

An Evaluation of the Relationship Between Principals' Demographic Factors, and Their Performance in the Task Areas of Management of Secondary Education in Nsukka Education Zone

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Abstract

The study determined the relationship between principals' demographic factors, and the performance of principals in the task areas of management of secondary education in Nsukka Education Zone. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of this study covered all the 61 principals in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 20 secondary school students in Nsukka Education Zone, which is outside the study area. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to determine the internal consistency of the items. The result yielded 0.87 Alpha coefficients value. This high coefficient value indicate that the instrument were reliable for the study. The instrument was administered directly to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. The data collected for this study was analyzed using Mean, Standard deviation for the research questions. Mean was being used to answer the questions, and standard deviation to determine the closeness of the responses from the mean. A mean score of 2.50 and above were used as the benchmark for acceptance of an item, while mean score below 2.50 was rejected. The findings of the study revealed that: the principals agreed on all the items of management services in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone; majority of the principals in Nsukka Education Zone were within the age bracket of 46-50 years and also, majority are males. The study also revealed that there is a positive relationship between principals' age and performance in management service in secondary school; a positive relationship existed between principals' gender and performance in management service in secondary school.

Keywords: Demographic factors, Age, Gender, Principals, Performance, Manahement.

Introduction

The principal is the executive head of a secondary school. It is the principal that oversees the administration of secondary schools, and equally saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that the management of secondary school is effectively done. The principal is responsible for coordinating all school activities ranging from instructional supervision, financial and record management, communication, decision-making, provision of incentives, human resource development, public relations, adherence to statutory provisions, conflict management and resolution, and plant management in secondary school. Eze (2012) defined the principal of secondary school as the administrative head who has the responsibility of ensuring that all services are effectively done. Oyewale and Alonge (2013) noted that the principal in the school system is a professional leader and foremost supervisor who combine the roles of administration supervisor, instructional supervisor and subject supervisors. Hence the growth and development of secondary schools in Nigeria depends largely on the administrative effectiveness and efficiency of the principal. In this study, the principal is conceived as the most senior ranked person in secondary school, who is by position authorized to oversee the management of secondary school.

Secondary school is a six-year form of education which children receive after primary school before proceeding to the tertiary level of education. The importance of secondary education in educational system cannot be overemphasized. Apart from serving as the link between primary and tertiary education, it provides opportunity for a child to acquire additional knowledge, skills, and traits beyond the primary level. A major factor that necessitates the acquisition of secondary education in Nigeria is that the education being provided at the primary level is proving to be insufficient for a child to acquire permanent literacy, communicative, and numeracy skills expected from the child at the end of the training (Chinelo, 2011; Ige, 2011; Yusuf, 2009). In Nigeria, secondary school aims at preparing an individual for useful living within the society, and higher education. This role cannot be achieved if the principals of secondary school are not responsive to effective management functions.

Management broadly refers to organizing, planning, directing, monitoring, controlling and evaluation of resources in the organization (Ramalho, 2006). Adeleke (2009) defined management as planning, controlling, organizing, staffing, leading, coordinating and directing the available resources. In this context, management is

conceived as the planning, directing, monitoring and controlling of school resources which include finance, examinations, records and information flow. It involves staff and students personnel management, financial management and record keeping in school. Management of secondary schools therefore refers to a process of making use of the available resources for achievement of an education goal at secondary school level. The aim of management in school is to ensure the highest possible standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. School management as earlier pointed out includes coordinating all school activities ranging from instructional supervision, financial and record management, communication, decision-making, provision of incentives, human resource development, public relations, adherence to statutory provisions, conflict management and resolution, and plant management in secondary school. In this study, management of secondary school contextually includes: Instructional supervision, communication, decision making, provision of incentives for teachers and students, human resource development, public relations, funds management, plant management, adherence to statutory provisions, and conflict management/resolution are considered.

The ability of principals to perform well in the above highlighted management services greatly depends on the principals' personalities. The principal's demographic features includes the principal's age, gender, and year of experience as a teacher, intelligence, educational qualification and marital status amongst others.

Age is viewed as the length and time a man has lived from birth (Sturman, 2010). It is the length of time during which a being or thing has existed; length of life or existence to the time spoken of or referred to (Grale, 2010). Malik (2012) pointed out that the age of a person could enhance the person's management skill or performance since age and experience go together. Jimoh (2011) however disagreed that age is a determinant of person's performance in any field or skill. Due to these inconsistencies, it has become necessary to determine whether age is a correlate of principals' performance in the management of secondary schools.

Earlier scholars were of the opinion that gender is a correlate of one's ability to perform management services (Grale, 2010; Harry, 2012). Gender is described as the behavioral characteristics distinguishing between males and females in any society. Gender according Onyeonoru (2007) refers to the differentiation in roles between men and women which is different from sex but construed by society through socialization. Sex is the biological differentiation between the roles of men and women. Richard (2007) defined gender as the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioral characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. In this study, gender refers to male or female principal who oversees the management of a secondary school.

Some researchers are of the opinion that intelligence is related to ability to perform management services (Stack, 2008; Watins, 2011). Neisser (2012) defined intelligence as one's capacity for logic, understanding, self-awareness, learning, emotional knowledge, planning, creativity and problem solving. It can be more generally described as the ability to perceive information, and to retain it as knowledge to be applied towards adaptive behaviors within an environment or context. In the context of this study, intelligence implies ability for understanding, learning, emotional knowledge, planning, creativity and problem solving by principals of secondary school. Stack (2008) noted intelligence has causal precedence to the ability of managing secondary school. Hillary (2012) believed that the relationship between intelligence and management services are reciprocal. Uzoegbu (2013) however argued that intelligence does not contribute to the ability of a principal to manage the school.

Marital status has also been identified as one of the demographic factor that could impact on one's ability to perform management services in secondary school. Marital status is the state of being married or single by a man or a woman (Anyanwu, 2009). It is perceived by Onah (2009) that marital status is correlated with principal's ability to perform management services in school. The author believed that principals who are married tend to perform poorly in management of their school because of family challenges. However, Simule (2012) found an insignificant relationship between marital status and principals' performance in management of secondary school. It is therefore necessary that the relationship between marital status and principals' performance in management of secondary school be investigated in this study.

It has also been pointed out by earlier scholars that principals' years of experience could impact on their performances in the management of secondary school (Rocile, 2012; Mark, 2014). The concept of experience generally refers to know-how or procedural knowledge, rather than propositional knowledge: on-the-job training rather than book-learning (Mark, 2012). Christensen (2010) noted that experience is the knowledge or mastery of an event or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it. Experience as viewed by Sturman (2010) is the culmination of context based events that a person perceives. It is the professional growth as a result of a period of continued work, training and retraining on the job and other related processes. A person with considerable experience in a specific field can gain a reputation as an expert. It has been suggested by Nwangwu (2006) that experience assists in developing the required social and intellectual skills, in learning how to work closely with other people and in finding out about individual interests and differences. This indicates that experience may be related to one's ability to perform management services. It is with this intention that this study opts to investigate the relationship between principals' year of experience as a teacher and his/her

performance in management services.

The performance of principals in the management of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State has remained questionable in contemporary times as there had been public outcry. Ibekun (2009) attributed it to the performance of school administrators in task areas like supervision of instruction, decision making, communication, human resource management, conflict management and resolution, and plant management. Evidence abound for poor infrastructure, teacher's poor attitude to work due to vacillating nature of principals like nagging, and non-involvement of teachers in decision making. Indiscipline among staff and students are not uncommon. Students' performance in external examination is low in some schools. Students' unrest, continuous rancor between staff and student, and illegal activities like embezzlement of funds and cheating are also perpetrated in secondary schools. Some concerned Nigerians have questioned the management of secondary schools by principals who have abdicated their functions and compromised their roles to the extent of aiding and abetting examination malpractice. For principals to perform efficiently and effectively, it is presumed that demographic qualities should be considered in the appointment of principals. Some earlier scholars are of the opinion that demographic factors such as age, gender, intelligence, educational qualification, experience and marital status, could be advantageous or disadvantageous in the principals' performance of duties. In the Nigeria setting, according to Ibekun (2011), age has been considered with other factors like qualification, and experience in the appointment of teachers into the position of a principal with the believe that these factors would make some individuals to be more effective than others. Therefore, there is the need to examine the relationship between these variables and principals performance in the management services.

The extent to which demographic variables had become factors in the performance of principals in the different task areas of school administration was a subject of concern for verification. Therefore, there was need to examine the relationship of these variables to the performance of principals in the task areas of management of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between principals' demographic factors in terms of age, and gender, and the performance of principals in the task areas of management of secondary education in Nsukka Education Zone. Specifically, the study seeks to find out the followings:

1. To determine the extent principals' age affects their work performance in secondary school management.
2. To determine the extent principals' gender affects their performance in secondary school management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Demographic Factors

Demographics are the quantifiable statistics of a given population while demographic factors are those relating to personal characteristics such as age, gender, social class, and level of education, family, race and ethnicity (Elliot & Shepherd, 2006). Simon (2012) posited that demographic factors are those factors relating to personal characteristics such as age, gender, social status level of education and family. In this study, two demographic factors are discussed. These include age, gender.

Age

Age is conceived as the length and time a man has lived from birth (Sturman, 2010). It is the length of time during which a being or thing has existed; length of life or existence to the time spoken of or referred to (Grale, 2010). Malik (2012) pointed out that the age of a person could enhance the person's performance since age and experience go together. Jimoh (2011) however disagreed that age is a determinant of person's performance in management services. Nevo (2013) noted that age does affect the viscometer flexibility of a person but not his crystalline intelligence. The extent to which age is correlated to principal's management services in secondary school will be determined in this study.

Gender

Gender has become a vital issue of consideration in most educational research. Depending on the context, gender may refer to biological sex (i.e. the state of being male, female or intersex), sex-based social structures (including gender roles and other social roles), or gender identity (Richard, 2007). Gender is a specific cultural patterns of behavior that are attributed to the sexes. It refers to cultural attributes of both males and females (Nnachi, 2007). According to Ayodeji (2009), gender is the socially constructed ways of being male and female, women and men. This involves the gender division of labor, relationship between men and women, differences in roles, behavior and expectations. Gender also indicates the value and behavior attached to the concepts of masculine and feminine (Ayodeji, 2009). Bryce (2010) defined gender, in its narrowest sense as a socially constructed sex, be it

female or male. For Haig (2011), gender is the range of physical, mental, and behavioral characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Bruce and Yearley (2011) observed that gender is commonly used while referring to the distinction between females and males on the basis of anatomy. Afolabi (2012) stated that the term gender has been variously used to refer to a collection of the characteristics that are culturally associated with maleness and femaleness. Becker (2013) saw gender as the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex.

Gender is also considered to be the society constructed roles, responsibilities ascribed to male and female by different societies (Ugboaja & Uzoka, 2011). It refers to socially constructed roles and socially learned behaviors and expectations associated with males and females (Okeke, 2012). Edward (2013) added that gender refers to the sum of cultural values, attitudes, roles, practices and characteristics based on sex. It means that gender is the condition of being masculine or feminine through one's behavior. In other words gender issue is a broad categorical characteristic attributes of a person based on ones belonging to one of the two sexes.

Principal

The Principal as the administrative head of secondary schools ensures the effective and efficient utilization of human and material resources towards the achievement of educational goals. Reiterating on the position of the School principal, Peretomode (2001) posited that the school as a social system and a formal organization, and like every formal organization, elements of administration must be used in running the organization. Some of these elements are clear statements of aims and objectives, hierarchy of authority, unity of command, delegation of authority, division of labor, and effective communication and coordination of various tasks such as staff development and students' personnel functions. In the secondary school, these responsibilities of coordinating the activities normally fall on the principal. The Principal is appointed based on qualification and seniority to oversee the proper running of the school in terms of staff and students' welfare and discipline.

Educational Management

Educational management is the process of applying the functions of management in the routine activities of educational institutions to foster the achievement of their set objectives. Okoroma (2000) and Mgbodile (2004) described educational management as the process of formulating educational policies or programmes with a view to achieving educational goals. Their view is considered as an aspect of educational management. Educational management is seen as the process by which educational objectives are achieved. Peretomode (2001) stated that, alternatively, "educational management can be defined as the application of the processes of planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and evaluating human and material resources in order to achieve stated educational goals or objectives"(P.34). These definitions imply that educational management is concerned with the process by which school administrators like principals utilize human and material resources by bringing them together, setting objectives and working out modalities like arranging structures and activating them to achieve such objectives. This is done while appraising situations in order to determine their relationships with the stated goals to guide against deviation from targets.

Methodology

This chapter is discussed under the following sub-headings; design of the study, area of the study, population for the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

Design of the Study

The study adopted descriptive survey. The descriptive survey tries to secure evidence or data concerning the degree and direction of relationship between independent and dependent variables. Therefore, the descriptive survey became imperative since this study was a multivariate analysis of the relationship between demographic variables and principals' performance in the management of secondary education in Nsukka Education Zone.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Nsukka Education Zone in Enugu State. Nsukka Education zone is one of the six education zones in Enugu State, and is made up of three local government areas, namely: Nsukka, Igbo-Etiti and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas. Most of the people in the zone have started embracing education. As at the period of the study, there were a total of 61 public secondary schools in the education zone, and each school was having a serving principal.

Population of the Study

The population of this study covers all the 61 principals in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone. The above figure was obtained from the Post-Primary School Management Board (PPSMB, 2015 academic

session), Nsukka.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The entire population was included in the study accordingly, hence there was no sampling.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection for the study was structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and titled Principals' work performance in Management Questionnaire (PWPIMQ). The PWPIMQ consisted of two sections. Section A focused on the bio-data factor of the respondents. Section B address the research question which contain 41 items questions on principal management services. All the items in section B were placed on a four point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) and weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

Validation of the Instrument was face validated by three experts, two in measurement and evaluation, and one on statistics. All are from Peace land College of education, Enugu. The experts were given the purpose of the study, the purpose the research questions and research hypotheses that were formulated to guide the study. These helped the experts to determine the items that can elicit the information they intended to elicit. The research requested the experts to review the items of their clarify, appropriateness of instruction to enable the experts to comment on the overall adequacy of the instrument in line with constructive criticism and suggestions of the experts. Their comments were taken into consideration in drawing the final copy of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 20 secondary school principals in Obollo-Afor Education Zone, which has outside the study area. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha method to determine the internal consistency of the items. The result yielded 0.87 Alpha coefficients value. This high coefficient value indicates that the instrument was reliable to be used for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered directly to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. The use of the research assistants was to facilitate the distribution and retrieval of the copies of questionnaire from the respondents. The researcher thoroughly briefed the research assistants to get them acquainted with the modality of administering the instrument in appropriate and friendly ways. The researcher and the research assistants personally distributed the instruments and have them collected the same day, after the questionnaire have been properly filled by the respondents. This method yielded high return rate of this instrument of the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was analyzed using Mean with standard deviation for research questions. Standard deviation to determine the closeness of the responses from the mean. On research hypothesis, the research used t-test to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. A mean score of 2.50 and above was used as the benchmark for acceptance of an item, while any mean score below 2.50 were rejected. On the research hypothesis when the calculated t-value was equal or greater than t-critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. When it was less on them t-critical, the null hypothesis, was not rejected.

Analysis and Results

This chapter is focus on the analysis of data and presentation of results. The result were presented according to the research questions and the hypotheses used for the study.

Research Question 1

To what extent does principals' age affect their work performance in the management of secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone?

Table I: Mean ratings of urban and rural principals in Nsukka Education Zone with respect to the extent age affects their work performance.

S/N	Items	Urban				Rural			
		N	X	SD	D	N	X	SD	D
1.	Younger Principals don't have administrative competence to discharge responsibly.	33	3.67	0.69	HE	28	3.43	0.74	HE
2.	Younger principals have administrative capability to perform	33	3.76	0.66	HE	28	3.61	0.74	HE
3.	Younger principal are very energetic to always perform their functions tirelessly.	33	3.48	0.76	HE	28	3.43	0.92	HE
4.	Older principals are very tired to come to work.	33	1.58	0.83	LE	28	1.46	0.10	LE
5.	Younger principals always include teachers in decision making	33	3.63	0.82	HE	28	3.57	0.79	HE
6.	Younger principals are friendlier to the students.	33	3.73	0.67	HE	28	3.68	0.72	HE
7.	Younger principals has good administrative technicality.	33	3.64	0.70	HE	28	3.64	0.73	HE
	Cluster Mean		3.36				3.26		
	Cluster STD			1.28				1.34	

Data on Table 1 indicate that a cluster mean score of 3.36 and 3.26 respectively of urban and rural principals in Nsukka Education Zone with respect to the extent to which principal's age affect their work performance. The implication of the above findings is that, to a great extent, principals Age affect their work performance as opined the respondents. Further their analysis on the table revealed that the respondents agreed on most of the items in the as they mean scores are above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 and above

Research Question 2

To what extent does principal's genders affect their work performance in the management of secondary school in the management of secondary school in Nsukka Education Zone?

Table 2: Mean ratings of urban and rural principals in Nsukka Education Zone with respect to the extent gender affects their work performance.

S/N	Items	Urban				Rural			
		N	X	SD	D	N	X	SD	D
8.	Male Principals are more actively involved in school programme	33	3.82	0.64	HE	28	3.79	0.69	HE
9.	Male principal are more gender friendly than their female counterpart	33	1.91	0.77	LE	28	1.43	0.74	LE
10.	Female principals often absent from work because of maternity affairs.	33	3.52	0.71	HE	28	3.82	0.67	HE
11.	Female principals are friendlier to their staff.	33	1.76	0.71	LE	28	3.57	0.84	HE
12.	Male principals are more democratic in nature with respect to school function.	33	3.09	0.58	HE	28	3.86	0.45	LE
13.	Female principals equally are more autocratic in nature.	33	3.79	0.65	HE	28	3.86	0.45	HE
14.	Female principals send out information about the students to their parent.	33	3.76	0.66	HE	28	3.71	0.53	HE
	Cluster Mean		3.09				3.16		
	Cluster STD			1.20				1.38	

Table 2 shows the cluster mean score of urban and rural public secondary schools principals in Nsukka with respect to the extent to which gender after work performance as 3.09 and 3.16 respectively. Further analysis of the table revealed that the respondents agreed on items 8, 10, 13 and 14 jointly as their mean scores are above 2.50 but disagree on 9 & 12 as indicated in the mean score. The implication of the above findings is that to a great extent, principal's gender affect work performance as opined by the respondents.

Discussion of findings

To great extent, principal's age affect work performance of secondary school principals. The finding is no agreement with the views of Malik (2012) who observed that age of a person could enhance the person's performance since age and experience goes together.

To a great extent, gender affects work performance of secondary principals in Nsukka Education Zone. The finding was in agreement with the views of Richards (2007) who observed that gender is a specific cultural patterns of behaviour that are attributed to the sexes. It refers to cultural attributes of both males and females. Supporting the findings and equally, Ayodeyi (2009) observed that gender is the socially constructed ways of ensuring good division of labour, relationship between men and women, differences in roles, behaviour and

expectation. Gender also indicated the value and behaviour attached to the concepts of masculine and feminine.

Summary of findings

From the result of data analysis, the following are the summary of major findings

1. To a great extent, principal's age affect their performance in management service in secondary school in Nsukka Education Zone.
2. To a great extent, principals' gender affects their performance in management service in secondary school in Nsukka Education Zone.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the followings were the conclusions were drawn: Principals age affects work performance to great extent. To a great extent Principals gender affect work performance. To a great extent, principal's material status affects work performance. It is therefore, concluded that there is a significant relationship between principals' demographic factors, and the performance of principals in the task areas of management of secondary education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the various implications which have been highlighted, the following recommendations were made:

1. In the promotion of teachers to principalship cadre, age should be given much premium since it had significant relationship with principals' performance in any of the task areas of management of secondary schools.
2. In the promotion of teachers to principalship cadre, gender should be given much premium since it had significant relationship with principals' performance in any of the task areas of management of secondary schools.

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