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## Gender Differences in Administration of Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

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**Abstract**

This paper investigated gender differences in the administration of secondary schools of Ebonyi state. In carrying out this study, three research questions were formulated to guide the study and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant. The population of the study comprised of 232 public secondary school principals in Ebonyi state. Census was the sample technique employed. Also the study adopted descriptive survey research design since none of the variables was manipulated. A 28 item self-structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. This was structured in a 4 – point Likert option. The findings of the study revealed that male and female principals differ to a low extent in the administration of curriculum and instructional programme and personnel management but differ to a large extent in the administration of school plant. It was therefore recommended that government should organise the same in – service training for both male and female principals in the area of administration of curriculum and instructional programme and also expose them to the same styles of personnel management and should at the same time organize separate workshop for female principals as it relates to administration of school plants.

**Keywords:** Gender difference, administration, secondary schools, Ebonyi state and Nigeria.

### 1. Introduction

#### Background to the study

Issues that surround administration and its application in school system are too central to organizational management especially in human resource management. Prime importance is given to the secondary education administration as it serves as a binding wire to primary through higher levels of education. The understanding of secondary school administration or management entails describing the effective characteristics of those currently occupying administrative positions of the secondary schools. Institutional heads are supposed to play very important and pivotal role in the administration of educational institutions. All sorts of commendation or censure ultimately result in the way administration is piloted. Institutional heads are supposed to carry out some duties which include administration of instructional programme and curriculum, personnel management/staff appraisal, school plant management, resource allocation, costing and effective planning, relationship with community and use of practical skills necessary for surviving the policies of organization (Komolafe, 2012) [7]. It is a known fact that aims and objectives of education can never be achieved until and unless educational policies are properly implemented which is the basic responsibility of institutional heads. Olaleye (2010) opined that both the male and female school heads are supposed to play very active part and as well as show uniformity in their administrative processes as it relates to information and execution of organizational policies as well as instructional programmes. This means that they must be acting as a change agent to enable them face possible challenges of the system. Emenalo (2004) also observed that a school head should extend his work outside the classrooms environment, thereby actively interacting with community, and demonstrate the purpose and strategies of institutional plan, mission and vision. In this respect, involvement of parents and community play an important role and help in institutions' development and enhancement. For this purpose, the school heads must be active in adopting the new development plan and must possess the abilities of adapting to the new changes (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004). Murphy and Amanda (2006), opined that institutional head is a person who identifies and shoulders the set goals and objectives of institution which are according to national needs. It is also a known fact that countries that have an effective system of educational administration also happen to be the leaders of the world, both socially and economically. The major responsibility of the school administrator is to uplift the standard of teaching and learning in classroom. He/she must be capable of supporting teachers' classroom

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instruction through instructional supervision, professional development and classroom resources, and the extent to which these variable were affecting teachers performance, depends to a large extent on sex differences.

School head is a planner, controller, director, coordinator, organizer, adviser and a problem solver. Available research by Inyang (2008) <sup>[6]</sup> reveals that school heads' confidence encourage teachers in classroom and their participation in instructional leadership programme. Nosike and Oguzor (2004) observed that the reason for poor quality output in Nigeria secondary stems from insufficient funding, deficient facilities, less job satisfaction of teachers, frequent changes in education policies, poor administration of institution and poor motivation. This is the major reason why schools exhibit poor quality of administration irrespective of gender. In the opinion of Johnson (1997) the school administrator should be aware of goals and objectives of the institution, and should adopt correct leadership style for promotion of the institution in desirable direction. This depends to a large extent on gender of the administrator, which appears to be more important than organizational success.

Gender of the school heads differently influences their profession which is regarded as gender norms (Witzier, Boske and Kruger, 2003) <sup>[16]</sup>. It is also important to note that institutional heads got their positions either "by chance" or by clear career planning and aspiration into school headship. Major factor that affects the difference between male and female working as administrators may hinge on their family responsibilities and marital status (Lassa, 2004) <sup>[8]</sup>. Available research indicated that reasonable number of females are involved in educational administration (Luga, 2003), and (Kamolafe, 2012) <sup>[7]</sup>.

There are two views about the educational leadership stance of male and female administrator. Some researchers found no gender difference in educational leadership, others say that men and women differ in the ways they manage people. Generally it is not clear to establish that female institutional heads tend to adopt a democratic and cooperative style, in staff appraisal, allocate resources adequately, relate harmoniously with the community to spend much time to bring change and implement the change and to solve curriculum matters (Marshall, 2006 and Oplatka, 2006) <sup>[9, 14]</sup>.

In Ebonyi State, there is no research evidence to establish the fact that female school heads are more prudent in financial management than their male counterpart, or more effective in school plant management and as well good at communication and in establishing relation with others. Observation has also shown that the practices in our secondary school system do not show a clear line as it relate to female institutional heads been more effective than their male administrators in getting at institutional mission and vision, developing knowledge and administration of school plant.

In the same vein, Okunamiri (2005) indicated that there is no permanent difference in the work of male and female head teachers. According to him, it is assumed that female teachers are less influenced by location. In Ebonyi state secondary school system, some administrators turn to be autocratic in their mode of their operation, some are inactive on issues of institution, administration and academic achievement. These problems may be linked to the sex of the administrator. Betty (2004) <sup>[2]</sup> has observed lack of aspiration, lack of awareness of promotion system and lack of confidence for success, gender based socialization, lack of cooperation and student rioting. These problems most often appear concurrently whether it has link with the sex of school heads. It is against this backdrop

that one need to establish the gender differences in administration of secondary school system. These call for this investigation.

### Statement of the problem

The persistence problem of student rioting, non cooperative attitude from teachers, as well as fraud or poor utilization of fund have been linked to inability of male school administrator and their female counterpart in school administration to manage their student, staff and financial resources effectively. Also, none actualization of school goals and objective can be linked to poor implementation of school programme and curriculum. This has been an issue of great concern, not only to the ministry of education also to the entire society. This situation coupled with poor management of school plant in some school tends to generate doubts as to whether male and female school administrators actually execute their administrative function at the same rate. Although, educators like Akpa (2002) <sup>[1]</sup> Omebude and Igbudu (2012) <sup>[13]</sup>, Ojo and Okiniya (2008) and Caro (2004) <sup>[13]</sup> have linked these problems to gender factor, they have not actually been able to establish the sex differences in the implementation of school programme and curriculum and as well in personnel management. In the same vein while it is appreciated that school location, job experience and sex may have some relationship with secondary school administration, the differences in their achievement in school administration hinge on these variables is also in doubt.

With the current emphasis of the government on the increase on the number of female works in administrative position for the purpose of accomplishing projects and programmes at the secondary school level, it has become necessary in the field of educational administration to explore the differences in administration based on the sex of the administrators so that problems in the implementation of school programme and curriculum, personnel management and financial management will be free gender biased. Unfortunately, in Ebonyi state, the differences in secondary school administration based on gender are still based on theoretical speculations without empirical backing. As such, drawing the line between male and female administrators in secondary school administration still constitute a challenge to the researchers in Educational Administration. Therefore, the problem of this study is "what are the differences in the administration of secondary school system as it relates to gender"?

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify gender differences in administration of secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Specifically, this study will identify gender differences in:

1. Administration curriculum and instructional programmes
2. school business administration
3. school plant administration

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent do male and female principals of Ebonyi State public secondary schools differ in administration of curriculum and instructional programme?
2. To what extent do male and female principals of Ebonyi State public secondary schools differ in administration of personnel management?
3. To what extent do male and female principals of Ebonyi State public secondary schools differ in administration of school plant?

### Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 232 principals (128 male and 104 female) in the Ebonyi State public secondary schools. Census was used as the sample technique for the study. That is, the entire population was used as the sample for the study. Therefore the sample size was 232 research respondents. The study was guided by three research questions and eighteen questionnaire items to elicit information on the differences in administration of curriculum and instructional programme, personnel and school plant as they relate to gender.

Before the validation of the instrument all the items in the questionnaire were based on the testable assumption postulated in the research question, although content validation was assigned to educational administration and planning lecturers in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria. The advice of these experts were incorporated into the final draft of the questionnaire; each questionnaire item required an answer of very great extent (VGE) great extent (GE), Little Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) from the respondents. Very great extent and great extent are regarded as positive while little extent and very little extent are regarded as negative responses.

### Method of Data Collection

Data were collected personally by the researcher with the help of three research assistants that were trained mainly for this purpose. Considering that most of the schools were loosely

scattered in what one might consider densely remote/bush areas of the local government. The researcher was fortunate to attend seminar organized for principals by Ebonyi state secondary education board (SEB). Those who could not be reached at the seminar were later reached at their places of work with the help of the research assistants. Interview as another helpful method the researcher used in gathering data. This is mainly to get clarity with regard to responses to some items in the questionnaire.

### Method of Data Analysis

Analysis of data was done using mean and standard deviation were used for answering the three research questions that guided the study. This is a form of descriptive research, which Babies argues that it has the capability of putting into perspective, the context in which a problem exists. Illustration of the findings was done using Microsoft excel application and the results were presented in tables.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

The result of the study were analyzed and presented in tables based on the three research questions that guided the study.

### Research Question 1

To what extent do male and female principals of Ebonyi state public secondary schools differ in administration of curriculum and instruction programme?

S/N	Items on curriculum & instructional programme	Male			Female		
		X	SD	DEC	X	SD	DEC
1	Monitoring and evaluation of curriculum plans and objectives are normally performed alone	2.42	0.55	LE	1.76	0.78	LE
2	Teachers joined in using students' achievement data to develop academic objectives	1.93	0.65	LE	1.83	0.83	LE
3	Strictly follow the instruction from the school board before introducing new subjects.	1.99	0.68	LE	1.69	.066	LE
4	On the spot, check was normally carried on the teachers as they perform their duties in the classroom.	1.81	0.79	LE	1.65	0.76	LE
5	Teachers lesson note is normally cross checked and marked to ensure that correct lesson notes were correctly written down prior to the time of actual teaching.	1.74	0.78	LE	1.76	0.78	LE
6	Initiation of instructional programme is normally done with teachers and students.	1.78	0.79	LE	1.68	0.78	LE
7	Liaise with teachers to ensure that objectives set are measureable, realistic and achievable	2.13	0.73	LE	1.64	0.88	LE
8	Discuss school academic objectives in student's forum.	2.19	0.76	LE	1.52	0.54	LE
9	Set objective for school workers in consultation with other staff members.	1.93	0.64	LE	1.79	0.59	LE
10	Monitoring of consistency between school activities and curriculum out by the principal alone.	1.85	0.72	LE	1.91	0.76	LE

Note: X= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation & Dec= Decision rule LE= Little Extent.

The data on table 1 revealed that both male and female in public secondary schools of Ebonyi state do not differ in the administration of curriculum and instructional programmes. The Mean score ranged from 1.57 - 2.42, the implication is that each mean (x) of the items in the table was below the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that both the male and female principals display that there is uniformity on the administration of curriculum and instructional programmes. They also had their standard Deviation (SD) ranged from 0.54 - 0.88, this indicates that the respondents did not deviate much

in their opinion or responses to the items of research question one. The grand mean is 1.72 and 1.98 show that both male and female differ in their mode of administration as it relate to monitoring and evaluation of curriculum plans, using students achievement data to develop academic objective etc.`

### Research Question 2

To what extent do male and female principals in Ebonyi state public secondary schools differ in administration of personnel management?

**Table 2:** Mean score on the extent to which male and female differ in the administration of personnel management in secondary schools

S/N	Items on the extent of difference in the administration of personnel management	Male			Female		
		X	SD	DEC	X	SD	DEC
11	Seminar and orientation on school objectives are organized regularly for the staff	2.08	1.11	LE	2.35	0.68	LE
12	Cordial relationship with members of staff is paramount	1.78	0.93	LE	1.89	0.61	LE
13	Staffs are encouraged and motivated with praises/gift to achieve set objective.	1.63	0.77	LE	1.89	.055	LE
14	Teachers are consulted before drawing any conclusion	1.72	0.82	LE	1.64	0.61	LE
15	High level of confidentiality is maintained as it relates to staff personal matters	2.01	0.98	LE	1.98	0.65	LE
16	I influenced the posting and transfer of teachers from my school to others visa vie	1.64	0.82	LE	1.64	0.61	LE
17	I participated fully in the recruitment exercise of both Tutorial and Non – Tutorial staff	1.41	0.64	LE	1.38	0.49	LE
18	I appraised staff performance based on specific objective	1.31	0.55	LE	1.13	0.39	LE
19	I communicate school objectives to staff before embarking on classroom supervision	1.78	0.83	LE	2.00	0.93	LE
20	Liaise with teachers to ensure that adequate disciplinary measure are meted out to erring students in order to achieve school objectives	1.85	0.72	LE	1.91	0.76	LE

Note: X= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation & Dec= Decision rule.

The data on table 2 revealed that the extent to which male and female principals in Ebonyi state public secondary schools differ in their administration of personnel management. This is evidence on the fact that Mean score for all the items in table 2 ranged from 1.13 to 2.36, each mean was below the criterion mean of 2.50. This also means that male and female principals differ to a low extent in personnel administration as it relate to the ten items raised in table 2 above. The SD on the extent of difference in personnel administration ranged from

0.39 to 1.11. This indicated that the respondent were close to one another in their opinion and were also not too far from the central Mean. The grand means were 1.77 to 1.84 which is above the criterion Mean of 2.50.

### Research Question 3

To what extent do male and female principal of Ebonyi state public secondary schools differ in administration of school plants.

**Table 3:** Mean score of the respondents on the extent to which male and female principals differ in the administration of school plants.

S/N	Items on administration of school plants.	Male			Female		
		X	SD	DEC	X	SD	DEC
21	Protection of school plant and infrastructure are adequately ensured	3.42	0.49	GE	3.38	0.73	GE
22	Demonstrating high level maintenance culture with respect to school plant and infrastructure	3.33	0.76	GE	3.36	0.67	GE
23	Forestalling encroachment into school lands and property	2.89	0.95	GE	2.80	1.21	GE
24	Collaborating well with education management board in providing adequate school plant and infrastructure	3.47	0.52	GE	3.40	0.58	GE
25	Guiding against misuse/mismanagement of school plant by staff and students	3.14	0.83	GE	3.36	0.64	GE
26	Ensuring adequate utilization of school plant and infrastructure for achieving the set goals	3.19	0.89	GE	3.39	0.71	GE
27	Guiding against theft and destruction of school plant and infrastructure by staff and students	3.57	0.89	GE	3.31	0.74	GE
28	Collaborating well with the host community in providing infrastructure and school plant	3.57	0.50	GE	3.19	0.78	GE

Note: X= Mean, SD= standard Deviation & Dec = Decision rule.

The data on table three revealed that the extent to which male and female principals differ in their administration of school plant is high. This is seen on the mean scores displayed on table three above. This is revealed in the table which shows high/great extent on the items to which male and female administrators reacted to as it relate to administration of school plant. Their Means are above the criterion Mean of 2.50.

The Standard Deviation on the extent to which administration of school plants differ base on organization differences ranged from 0.49 to 1.21, this implies that the respondent were close to one another in their view as it relate to administration of school plant.

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female principals on the extent to which male and female principals differ in their administration of curriculum and instructional programmes.

**Table 4:** t – test analysis of male and female principals on the extent to which they differ in their administration of curriculum and instructional programmes.

Sources of variation	N	X	SD	DF	t - cal	t - crit	P>0.05
Male	128	2.48	0.75	230	1.22	1.96	Not sig.
Female	104	2.12	0.80				

Key: N= number of respondents, X= Mean Score, SD= Standard Deviation, DF= Degree of Freedom, t – cal= t – calculation value, t – crit= t – table value.

Table 4 disclosed that in all the items in administration of curriculum/instructional programme and the values are lower than the table value of 1.96. This implies that there was no significant difference between the Mean responses of male and female principals on the extent to which they differ in their administration of curriculum and instruction. Therefore

the hypothesis of no significance difference in the mean rating of the two groups was not rejected.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on the extent to which they differ in their administration of personnel in the schools

**Table 5:** T – test analysis on the extent to which male and female principals differ in their administration of personnel management.

Sources of variation	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	P>0.05
Male	128	2.89	0.69	230	1.24	1.96	Not sig.
Female	104	2.67	0.78				

The observed  $t$  – value is 1.24, and the critical  $t$  – value is 1.96. Since the observed  $t$  – value is less than the critical value; the null hypothesis is therefore upheld. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on their views as it relate to their administration of personnel in secondary schools.

$H_{03}$ : *There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on the extent to which they differ in their administration of school plant.*

**Table 6:** T – test analysis on the extent to which male and female principals differ in their administration of school plant.

Sources of variation	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-crit	P>0.05
Male	128	2.25	0.58	230	1.984	1.960	Significant.
Female	104	1.92	0.80				

From the analysis, both male ( $x=2.25$ ) and female ( $x=1.92$ ) principals differ in their administration of school plant. However,  $t$  – calculated of 1.984 is greater than the  $t$  – critical of 1.960 which means that  $H_{03}$  is rejected. Therefore, male and female principals differ significantly in their administration of school plant with men being more effective.

#### Discussion of the Result

From the result of the data analysis made, it is obvious that male and female principals exhibit similarities in administration of secondary school, especially in the area of administration of curriculum and instructional programmes, as we can see in their responses. The findings on the aspect of administration of curriculum and instructional programme, it was revealed that male and female principals displays a low extent in their differences as it relate to monitoring and evaluation of curriculum plans and objective; allow teachers to join in using students achievement data to develop academic objectives, strictly follow the instructions from the school board and carry on – the – spot check etc.

The findings is in agreement with Adeyemi and Olaleye (2010) who opined that both male and female school heads supposed to play very active role and as well show uniformity in the formation and execution of organizational policies and instructional programme.

Results from the respondents agreed with the hypotheses made that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female respondent as it relate to the extent to which male and female principals differ in the administration of curriculum and instructional programme. Therefore, these responses and results of these analytical findings are supportive in accepting the null hypothesis as state above.

On the aspect of administration of personnel in secondary school, it was revealed that male and female principals differ to a low extent in organizing seminars and orientation on school objectives; encouraging/ motivating staff with gift to achieve set objectives; maintenance of high level of confidentiality as it relate to staff personal matters; and posting and transfer of teachers etc. this is in consonance with the observation of Timilehin (2010) that the reason for lack of quality output in Nigeria secondary schools system stem from insufficient funding, lack of job satisfaction and poor

motivation, which may exist irrespective of sex of the administrators. This also agreed with hypothesis made that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on the extent to which they differ in their administration of personnel management.

Finally, the result revealed significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on the extent they differ in demonstration of high level of maintenance culture with respect to school plant, forestalling encroachment into school lands and property collaborating well with education management board in the provision of adequate plant and infrastructure, guiding against misuse of school plant and against its theft/destruction as well as collaborating with the host community in the provision of infrastructure/plant. This is because the  $t$  – cal of 1.984 is greater than the  $t$  – critical table of 1.960. This shows the rejection of null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals in the administration of school plant. This is in line with the observation of Marshall, (1995) and Oplatka (2003) who uphold that male administrators appears more experienced in the administration of school plant comparing to their female counterpart.

#### Conclusion

In view of the increasing need for effectiveness, efficiency and competency in school administration, it has become imperative that researchers in Educational administration investigate the differences in the mode of administration of schools in terms of curriculum and instructional programme, personnel, and school plant administration. It was discovered that both male and female administrators displayed uniformity in the area of curriculum and instructional programme as well as the personnel administration. While in the area of administration of school plant, they differ to high extent. The hypotheses associated with these shows no significant difference in the respect of male and female administrators, but show significant differences in the mean ratings of the two groups as it relate to the administration of school plant.

#### Recommendation

Based on the findings and result of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should mount the same in – service training in the area of administration of curriculum and instructional programme for male and female principals, since the both shows no difference in their mode of administration in this regard.
2. Ministry of Education should endeavour to expose both male and female principals to the same strategies/styles of personnel management. This will enable them maintain the same level of cordial relationship with their staff.
3. State government should organize separate workshop for female principals in terms of school plant administration. This will enable them meet up with their male counterparts in administration of infrastructure in secondary schools of Ebonyi State.

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