of internal force within an individual, which should be sustained and directed toward the achievement of set objectives. Understanding the issues of students’ diversity and knowing how to motivate each

student can be a key to success in today's schools. Flynn (2001) enumerated five steps that can help school administrators in motivating diverse students:

- Examine what each student needs;
- Examine the perception of all students;
- Examine expectations of students;
- Examine students' role; and
- Examine the student relationship with staff

Analyzing the situation of each student helps school administrators to understand how best to motivate and manage diversity towards the achievement of goals.

### **Dimensions of Students' Diversity in Schools**

Managing diversity should be a comprehensive and holistic process aimed at the productive wellbeing of all. A holistic model of managing diversity recognizes its two dimensions Primary or Horizontal (mainly biological, usually visible age, gender, race, ethnically, sexual orientation, disabilities) and secondary or vertical (psycho-socio-spiritual invisible value system, mindsets, ethics, paradigms, core intelligence). David-West (2016) opined that these differences have the potential of giving rise to conflicts but if managed well can result in a synergetic unity; in order words, it makes for effective students, diversity management devoid of conflicts but capable of building together the school system for the attainment of desired educational goals.

The first dimension is concerned with embracing and valuing differences focused on the individual. This dimension is of great relevance because it maintains that students from diverse backgrounds must have differences to be managed. Seminars on prejudice, cultural awareness, cross-cultural communication and conflict resolution are helpful in managing diversity for both teachers and students.

The second dimension (vertical dimension) is concerned with harnessing and empowering diversity. This dimension holds the key of influencing the greatest change in organizations. Change at both of these dimensions horizontal and vertical", results in cultural inclusion at the center, where living diversity takes place. The holistic model of managing diversity is called "Total Quality Diversity". Total quality diversity shows how the model has helped schools deliver effective workforce.

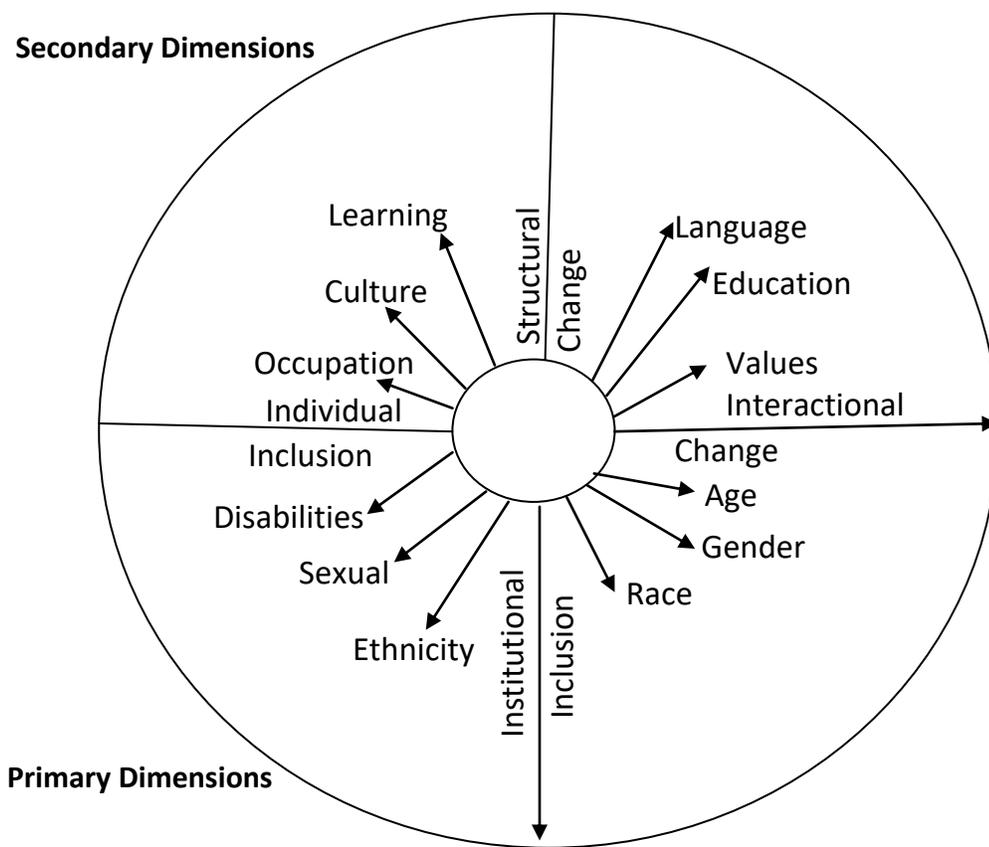


Figure 1: Dimension of diversity: Adapted from Rosado (2007)

Educational institutions must develop and maintain environment that is hospitable for diversity management. The administrative team has the responsibility to set policies that demonstrate school values and diversity that will harness the contributions of academic staff and students. Administrators have to provide real leadership on issues of diversity for effective human resource management.

### Statement of the Problem

The issue of managing students' diversity is not only a Nigerian school organizational phenomenon, but a global issue. There is a wide diversity of cultural backgrounds in today's classroom and in every indication this diversity seems to increase and create more problems for the school systems. Teaching in a multicultural classroom appears challenging having students with diverse nature; gender, age, intelligence Quotient (IQ), culture and different languages from different ethnic groups. These students respond to teaching differently. Their responses definitely are caused by some diverse features among them. Culture for example influences both behaviour and psychological processes of individuals. It affects the way individuals perceive the world and communicate with each other. The cultural differences among students may result in differences in learning style; there seem to be students with special needs, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities. Teaching is not simple talking, just as leaning is not simply listening. Teaching and learning involve a communication relationship between the teacher and the

students. This shows that teachers need to identify how to carry all students along while teaching. It is against this backdrop that the researcher investigates management of students' diversity for academic competitiveness in secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is to investigate the management of students' diversity in the secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- Ascertain the needed students' diversity policy in the secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Identify various strategic approaches in the management of students' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Determine the dimensions of students' diversity management in secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

- What is the needed policy on students' diversity in secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What are the strategic approaches in the management of students' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What are the dimensions of students' diversity management in secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural areas on the needed policy on students' diversity in Secondary Schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the strategic approaches in the management of students' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural areas on the dimensions of students' diversity management in secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 15,601 teachers and 247 principals in 247 secondary schools in Rivers State. The scope of the study will not go beyond public secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample size of seven hundred and fifty four (754) respondents was drawn randomly from 74 secondary schools (that is, seventy four (74) principals and six hundred and eighty (680) teachers) using stratified random sampling technique. This sample size represents 13.5% of the population, which included 450 teachers from rural areas and 304 teachers from urban areas 400 male teachers and 354 female teachers. The instrument used in this study was the questionnaire tagged "Management of Students' Diversity Questionnaire (MSDQ)" developed by the researcher. The instrument was validated by experts in educational management and the reliability yielded an index of 0.83. In scoring the MSDQ,

the responses were weighted strongly Agree (SA) — 4 points. Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. Based on this, a criterion mean of 2.50 ( $(4+3+2+1=10 \div 4)$ ) was calculated to judge the mean responses from the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULT

**Research Question 1:** What is the needed policy on students’ diversity in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean Scores of teachers in rural and urban schools on the needed policy on students’ diversity in secondary schools in Rivers State

	Needed Policy on Students Diversity in Secondary Schools include:	Teachers in urban schools		Teachers in rural schools		Means set	Decision
		N	X <sub>1</sub>	N	X <sub>2</sub>		
1.	The total culture must be respected as multiethnic and multicultural society	304	3.58	450	2.78	3.18	Agreed
2.	The school policy has to reflect the ethnic, racial, cultural and gender diversity in Nigerian society	304	2.86	450	2.72	2.79	Agreed
3.	The schools’ meal preparation reflects the range of ethnic foods in Nigeria	304	3.10	450	2.83	2.97	Agreed
4.	School assemblies and holidays have to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity in Nigeria	204	2.94	450	2.82	2.88	Agreed
5.	The total environment of the school has to be positively responsive to racial, ethnic, cultural and language differences	304	3.10	450	3.08	3.09	Agreed
6.	The students are multiethnic/multicultural and therefore must be treated with care	304	2.75	450	2.68	2.72	Agreed
7.	The attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and behavior of the students must be ethnically/racial sensitive to their academic involvement in school	304	2.96	450	3.36	3.16	Agreed
8.	Students should be taught why different ethnic/cultural groups often perceive the same historical event or contemporary situation differently	304	2.83	450	2.94	2.89	Agreed
	<b>Aggregate Mean</b>		<b>3.02</b>		<b>2.90</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Data in Table 2 show the mean scores of teachers on the needed policy on students’ diversity in secondary schools in Rivers State. Teachers in rural and urban schools agree on the items in the table with high mean scores, which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The aggregate mean scores of 3.02 for teachers in urban schools and 2.90 for teachers in rural schools show that they agree to the items in the table. Therefore, the needed policy on students’ diversity in secondary schools in Rivers State includes: respecting the total culture of multiethnic and multicultural society; the school policy has to reflect the ethnic, racial, cultural and gender diversity in Nigerian society; school’ meal preparation should reflect the range of ethnic foods in Nigeria; School assemblies and holidays have to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity in

Nigeria; total environment of the school has to be positively responsive to racial, ethnic, cultural and language differences: students must be treated with care to respect their multiethnic and multicultural nature: attitudes perceptions, beliefs and behavior of the student must be ethnically and racial sensitive to their academic involvement in school: and the student should be taught why different ethnic and cultural group often perceive the same historical event or contemporary situation differently.

**Research Question 2:** What are the strategic approaches of managing students’ diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary school in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean Score of male and female teachers on the strategic approaches managing students diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State

Strategic approaches of managing students’ diversity	Teachers in urban schools		Teachers in rural schools		Means set	Decision
	N	X <sub>1</sub>	N	X <sub>2</sub>		
To enhance their academic performance include						
9. Ensuring that the school curriculum, leadership/management practices promote and affirm the principles of diversity	400	2.98	354	2.82	2.90	Agreed
10. Staff participation in training on students’ diversity management.	400	3.58	354	2.78	2.94	Agreed
11. Interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary approaches should be used in designing/implementing the curriculum.	400	3.10	354	2.78	2.94	Agreed
12. Monitoring the school environment to control the attitudes and behavior of students.	400	3.86	354	2.68	3.27	Agreed
13. Promoting and affirming diversity in aspects of work practices and interactions with students, parents and staff	400	3.08	354	2.94	3.01	Agreed
14. Using the curriculum material and other resources available to support the multicultural policy	400	2.83	354	2.94	3.01	Agreed
15. Mode lining appropriate behavior and promote a climate of mutual respect among students.	400	2.75	354	3.10	2.93	Agreed
16. Participating in cultural awareness anti-bullying and other curriculum-linked strategies aimed at increasing respect for diversity	400	3.32	354	3.86	3.59	Agreed
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>		<b>3.19</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>3.07</b>		Agreed

Data in table 3 show the mean score of teachers on the strategic approaches of managing students’ diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary school in Rivers State. Both male and female teachers agree on the items with high mean score greater than the criterion mean score of 2.5. The aggregate mean score of 3.19 for male teachers and 2.95 for female teachers showed that they agreed to the items in the table. Therefore, the strategic approaches of managing students’ diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State include: ensuring that the school curriculum, leadership and management practices promote and affirm the principles of diversity; staff participation in student’s diversity management training; interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary approaches should be used in designing

imp implementing the curriculum; monitoring the school environment to control the attitudes and behaviour of students: promoting and affirming diversity in all aspects of work practices and interactions with students, parent and staff using the curriculum materials and other resources available to support the multicultural policy; modeling appropriate behavior and promoting a climate of mutual respect among students: and participating in cultural awareness, anti-bullying and other curriculum— linked strategies aimed at increasing respect for diversity.

**Research Question 3:** What are the dimension of student’ diversity management in secondary school for academic competitiveness in Rivers State?

Table 4: Mean Score of teachers in rural and urban schools on the dimensions of student’ diversity managing in secondary school for academic competitiveness in Rivers State

Dimensions of student’ diversity management in decision		Teachers in urban schools		Teachers in rural schools		Means set	Decision
		N	X <sub>1</sub>	N	X <sub>2</sub>		
<b>Secondary school for academic competitiveness include;</b>							Agreed
17.	A commitment to understanding and responding to student diversity is articulate in the program’s goals, and objectives	304	3.19	450	314	3.30	
18.	School psychologists in collaboration with others; develop appropriate cognitive and academic goals for student with different abilities.	304	2.88	450	3.34	3.11	Agreed
19.	School implements interventions to achieve the goal of diversity and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.	304	2.56	450	3.06	2.81	Agreed
20.	The testing procedures used by the school are multicultural/ethnically fair	304	3.19	450	3.19	2.19	Agreed
21.	The formalized curriculum/course of study are multiethnic and multicultural	304	3.38	450	3.36	3.37	Agreed
22.	The curriculum help student develop skills necessary for effectives interpersonal and intercultural group interactions	304	2.81	450	2.69	2.75	Agreed
23.	Teachers use a variety of assessment procedures that reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of student	304	3.34	450	2.69	3.02	Agreed
<b>Aggregate men</b>			<b>3.05</b>		<b>3.09</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Data in table 4 show the mean score rating of teachers on the dimensions of Students’ diversity management in secondary school for academic Competiveness in Rivers State. Teachers in Urban and rural areas agrees on the items in the table with mean score greater than the criterion and .3.09 teachers in rural school are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. therefore, it can be secondary school for academic competitiveness in Rivers State include commitment to understanding and responding to student ‘s diversity:, development of appropriate cognitive and academic goals for student with different abilities recognizing the influence of subtle racial, class gender and cultural biases on the student outcomes by the staff; formalized multi-cultural/multiethnic curriculum /course of study and the use of variety of assessment procedure that reflect the student’ diversity by the teachers.

## Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural areas on the needed policy on students' diversity in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test Analysis of Difference between the mean scores of teacher in urban and rural areas on the needed policy on students' diversity in secondary school in Rivers State

Location	N	X	SD	Z-cal	Critical value	Decision
Urban teachers	304	3.02	1.46	1.56	$\pm 1.96$	Accept $H_{01}$
Rural teachers	430	2.90	1.41			

The result in Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of Teachers in urban and rural areas in the needed policy on students' diversity in secondary schools in Rivers State. this is evidenced from the fact that the z- calculated value of 1.56 is less than the critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  at 0.05 significant level Hence the null hypothesis is a accepted Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean score of teacher in urban and rural areas on the needed policy on students' diversity in secondary school in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the strategic approaches in the management of students' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary school in Rivers State.

Table 6: z-test Analysis of difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the strategic approaches in the management of student' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary school in Rivers State

Gender	N	X	SD	Z-cal	Critical value	Decision
Male Teachers	400	3.19	1.54	1.46	$\pm 1.96$	Accept $H_{02}$
Female Teacher	354	2.95	1.35			

The result in Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the strategic approaches in the management of students' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary school in Rivers State. This is evidenced from the fact that the z-calculate value of 1.46 is less than the z-critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  at 0.5 significant level. Hence, the null Hypothesis is accepted and the alternative rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the strategic approaches in the management of students' diversity to enhance their academic performance Secondary school in Rivers State

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural areas on the dimensions of students' diversity management in secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State.

Table 7: z-test Analysis of different between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural areas on the dimensions of students' diversity management in secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State

Location of school	N	X	SD	Z-cal	Critical value	Decision
Urban teacher	304	3.05	1.56	1.33	±1.96	Accept H <sub>0</sub>
Rural teachers	450	3.09	1.59			

The result in Table 7 shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural areas on the dimensions of students' diversity management in secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State. This is drawn from the fact that the z-calculated value of 1.33 is less than the z-critical value of ±1.96 at 0.05 significant level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of teaches in urban and rural areas on the dimensions of student's diversity management in secondary school for academic competitiveness in Rivers state.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the needed policy on students' diversity in Secondary school in Rivers State include: respecting the total culture of multiethnic and multicultural society; the school policy has to reflect the ethnic racial culture and gender diversity in Nigeria society; schools' meal preparation should reflect the range of ethnic foods in Nigeria; school assemblies and holiday have to reflect the range of ethnic and cultural diversity in Nigeria; total environment of the school has to be positively responsive to racial, ethnic, cultural and language differences. Students must be treated with care to respect their multiethnic/ multicultural nature; attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and behaviour of the students must be ethnically/racial sensitive to their academic involvement in school; and the students should be taught why different ethnic' cultural groups often perceive the same historical event or contemporary situation differently. This is in agreement with the policies as listed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training in (2001) that schools should promote and affirm the values of diversity among members of the school community: school should contribute to strategies to prevent racism and value cultural, and linguistic diversity; encourage and facilitate the participation by parents in school community activities and decision making.

Taking into account the special needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities: ensure that the education policies of the school promote and nurture self-esteem and acknowledge and build on the life experiences of all students; and ensure that all of the schools' current and future policies are consistent with these guidelines. The test of hypothesis one showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural areas on the needed policy on students diversity in secondary school in Rivers State. These policies are needed in both rural and urban schools to manage students for, academic competitiveness. Thus, the finding synchronizes with the findings of Rosado (2007) who revealed that managing diversity should be holistic... the differences (David-West, 2016) have the potentials of giving rise to conflicts but if managed well can result in a synergetic unity. In the same vein, William (2013) contended that effective diversity management is a function of improved individual and organizational performance.

Findings of the study also revealed that the strategic approaches of Managing students' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary school in Rivers State include:

ensuring that the school curriculum, leadership management practices promote and affirm the principles of diversity; staff participation in students' diversity management training; interdisciplinary/ multidisciplinary approaches should be used in designing/ implementing the curriculum; monitoring the school environment to control the attitudes and behaviour of students promoting and affirming diversity in all aspects of work practices and interactions with students, parents and staff using the curriculum material and other resources available to support the multicultural policy; modeling appropriate behaviour and promoting a climate of mutual respect among student; and participation in cultural awareness, anti-bullying and other curriculum-linked strategies aimed at increase respect for diversity. If these strategies and approaches are fully applied in secondary schools, students diversity will he managed effectively This is in line with the findings of Williams (2003) who advise school leaders to implement a broad range of strategies for managing, students' diversity to improve teaching and learning such as interdisciplinary multidisciplinary approaches in curriculum design involving students and teachers in diversity management and discrimination, promote climate of mutual respect, and participating in cultural and linguistic awareness.

The test of hypothesis two showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the strategic approach in the management of students' diversity to enhance their academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State. Both male and female teachers agreed that these strategies if employed would help in managing students' diversity as well as go a long way to improve their knowledge and skills through classroom management. In line with these findings, Rosado (2007) study had earlier maintained that managing diversity binds organization together and create a wholesome and inclusive environment that is safe for managing the difference within a school workforce, capitalizing on the benefits of diversity and maximizing work place challenges.

The findings of this study finally revealed that the dimensions of students' diversity management in secondary schools for academic competitiveness in Rivers State include: commitment to understanding and responding to students' diversity, development of appropriate cognitive and academic goals for students with different abilities; recognizing the influence of subtle racial, class, gender and cultural biases on the student outcomes by the staff formalized multicultural/multiethnic curriculum course of study, and the use of variety of assessment procedures that reflect the students diversity by the teachers. The test of hypothesis three showed that there is no significant difference between the mean score of teachers in urban and rural areas on the dimensions of student' diversity management in secondary school for academic competitiveness in Rivers State. This is in line with the guidelines for managing students diversity presented by the Department of Education, Employment and Training (2001, p. 84) as follows: promoting and affirming diversity in all aspects of their work practices and interactions with students, parent and staff using the curriculum materials and other resources available to support the Multicultural policy where appropriate making use of available professional development opportunities where appropriate modeling use appropriate behavior and promoting a climate mutual respect; abide by the student code of conduct in particular the principle concerned with the elimination of discrimination based on difference of cultural, race and gender aid participate in cultural awareness, anti -bullying and other curriculum- linked strategies aimed at increasing respect for diversity. Graham (2002), asserts that for the standard to be maintained, school curriculum should be reformed, staff should participate in training programme on diversity management, parents should be involved in school decision making and schools be restructured.

This according to David-West (2016) will make for effective students' diversity management devoid of conflict but capable of binding together the school system for the attainment of coveted educational objectives.

## CONCLUSION

This study found out that having a diverse student body is associated with six other attributes of the institutional climate: stronger commitment to multiculturalism, a greater faculty emphasis on racial and gender issues in the classroom, and more frequent students involvement in cultural awareness workshops and ethnic studies course. Students who attend schools with a diverse population develop an understanding on the perspectives of children from different backgrounds and learn to function in a multicultural, multiethnic environment. Hence, diversity brings significant educational benefits to all students, teachers and administrators and the wider community. It enables the creation of learning environment enriched by different life experiences, varied perspectives, dynamic interchange, problem solving skill, resource acquisition, flexibility and creativity.

## Recommendations

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

- Secondary education institutions should create curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to experience genuine racial, ethnic, cultural and religious integration to interact in meaningful ways and learn from each other if diversity is to have a positive educational impact.
- Secondary school administrators should create diverse student body aimed at appreciating unity in diversity in our schools for effective academic competitiveness.
- The attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and behaviour of the students /staff should be religious, ethnically and racial sensitive.
- School assemblies and holidays should reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Teachers should be provided with training on the management of students' diversity and discrimination.

## REFERENCES

- Banks. J. A (1993). *Teachers strategies for ethnic students (5th ed.)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Banks. J. A. (1994). *An introduction to multicultural education*. Massachusetts: Needham heights.
- Betalafy, V. (1950). *The system's theory*. Toronto: University of Toronto press.
- David-West, T. M. (2016). Principals' emotional intelligence and effective secondary education delving in Nigeria. *International Journal of Education Development*, 6(1), 92-98.
- David-West, T. M., & Kaegon, L. E. S. (2017). Principals' managerial techniques as correlates of teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 10(3), 343-351.
- Flynn, J. (2001). *Motivating increasing diverse workforce*. New York: NACUFs Resources.
- Gardenswartz, L., & Rowe, A. (1995). *Managing Diversity*. Boston: JAIMAC Newsletter.

- Graham, M. N. (2002). *Theories of multicultural education*. New York: Houghton Mifflin
- Henze, S. B. (2002). *Ways with works: language, life and work in communities and classroom*. New York; Cambridge University press.
- Nwachukwu, A. M. (2002). *Human resource management*. Port Harcourt: University of Harcourt press
- Nwachukwu. A. M. (1988). *The disuniting of America: reflections on a multicultural society*. New York: Norton
- Nwachukwu. C. C. (1998). *Management theory and practices*. Onitsha: Africana Feb Publishers.
- Rosado, C. (2007). Paradigm shifts and stages of societal changes: A descriptive model. Retrieved from <http://rosado.net/article-spiralleader.html>.
- Steven, K., & Bayer, J. M. (2004). *Those who can teach*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- The Department of Education, Employment and Training (2001). diversity and equity. Retrieved from <http://www.hrwen@edumail.vic.gov.com>.
- Thomas, R. R. (1996). *Managing and redefining diversity*. Georgia: JAIMAC Newsletter.
- William, H. S. (2003). Social class, parental encouragement and educational Aspirations. *America Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37, 559-572.