

**THE EFFECT OF GENDER AND AGE ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE
EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN AKWA IBOM
STATE**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of gender and age on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State. The population of this study comprised of all secondary school principals, teachers and PTA members in Akwa Ibom State. There are 227 Principals and 7583 Teachers in Akwa Ibom state. The study adopted Expost-factor design while stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Data was obtained using a research questionnaire titled “Correlates of Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals Questionnaire (CAESSPQ) test”. Data obtained from respondents were analysed using mean statistics like independent t-test analysis and one-way analysis of variance. It was concluded that the administrative effectiveness of male and female principals in secondary schools cannot be same as male principals can work under pressure and other interfering factors. Also, young principals are more active than the older ones in the discharge of their administrative functions. It was therefore recommended that Government should regularly appreciate the long years of service and effort and skills put in by staff of secondary school by way of promotion.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Age, Administrative Effectiveness, Secondary School, Principals, Akwa Ibom State.

INTRODUCTION

The school is an academic environment where individuals are educated and trained in different fields of study for the development of the individuals and the society. A Principal is the administrator of secondary schools, he or she is expected to bring together students, teachers and parents teachers association as a family as well as implementing government policy on education and school rules regulations so that the goals of the school will be achieved. As early as 1842, when the first secondary school was established by the church missionary society (CMS) in Lagos, the office of the principal was established. Each voluntary agency that established the secondary school also chooses a principal who could achieve both the religious and the academic functions of the school. For many years the secondary school principal kept his role as the instructional leader of the school (Mbipom 2006).

The learning process is usually expected to produce impressive results provided the school possesses the relevant administrative and professional atmosphere favourable for effective teaching and learning. This is because the administrative efficacy of the school leadership promotes achievement of the students. The role and status of the secondary school principal has changed through the years. To this end Udo, Akpa and Grang (1990) identify the responsibilities of the present day school principal to include:

1. The preparing the annual budget of the school.
2. Liaising between the school and educational agencies and organizations.
3. Co-ordinating Parents Teachers Association activities
4. Initiating Innovations amongst others.

Jacob (2003) asserts that the effectiveness of a school is largely dependent upon the type of leadership or administration of the school. According to Redfern (2007), the principal can either exhibit a directive behaviour or guiding- behavior. Based upon the directive behaviour; staff reaction will either be resistive, thereby creating a frictional environment between the principal and the staff. This could make it impossible to achieve the target or goal of the school. In the second part, if the principal exhibits a guiding-behaviour, this could result to an unreserved cooperation on the part of the staff, teachers would put in more of their talents targeted at positive result oriented processes. The administrative effectiveness of the school principal therefore depends upon both intrinsic and extrinsic variable with regards to the principal (Enebong, 2008). This study therefore tries to find out certain factors (variables) which could account for the quality and efficacy of the school principal such as gender and age.

Statement of the Problem

The school principal is an administrator and a leader. For any school to achieve its objectives, good quality leadership cannot be over-emphasized. It is noted that truancy, consuming problems of cult and general indiscipline among the students has assumed frightening proportion in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. Several explanations for this problem has been deduced by some observers. Some say that it is caused by the cumulative actions of government which has tended to undermine education and teaching profession, others tend to believe that it is the ineffectiveness of Secondary School administrators that may be the real cause of the problem. The effectiveness of a school is largely dependent upon the type of leadership or administration predicated by the personal factors of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State. The researcher wishes to find out if there are (factors, variables/correlates) which could account for administrative effectiveness of secondary school principal in Akwa Ibom State such as gender and age.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the effect of gender and age on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the influence of gender on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To examine the influence of age on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does gender of principals influence their administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent does age influence the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant difference on the level of administrative effectiveness between the male and female principals in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. There is no significant influence of age on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.

Literature Review

Gender and Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals

Gender differences have been recognized as a factor in employee's work effectiveness. There is this general opinion that women are the weaker sex. This notion has been held till now even after the assumed women liberation enlightenment. Stogdill (2004) observed that male principals are more administratively effective than their female counterparts. They attribute this disparity to men's stamina and ability to work even at stress and other interfering factors. By implication, Stogdill (2004) said that, Principals who are male, have the capacity to work under any uncomfortable conditions; and the ability to work long hours in order to achieve their aims. Take for instance; a female principal would not have the courage to go out on inspection, dormitory to dormitory at late hours of the night, whereas the male principal would do it. The female principal would be afraid of accosting a student or a teacher at any spot found improper. The fear of the female principal would be that of strength to stage a fight if it comes to that.

Ejiogu (2002) opined that: "who does not know that a woman's place is in the kitchen" Taking a critical look at the administrative effectiveness of principals in Akwa Ibom State Secondary Schools, women performed better when they are heading a single sex school (girls' school) and their performance is observed to be low when they are in charge of a mixed sex school. Ejiogu (2002) further said that women may be good teachers but not good leaders. Female principals find it difficult to present their cases before hawk board members; more so, they cannot cope with the present trend of militarism and the evolution of cultism in secondary schools these days. The female principals would not be able to run after a student running into the bush; she would not be smart enough as the male principals to jump over the fence if necessary, to corner a student who is breaking the bounds. There are other administrative tasks that require masculine effort/background, where the principal is a woman such is a failure. In spite of all these negations against the female principals, this popular saying that "what a man can do, a woman can do even better" should not be underestimated.

Dickson (2000) opined that some female principals do better in their leadership techniques than their male counterparts. This is because, as stated by Ogunsaju (2003), female principals consider more staff contribution on decision making whereas the male principal often adopt, the autocratic nature of decision making. That is, a female principal tends to consult almost all the staff on issue or matters concerning the school and seek general opinion as the way forward. With this, she is more regarded for giving her subordinates the recognition and privilege to contribute. But the male principal, believing in his masculine strength and sometimes self-esteem, often take decision concerning the school personally without consulting other staff who are relevant in such matters. Most times such policies fail, because other staff who feel not carried along refuse to implement or even enforce it. In such an environment, there is always friction between the principal and the staff.

Udoh (1990) is of the opinion that principals in Akwa Ibom State secondary schools, both genders show similarities in several aspects. They stress that the administrative effectiveness of the school does not depend on whether the principal is a women or man, it rather depends on self-concept.

A study of male and female principals was conducted by Charter (2005) among 40 schools. It was revealed that in terms of administrative behaviour and other factors such as school size and age were controlled, there was no significant difference between male and female in area of being principals. The study observed that female principals were seen to be more influential and had more extensive person to person communication with all the students and staffs of the school. The female principals are perceived to be more involved than their male counterpart.

Age and Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals

Odell (2006) opine that of the characteristics most often considered, age consistently has been correlated with administrative effectiveness in any organization. The principal stands out among teaching-learning inputs process in the school. His/her activities determine the tempo in the school activities. Falva (1992) in his research on the impact of age on administrative effectiveness stressed that the effectiveness of an individual improves with age and hit optimum level of 35. Thereafter, comes the tendency for the effectiveness of decline till age 65 when one is expected to retire from active service. Kallman (1991) opined that there are some regeneration changes in individuals according to age. Explaining further that when one is old, the rate of metabolism is reduced, the 'tissue' works at a lower rate; chemical interchanges go on more slowly. Some tissues may shrink and at this point some old one find it convenient to eat a little and hence loses body weight and become thin.

Bernal (2006) investigated the relationship between administrative effectiveness and age for both males and females. Results of the research have it that administrative effectiveness increases with age for both genders. The state secondary education board who is the main employer of personnel into the secondary school system, considers age as one of its criteria during recruitment. To the employer of principal, age is an economic factor. It serves as a determinant of the years of service. Udofot (2005) said that the administrative effectiveness of an administrator is dependent upon age. Like in the area of decision-making, counseling, judgment and conflicts resolution, age is a crucial factor to be considered as aging is a continues process as individual gets older year after year.

Ngwo (2009), in a research on the factor that influence administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals discovered that age of a principal has a significant relationship on how they perceive the effectiveness of a sub-ordinate. Older principals presume to have a wealth of experience in the teaching-learning environment and would be capable of handling any situation. Younger principals may prove more vibrant and more sound academically than older principals (Yekins, 2002), but younger principals on the other hand are observed to be queer in the discharge of their administrative functions. It is believed that the young ones are always faced with the problem of confidence and managerial skills when it comes to leadership roles. This is because administrators of schools require the application of their wealth of experiences and sense of maturity in the exercise of their statutory duties (Odell, 2006). Ornstein (2007) is of the view that individuals (in this case principals) mental, physical and grasp of professional knowledge dwindle with aging. This invariably affects the administrative effectiveness of the principal.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopted an Expost-Facto research design.

Area of the Study

The study area is Akwa Ibom State.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of all secondary school principals, teachers and PTA members in Akwa Ibom State. There are 227 Principals and 7583 Teachers in Akwa Ibom state.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 1440 respondents was used for the study. A stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting six (6) Local Government areas from each of the three senatorial districts in the state. From each local government area, five (5) secondary schools were randomly selected and the researcher later adopted “Hat and draw” method in selecting ten (10) teachers and five (5) PTA members and then added to the principals of each secondary school chosen for the exercise.

Instrumentation

The main instrument of research was the researcher-developed questionnaire called the correlates of Administrative Effectiveness of Secondary School Principals questionnaire (CAESSPQ) test. The research questionnaire was made up of three sections (sections A, B and C).

Validation of the Research Instrument

The instrument was designed by the researcher, vetted by my supervisors and a lecturer in test and measurement, in the Faculty of education, University of Calabar, Calabar.

Reliability of the Instrument

The test-retest reliability study was conducted with the use of forty (40) respondents who did not form part of the main study.

Method of Data Analysis

Each hypothesis is re-stated here, the variable(s) inherent in it are identified, and the appropriate statistical analysis technique for testing it is given. All the hypotheses were stated in the null form, and were tested at .05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the level of administrative effectiveness between male and female principals in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State.

In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows: -

1. Gender of Principals as the independent variables
2. Administrative Effectiveness as the dependent variable

Independent t-test analysis was used to analyze the data in order to determine the level of administrative effectiveness between male and female Principals in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State (see table.1).

Table 1
Independent t-test analysis of level of administrative effectiveness between male and female principals.

Variable	N	X	SD	t
Male	678	58.57	5.58	38.031*
Female	762	49.79	2.91	

***Significant at 0.05 level; df = 1438; N= 1440; critical t-value 1.96**

The above table 1 presents the obtained t-test-value (38.031). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.96). at 0.05 level with 1438 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (38.031) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. The result means that there is significant difference in the level of administrative effectiveness between male and female principals in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of age on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.

In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows: -

1. Age of the principal as the independent variable
2. Administrative effectiveness as the dependent variable.

One-way analysis of variance was used to determine the influence of age on administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State (see table 2).

Table 2

One-way analysis of variance of the influence of age on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals.

Groups	N	\bar{X}	SD
60yrs and above	111	45.0090	1.00449
Less than 40 yrs	443	49.6343	2.11371
50 to 59 yrs	329	53.1581	1.56931
40 to 49 yrs	557	59.5673	5.59720
Total	1440	53.9250	6.19455

Source of variance	SS	df	Ms	F
Between group	34905.644	3	11635.215	822.566*
Within groups	20312.256	1436	14.145	
Total	55217.900	1439		

***significant at 0.05 level; df = 3 & 1436; critical F - value = 2.60**

The above table 2 presents the obtained F-value as (822.566). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical F-value (2.60) at 0.05 level with 3 & 1436 degree of freedom. The obtained F-value was greater than the critical value. Hence, the result was significant. The result of the data analysis is proved that there is significant influence of age on the administrative effectiveness of the secondary school principals.

Discussion of Findings

Gender and Administrative Effectiveness of Principals

The result of the data analysis in table 1 was significant due to the fact that the obtained t-value (38.031) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with (1438) degree of freedom; this result implies that there is significant difference in the level of administrative effectiveness between male and female principals in secondary schools. The significance of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Stogdill (2004) who observed that male principals are more administratively effective than their female counterpart, they attribute this disparity to men's stamina and ability to work even at stress and other interfering factor more longer. It also agreed with the opinion of Ejiogu (2002) who opined that women performed better when they are heading a single sex school (girl's school) and their performance is observed to be low when they are in-charge of mixed sex school. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

Age and Administrative Effectiveness:

The result of the data analysis in table 2 was significant due to the fact that the obtained F-value (822.566) was greater than the critical F-value (2.60) at 0.05 level with (3 & 1436) degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significance of age on administrative effectiveness of the secondary school principals. The significance of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Yekins (2002) who said that younger principals may prove more vibrant and more academically sound than the older ones, but the younger hand is observed to be queer in the discharge of their administrative functions. It is also in agreement with the opinion of Ornstein (2007) who is of the opinion that individuals (in this case principals) mental, physical and grasp of professional knowledge dwindle with aging. This invariably affects the administrative effectiveness of the principal. It also in agreement with the opinion of Bernstein (1991) who said that when an individual grows old, changes that occur in the physical also take place in the central nervous particularly in the relation to the cells of the brain tissue. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was observed from the study that the administrative effectiveness of male and female principals in secondary schools cannot be same as male principals can work under pressure and other interfering factors. Also, young principals are more active than the older ones in the discharge of their administrative functions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that:

1. Male staff should always be engaged to work as they are more administrative effective than the females especially when it involves stamina and ability to work even under stress and other interfering factors.
2. The state secondary education board who is the main employer of personnel into the secondary school system should consider age as one of the criteria during recruitment and for purpose of retirement.

3. Government should regularly appreciate the long years of service and effort and skills put in by staff of secondary school by way of promotion.
4. For greater productivity and higher administrative effectiveness, staff of secondary schools should be trained and retrained.

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