

Teachers' Perception of Gender and Administrative Performance of  
Secondary School Principals in Gokana Local Government Area.  
Implications for Counselling

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study investigates teachers' perception of gender and administrative performance of secondary school principals in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was guided by three research questions. A sample of 120 teachers in the senior secondary school in the area were drawn from the population through a simple random sampling technique and use of for this study. An instrument titled "Principal Gender Factors and Administrative Performance Questionnaire" (PGFAPQ) was used for data collection. Face and content validities of the instrument were ensured by experts. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument (PGFAPQ), and the reliability of the co-efficient obtained was 0.72. The data were analyzed using percentage. The result showed that there was no remarkable difference on male and female principals in their abilities to adequately monitor organizational climate. Male principals encourage community participation more in the administration of secondary schools and withstand school-community politics. It also shows that, male and female principals have no difference in providing special pedagogical assistance to teachers. Based on the findings, recommendations, conclusion and implications for counselling were made.*

**KEYWORDS: Gender Factors, Administrative Performance, Teachers and Principals**

**Introduction**

The importance of education in any modern society is to develop an individual with the requisite ability and skills to face his environmental, social, economic, and political problems. Fafunwa in Ogbondah (2016) defines education as that which a generation gives to its young ones to enable them to develop attitudes, abilities, skills, and other behaviours that enable them to develop positive values in society, giving rise to a breed of individuals whose products, whether tangible or not, would be totally acceptable to the rest of mankind. It is in realization of the great role education has to play in society that individuals, groups, and nations all over the globe have continued to evolve ways of enhancing education and its administration. Education is capable of transforming crude, raw, and undeveloped resources into necessary elements for national development.

In addition, education is expected to make a mark in our quest for scientific and technological advancement. It has the capacity to produce useful techniques in agriculture,

medicine, and the management of our resources. It has an impact on the rule of law, national unity, labour dignity, individual moral development, patriotism, and respect for constituted authorities. As a result, the government outlined the major goals of secondary education in its national policy on education (2008). It states the broad aim of secondary education as:

- ❖ Preparation for useful living within the society
- ❖ Preparation for higher education

The need for the aim stated above emphasizes the survival of the individual and society. The national policy on education therefore provides for an integrated secondary education in which a wide range of subjects will be available to students. A greater number of students would require the necessary skills that could form the basis of re-service and in-service vocational education in the industries, in addition to preparing some for higher education.

However, the need for proper management and administration of our secondary education needs not be overemphasized. The emphasis is placed on the role secondary education has to play in overall national development. One of the major roles secondary school education has to play is providing a sound background on which knowledge at a higher level can easily be firmly established. This underlines the need for all available human resources to be fully harnessed and made functional in the management of our secondary school. Therefore, qualified individuals, whether male or female, should be allowed to take up administrative positions in secondary schools.

Human development remains a vital position in the life of an organization, and the education sector is not an exception. Hence, Burlock (2013:48) argued that among the various sectors of production, human capital is the most important one because the other sectors of production cannot stand without the organization that human resources offer. Thus, the use of human resources is essential for the survival and growth of learning, which implies the effectiveness of the school system to a great extent depending on the sufficiency of its administration.

It is noted traditionally that women are discriminated against in society. Onwuzurike (2010:4) agreed that efforts were deliberately made by men to stop women from engaging in ventures with a high percentage of risk and prestige. For example, women were not allowed to carry guns or go to war, etc. The traditional society followed a strict division of labor based on sex and age. They believed that males were physically and mentally stronger than females. Hence, traditional societies prescribed standards of behaviours, tasks, and expectations for members of both sexes. From the religious point of view, the biblical creation story reveals that woman was created out of man, as St. Paul clearly admonishes, "wives, be subject to your husband, as is fitting in the Lord (Colossian 3:18). The effect of these biblical injunctions is the possibility of women being looked upon as inferior to men. They seem to be destined for subservient roles or such that are determined by the male warlords. Consequently, male aggression has always lorded it over women on the assumption that they are the weaker sex. In effect, the male chauvinist feels

that women cannot contribute as effectively as their male counterparts to the development of mankind in most of the tasks of activities. Kanye (2019:6) extends the agreement when he observes that even in the sphere of education, discrimination against women persisted until about 100 years ago. This notion of comparative inferiority between the genders has lingered on through the ages, even to the present day. He agrees that, culturally, it is a form of garden-based discrimination.

As a person's behavior can be influenced by his environment for the upbringing of a boy or girl child, this also establishes a firm phenomenon. Time without number one, one observes parents scolding the girl child over certain behaviors that are often neglected if perpetrated by the boy child. By extension, boys, even at a very tender age, enjoy a lot of freedom in the environment (i.e. movement, association, and play). While the girl child is often overprotected, constrained and her "weakness" as a female is clearly presented to her. The implication of this environmental condition on the boy or girl child is obvious. The boy child begins to solve his problem early enough and develops defensive ability against normal attack from other children, while the girls avoid and run to the boys for protection. Therefore, we can establish that males and females are psychologically conditioned by the environment. Since the experiences are different, psychological dispositions may also be different.

The assumption is that these psychological situations derived from the environment may influence their performance on certain tasks, Asagwara (1999: 65). Another issue that attracts one's attention is the way society views women in relation to men. Women, in their usual way, are seen generally as being weak. They do not understand a lot of stressful situations. They are easily intimidated and are likely to succumb to threats. The women are also said to be very loquacious, giving indications that they would engage more in sermonization than pragmatism in their administration. It is also believed that they feel inferiority complexes before their male counterparts and may appear tough to male subordinates as a way of removing them, though it is believed that they are naturally more human than the male gender. Iwe in Duncan (2015:10) argues that men are physically stronger and more courageous than women. They are believed to be naturally more brutal and forceful than the female gender, but they are also said to be more susceptible to corruption and can be easily lured through sexual and other gratification.

The emotional and psychological composition of society over the years have made it easy to assign roles on the basis of sex. Men came to regard policymaking and governance as their sole domain. According to Uchendu (2003:8), men saw politics as a game that required a strong physique, intelligence, rationally disciplined emotions, and a logical mind. They also allocated these qualities to themselves and assumed that women are the weaker sex who must be seen to be playing second fiddle.

However, education has created an awareness of women, resulting in a radical shift towards women's emancipation and liberation. Moreover, the changes in society have made women politically and academically conscious and also given them due recognition by their male counterparts. The efforts of some enlightened women also deserve commendation through their feminist activities, which create awareness in women to

enable them to understand and fight for their rights in modern society. Gender-based discrimination in our society is gradually becoming a thing of the past. In our society now, women have access to education and are given the opportunity to contribute to national development. We have women, like their male counterparts, in various top administrative positions in secondary schools. They perform administrative and supervisory roles, and they are also decision-makers. The issue of effectiveness in the administrative roles still raises further questions.

The general assumption is that some of the gender factors, which derive from environmental and psychological influences, as well as cultural, religious, and societal role prescriptions, are likely to cause dysfunctionality in administrative performance. It is against this background that this study is designed to investigate gender factors and the administrative performance of principals of secondary schools in Gokana Local Government.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The various benefits that Nigeria stands to derive as a result of secondary education now place tasks on our administrators so that all factors will function effectively. Effective administration leads to purposeful, coordinated, goal-oriented activity. They plan, control, communicate, lead, and motivate the objective of the system. The principal, being the highest managerial position in a secondary school, is no longer the exclusive preserve of men. This may be due to the revolution in education that has provided equal opportunities to both sexes. These female principals perform all the administrative roles or functions that their male counterparts perform.

The factor of relative performance of gender resulting from the principal's position has caused a lot of arguments. Naturally, women are always let down by men and are given duties that are less stressful. A female child from birth doesn't always have different environmental experiences compared to a male child, causing the temperamental and psychological differences that influence their behavior in managerial positions. However, the problem with this study is that it investigates the factors and administrative performance of principals of secondary schools in Gokana Local Government Area.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate gender factors and administrative person performance of principles of secondary schools in Gokana Local Government Area.

1. To find out if there is any difference between male and female principals in the management or maintenance of good Community School relations.
2. To investigate the ways gender factors affect the administrative capabilities of secondary school principals
3. To ascertain if there is any difference between male and female principals in the discharge of their supervisory roles.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were generated to guide the study:

1. Is there any difference between male and female principals in the maintenance and management of good Community School relations?
2. Do gender factors affect the administrative capabilities of secondary school principals?
3. Is there any difference between male and female principals in the discharge of their supervisory roles?

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the teachers in senior public secondary school in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample of 120 teachers were drawn through a simple random sampling techniques. An instrument titled “Principal Gender Factors and Administrative Questionnaire” (PGFAQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts in the measurement and evaluation based on face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method and the reliability coefficient of the PGFAQ was 0.72. The researcher personally administered the copies of the instrument to the sample teachers with the help of one research assistant in each School (head teacher) who were properly guided about the administration of the instruments. The completed two copies of the instruments were collected immediately after its completion. Data collected were answered using percentage.

## RESULTS

The results of this study are presented below:

**Research Question 1:** Is there any difference between male and female principals in the management and maintenance of good school community relations?

**TABLE 1: Gender Factors and management/maintenance of good school-community relations.**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	A	D	(%)A	(%)D
1	Male principals encourage community participation in the administration more than female principals.	57	59	47.9	49.1
2	Male principals maintain better relationship with host Communities than female principals.	54	56	45	46.6
3	Male principals identify with the school community more than the female ones.	60	58	50	48.3
4	Male principals maintain a more functional PTA than the female ones.	58	52	48.3	43.3

5	Male principals are more effective in attracting projects from Communities than the female principals.	58	60	48.3	50
	<b>Total</b>			<b>48.3</b>	<b>43.3</b>

In the above table, the data shows the performance of male and female principals in the management and maintenance of the school community relations; 57 respondents which represent (47.5%) agree that the male principals encourage community participation in administration more than the female principals while (49.1%) disagreed. Again, 45 representing (45%) agreed that male principles maintain better relationship with the host communities than the female ones while 56 (45%) disagreed. Also, 60 represents (58%) agreed that male principals identify with the school community more than female ones while 58 (48.3%) disagreed. Then, 58 respondents representing (48.3%) agreed that male principals are more effective in attracting projects in communities than the female ones while 60 (50%) disagreed.

**Research Question 2:** Do gender factors affect the administrative capabilities or secondary school principals?

**TABLE 2: Gender Factors and Administrative roles**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	A	D	(%)A	(%)D
6	Female principals are more efficient in the administration of school statutory records than male principals.	56	56	46.6	46.6
7	Female principals delegate duties to staff more than the male ones.	48	56	40	46.6
8	Female principal show greater originality and emotional stability in the charge of administrative duties.	58	50	48.3	41.2
9	Female principle are more efficient in the monitoring and organisational climate than male principals.	49	51	40.8	42.5
10	Female principles are more influenced by Societal values than male ones.	42	49	43.3	42.5
11	Female principals are more easily lured by gratification money sex than male ones.	35	58	29.2	48.3
	<b>Total</b>			<b>40.6</b>	<b>43.8</b>

The table 2 shows that the teachers selected were asked to identify the administrative performance of male and female principles which 56 (46.6%) agreed that female principals are more efficient in the administration of school statutory records than the male principals, 56 (46.6%) disagreed. 58 (40%) agreed that female principals delegate duties to staff more than the male ones, 56 (46.6%) disagreed. 58 (48.3%) agreed that female

principals show greater originality and emotional stability in the discharge of administrative duties than the male principals, 50 (41.2%) disagreed. 49 (40.8%) agreed that female are more effective in managing organizational climate than the male principals while 51 (42.5%) disagreed. 42 (43.3%) agreed that female principals are more influenced by societal values than their male counterparts while 49 (42.5%) disagreed. 35 (29.2%) agreed that female principals are more easily lured into sex and monetary gratification than the male principals while 58 (48.3%) disagreed.

**Research Question 3:** Is there any difference between male and female principals in the discharge of their supervisory roles?

**TABLE 3: Gender Factors and discharge of supervisory roles.**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	A	D	A(%)	D(%)
12	Female principals ensure high academic responsibilities through classroom visitation than male ones.	54	56	45	46.6
13	Female principals are more effective in the supervision and allocation of instructional materials than the male ones.	60	59	50	49.1
14	Female principals are more effective in their supervision than male ones.	59	58	49.1	48.3
15	Female principals are more effective in the provision of special pedagogical assistance of teachers than the male ones.	56	58	46.6	48.3
16	Female principals are more effective in the evaluation of staff performance than male principals.	57	55	47.5	45.8
17	Female principals are more influenced by their staff conceit (in relation to their sex) in their supervisory roles than the male ones.	58	54	48.3	45
	<b>Total</b>			<b>47.8</b>	<b>47.1</b>

From the results of the analysis presented in table 4.3 above the teacher were asked to ascertain if there is any difference between male and female principles in the discharge of their supervisory roles; 54 (45%) agreed that female principals ensure high academic responsibilities through classroom visitation than male principals, 56 (46.6%) disagreed. 60 (50%) agreed that female principals are more effective in the provision and allocation of instructional materials than male principals, 59 (49.1%) disagreed. 59 (49.1%) agreed that female principals are more effective in their supervision than male principles, 58 (45.3%) disagreed. 56 (46.6%) agreed that female principals are more effective in the special pedagogical assistance of teachers than male principals, 56 (48.3%) disagreed. 57

(47.5%) agreed that female principals are more effective in the evaluation of staff performance than male ones, 55 (45.8%) disagreed. 58 (48.3%) agreed that female principals are more easily influenced by their staff conceit (in relation to sex) in their supervisory roles than the female ones, 54 (45%) disagreed.

### **Discussion of Results**

Is there any difference between male and female principals in the maintenance and management of good Community School relation?

The results showed that male and female principals show unremarkable difference in their ability to adequately monitor organizational climate. The results agree with the view of Dickson (2004) who does not agree that male principals do better than female principals since according to him many women have demonstrated even superior performance when given the role of principalship. Grincine-Cole (1975:11) also supported this contention by saying that men are not superior to women in the discharge of their roles as principals. Women are always looked down upon because of their assumed weakness. However, statistics has shown that they can equally perform well as school principals and have in some cases shown more effectiveness than their male counterparts (Kokogbah, 2011).

### **Do Gender Factors Affect the Administrative Capabilities of Secondary School Principals?**

The result shows that male principals encourage community participation more in the administration of secondary schools and are also likely to withstand school-community politics. The result is similar to the expression of Herbert et al (2013) maintains that women are limited in their capabilities to establish remarkable school community relations. Male principals have always maintained better relationship with the problem often associated with local politics especially in Communities torn apart by bitterness and feud. Similarly, Nwakaegu (2009) argued that only very few husbands if any will allow their wives to be involved with the problem associated and uncertainties of community politics in the name of running a school; such as many of them overlook this aspect of school administration.

**Is there any difference between male and female principals in the discharge of their supervisory role?**

The result shows that male and female principals have no difference in providing special pedagogical assistance to teachers. This means that female principals perform equally with their male counterparts. The responsibilities promoting high academic standards can be performed by both sexes. Male and female are equal and they should be given equal responsibilities. Neglecting the female child gives the male more strength over the female counterparts. Hoy and Bello (2008;22) agreed to this results when they reasoned that for effective supervision and management of the school system the emphasis should be less on gender based but on the ability of the individual to stimulate or control workers towards effective performance as well as coordinating the various activities of workers towards the school organization by checking performance with goals.



## **Implications for Counselling**

It is obvious that one of the principles of guidance and counselling is that guidance services are for every individual. The following therefore are counselling implications of this study based on the findings:

1. There is need for counselling against gender-based discrimination in the placement of principals in secondary school. This should be achieved through organisation of conferences and seminars by counselors for administrative officials in the Ministry of Education with the aim of advocating for merits and gender equality in the placement of principals in schools.
2. Counselling should be geared towards the need for proper girl-child education and the environment in teaching, recruitment in school. This will give them the opportunity for attaining various heights including the position of principal.
3. There is need for counsellors to emphasize on better job performance irrespective of gender especially among office holders at various levels including that of principal position in schools.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it is clearly seen that male and female principals do not significantly differ in the way school management is perceived or in their job performance. Principals face the same kind of challenges whether male or female. Male and female principals have the same work situation and are bound to have similar experience irrespective of their official positions as principal. High performance records on the job of principal-ship was not noted along gender lines but more as a result of the personal attributes of a particular principal.

However, the only area whereby the female principal is found wanting is regarding the maintenance of school community relations. An area which could be easily remedied by the re-orientation and training but in all other functions of principles there is no significant difference between male and female principals in the discharge of duties and responsibilities of the office.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings the following were recommended:

1. Government should give qualified women the opportunity to perform the functions of school principals.
2. Women in Gokana and Rivers State at-large should have interest in programs that will enhance their developmental skills.

3. School community relations strategies should be part of the curriculum design in order to make things easier for our women that will have interest in the principal position.
4. There should be positive transformation in the school administration in order to welcome our women into office.
5. Cultural practices should be eliminated that seems to emphasize male superiority over their female counterparts.
6. Government and other stakeholders should create policies and programs that will encourage the girl child to take up the administrative positions including principal ship.
7. Workshops, seminars and in-service training should be organised regularly for principals to be alert on innovations of school administration.

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