

# **Extent Principals' Attributes Influence Their Administrative Performances in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Ebonyi State As A Reference Point**

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## **Abstract**

*This study investigated the extent principals' attributes influence their administrative performances in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Ebonyi State as a reference point. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses. The design for the study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised of 225 public principals in Ebonyi State made up of 96 females and 129 male principals. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire entitled, "Principals Attributes on Administrative performances Assessment Scale" (PAAPAS). It was validated by three experts, two from Administration and Planning, while one was from Measurement and Evaluation (Science Education), all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Test re-test method was used to administer 100 copies of the questionnaire on 100 principals in Enugu State. A reliability of 0.85 was got using Crombach Alpha Statistic after the data were co-related. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation, while the three hypotheses were tested using t-test of difference at 0.05 significant level. Findings of the study revealed that that principals professional qualifications and principals' job experience influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary schools to a low extent, while gender influences their administrative performances to a very low extent. Some of the recommendations were that principals should be appointed by government based on professional qualifications.*

**Keywords:** *Attributes, Administrative, Performance, Secondary and Schools.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Education is a foundation upon which an individual stands on while carrying out his daily activities. Education globally is an agent of change in many spheres of human life. It is an instrument for rapid growth and development of any nation. It is through education that man learns some ethical values, beliefs and principles that will guide him in his daily endeavors. The importance of education in the development of any nation has made the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013 to state that education is an instrument "par excellence for effecting national development". In pursuance of this statement, the three tiers of government in Nigeria, namely: Federal, States and Local Government Areas had continually allocated substantial part of their annual budgets to education in an attempt to develop human and material resources. In line with this, Ighalo (2011) opined that the development of human resources through education spurs economic development and also the transformation of human life.

The major development of the human beings starts with entry into secondary level of education. According to Tabotndip (2005) secondary school in Nigeria has been the major source of human resources for the nation until of late when the university system exploded into manpower resource production today. The secondary school acts as inter-connectivity between primary school and the tertiary education. It is also at the secondary level of education that prepares the individual for useful living in the society and to gain admission into the tertiary institution. Secondary education is the education students receive after primary school and before tertiary education (FRN, 2013). This level of education is very crucial and critical in the life of students because it is at this stage that the knowledge they gained at the primary level is fortified. This level of education is equally characterized by enlarged, enriched and diverse curricular which also is meant to enrich the knowledge of the students. In the view of Oyeka, (2000) in Nigeria, secondary education is expected to expose the children to diversity of curricula, in both the junior and senior secondary school classes. The secondary school being the starting point of higher education is an avenue for producing literate, healthy and self – reliant individuals who will in turn pave way for wealth creation for human development. For these to be achieved, there is a manager in the secondary school called the principal. The principal is the chief executive, chief security, the planner, administration guidance counselor, the mentors and the hub of all school activities. The failure or success of the secondary school depends largely to his wealth acumen. It is because of these enormous tasks of the Principal that Babayemi (2006) postulated that a secondary school without a principal cannot be called a school, so also a school with many students without a leader (principal) cannot be what it ought to be. Therefore, the principal is vested with the responsibilities of overseeing to the effective running of the school in

terms of staff and students development, adequate provision of classroom instructions, school-community relations, discipline and proper keeping of vital school records. These will enhance his administrative performance. Administrative performances are how excellent the administrator is able with his wealth of experience to carry out his duties diligently. It is measured by the quality of the output or outcome of these tasks. In the words of Alabu (2013), administrative performances are duties performed by head teachers at various levels of education.

In the same vein, Edge, Stein and Book (2005) asserted that the roles of the principals in the school include among others; responsibility guidelines, students safety, students instruction, students supervision, staff supervision, staff evaluation, staff co-operation, school administration, access to school, building maintenance, community relations, school advisory group and reports to district. However, these roles may vary according to their attributes which invariably will influence their administrative performances. Attribute which is the quality or features of somebody have a great role to play in secondary school administration. Some of these principals attributes that influence their job or administrative performances include their qualifications, job experience, gender, age and marital status and these determine to a larger extent the success or failure of the secondary school system.

Professional qualification of principal is a critical issue as it concerns his administrative performance. Suffice to say that principals with higher professional qualification will perform better and more creditably than principals with low professional qualifications. Hornby (2015) defined professional qualification as passing an examination, completing a course of training or reaching the standard necessary to do a job or take part in a competition. From the above definition professional qualification is a skill or experiences that one need for a particular job or activity. Therefore, for principals to qualify for the post of principals, they should acquire Nigeria certificate in Education (NCE) or its equivalent, Bachelors' Degree in Education (B.Ed.) or its equivalent and Masters' Degree in Education (M Ed.) or its equivalent (FRN, 2002).

Job experience is another important attribute that influence the administrative performances of a secondary school principal. The more a principal is experienced, the more his administrative efficiency. Experience they say" is the best teacher" according to an old adage. Hornby (2015) defined experience as the knowledge and skill that one has gained through doing a task for a period of time, while work experience are those things that have happened to someone that influence the way one think and behave. It is in this regard that McClear and Thomason (2009) affirmed that successful teaching experience accompanied by administrative experiences in the middle level positions are perceived as hallmarks of effective principalship. Experienced principals are those that have been in the position of leadership for a period of six years while less experienced principals are those that occupied the leadership position for a period of five years and below (Alabu, 2013). Similarly, Okolo (2001) confirmed that there was significant difference in performance between the head of schools with duration of experience ranging from 4 to 11 years and those with 20 years of experience and above.

Another critical attribute of principals that influence their administrative performances is gender. Many scholars have defined gender to mean the state of being male or female. It is also short form of complex variable system of social differential between males and females found in a society or community (Osindeinde, 2000). It is categorizing human beings according to biological differentiation. It is equally, the classification of human beings according to sex.

Gender according to Emetarom (2000) refers to all the characteristics and the expected behaviours and roles of men and women which a particular society has determined and assigned each sex. It is in this line of thought that Agwara (2009) reported that women performed poorly in administrative positions because of gender factor. In the same vein, Wiles, Hane, Grobman and Hiries (1996) affirmed that men ranked significantly ahead of women as democratic leaders. In summary therefore, one can infer that administrative performances of principals depends to a large extent on gender.

In Ebonyi state of Nigeria which is the focus of this study, experience have shown that the individual, parent, stakeholders in education and indeed the general public are accusing principals of not performing their administrative tasks as expected of them. This is manifested in the indiscipline among teachers and students, poor academic performance of students in public examination, examination malpractices by teachers and students, insubordination of staff, formation of dangerous cliques, and cult related activities. For instance, Okwusebor (2009) reported that some teachers at the secondary school level are also involved in examination malpractices by encouraging students to contribute money (co-operation fees) in order to secure the needed assistance during examinations. This is because students are not properly prepared by the teachers before such examinations.

Ogunsola (2010) commented that results of the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) conducted in recent times by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) have been sources of worry to stakeholders in education. The results showed that only between 24% and 26% of the students passed credit in English Language, Mathematics and three other

subjects. The poor academic performances of students and other immoral behaviours of both teachers and students ravaging the secondary school system today in Nigeria are all attributed to ineffective administrative performances of principals. It is against this back drop that the researchers sets out to investigate the extent principals' attributes influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary schools .

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Ebonyi State secondary schools, the alarming rate of indiscipline among teachers and students, examination malpractices among teachers and students, poor academic performances of students in both internal and external examinations, formation of dangerous cliques by both teachers and students, insubordination of staff and other related cult activities which are attributed to principals' poor administrative performances have generated an outcry by the public. These vices may be attributed to principals' attributes in form of professional qualification, job experience and gender related issues. These attributes have put the administrative roles of principals in the state of coma, hence, jeopardizing dangerously the achievement of educational objectives.

Equally, the poor performance of students in public examinations nationwide especially in the key subjects such as English language, mathematics and some science based subjects in West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) is a source of worry to managers in the education sector. These are also evidences that principals are not living up to expectations in their performances of school administration. The problem of this study therefore, is to determine the extent principals attribute influence their administrative performances in Nigerian secondary schools with particular reference to Ebonyi State.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the extent principals' attribute influence their administrative performances in Nigerian secondary schools with focus in Ebonyi State. The variables of interest are professional qualification, job experiences and gender. Specifically, the study investigated the extent:

1. Principals' professional qualifications influence their administrative performances of secondary schools in Ebonyi state.
2. Principals' job experience influences their administrative performances of secondary schools in Ebonyi state.
3. Principals' gender influences their administrative performances of secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

### **Research Questions**

To what extent do:

1. Principals' professional qualification influences their administrative performances in Ebonyi State secondary schools ?
2. Principals' job experience influences their administrative performances in Ebonyi State secondary schools ?
3. Principals' gender influences their administrative performances in Ebonyi State secondary schools ?

### **Hypotheses**

1. Professional qualifications of principals do not significantly influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi State secondary schools .
2. Administrative performances of secondary school principals do not significantly depend on job experience
3. Administrative performances of secondary school principals do not significantly depend on gender.

## **II. Methodology**

The study was a descriptive survey research carried out in Nigeria with focus on Ebonyi state secondary schools which sought to describe and interpret what is, find out the conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing by observing subjects in their natural setting by collecting and analyzing data (Akujezuilo and Agu, 2003). The study was guided by three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses. The population of the study comprised of 225 public secondary school principals in Ebonyi State made up of 96 females and 129 males. There was no sampling as all the 225 principals were used for the study. Therefore, census sampling was adopted. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire entitled "Principals Attribute on Administrative Performances Assessment Scale (PAAPAS)". It was validated by three experts, two from Administration and Planning while one is from Measurement and Evaluation (Science Education) all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Test retest method was used to administer 100 copies of the questionnaire on 100 principals in Enugu State. After the analysis a co-efficient of 0.85 reliability index was got using Crombach Alpha Statistic.

Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while the three hypotheses were tested using t-test of difference at 0.05 significant level. The response mode was Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) with attached weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

### III. Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do principals' professional qualifications influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi State secondary schools ?

**Table 1:** Mean responses of respondents on the extent principals' professional qualification influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi State secondary schools .

S/N	Item Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Principals dutifully develop the curriculum sent to them from Ministry of Education.	1.42	0.44	VLE
2.	Principals' leadership acumen helps him to provide administrative support services.	1.33	0.76	VLE
3.	Teachers are punished using appropriate measures contained in the teachers' manual.	2.54	0.95	LE
4.	Principals relates well with members of the community so that they will help in the administration of schools.	1.90	0.95	VLE
5.	Principals use dialogue in the settlement of staff differences.	2.19	0.89	LE
6.	Principals carry out staff appraisal for increased productivity.	2.47	0.53	LE
7.	Principals organize PTA meetings to deliberate on issues bordering on school administration.	2.14	0.84	LE
8.	Principals ensure the provision of laboratory equipment for practical based subjects.	2.18	0.85	LE
9.	Only approved levies by Secondary Education Board are collected by principals.	1.44	0.76	VLE
10.	Moneys allocated to the school are not spent on unnecessary projects by principals.	1.43	0.50	VLE
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.12</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>LE</b>

**Key:** Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), Standard Deviation (SD) and Decision (D)

Result on table one showed that with 2.12 grand mean and 0.86 standard deviation, the respondents agreed that principals' professional qualification influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi State secondary schools to a low extent.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does principals' job experience influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary schools ?

**Table 2:** Mean responses of respondents on the extent principals' job experience influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary schools .

S/N	Item Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Principals ensure that all subjects have enough teachers.	1.58	0.44	VLE
2.	Principals discusses with the students matters concerning their welfare	2.38	0.72	LE
3.	Principals help teachers monitor students' progresses through examinations	2.36	0.67	LE
4.	Principals maintain good relationship with members of staff and students	1.80	1.21	VLE
5.	Principals promptly attend to indiscipline cases of teachers	2.40	0.63	LE
6.	Principals uses their initiatives in observing students academic work	2.47	0.58	LE
7.	Principals give proper financial account of the school	2.18	0.89	LE
8.	Principals ensures adequate rehabilitation of dilapidated classrooms	1.80	1.21	VLE
9.	Principals encourages the procurement of infrastructure	1.43	0.49	VLE
10.	Principals obtains revenue from education board for school administration	3.57	0.49	VLE
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.19</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>LE</b>

Result on table 2 revealed that respondents opinions were that principals job experience influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi State secondary schools to a low extent. The evidence is that the grand mean is 2.19 with the standard deviation of 0.88.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does gender of principals influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary schools ?

**Table 3:** Mean responses of respondents on the extent principals' gender influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary school.

S/N	Item Statement	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1.	Principals participate in internal classroom supervision of teachers and students activities.	2.56	0.02	LE
2.	Principals ensure that teachers prepare their lesson notes.	1.50	0.50	VLE
3.	Principals punish students who are perpetual late comers to school.	1.44	0.50	VLE
4.	Principals operate an open door administration.	2.32	1.46	LE
5.	Teachers are allowed some measures of authority in performing their jobs.	1.36	0.48	VLE
6.	Principals ensure good school discipline among students.	2.07	0.70	LE
7.	Principals encourage the auditing of the school financial accounts.	2.29	0.74	LE
8.	Principals keep financial records of the school.	2.20	0.77	LE
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>1.97</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>VLE</b>

Result on table 3 showed that the grand mean which is 1.97 with standard deviation of 0.22 is an indication that the respondents were of the opinion that gender of principals influences their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary school to a very low extent.

**Hypotheses**

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** Professional qualification of principals does not significantly influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary schools.

**Table 4:** t-test on the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent their administrative performances are influenced by their professional qualifications.

Sources of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Decision
Male	129	2.86	0.91	223	0.14	1.96	0.05	Not sig
Female	96	2.84	0.93					

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 significant level and 223 degree of freedom, the calculated t-value of 0.14 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96. The null hypothesis is therefore upheld. The researchers concluded that the mean scores of the principals on the extent their administrative performances are influenced do not differ significantly according to their professional qualifications.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** Administrative performances of secondary school principals in Ebonyi state do not significantly depend on their job experiences.

**Table 5:** t-test on the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent their administrative performances are influenced by their job experiences.

Sources of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Decision
Male	129	3.23	0.34	223	2.04	1.96	0.05	sig
Female	96	3.26	0.35					

Result presented on table 5 indicated that at 0.05 significant level and df of 223, the t-cal of 2.04 is greater than the t-critical of 1.96. The null hypotheses of no significant difference were rejected by the researchers. This shows that the extent administrative performances of secondary school principals in Ebonyi state are influenced significantly depend on their job experiences.

**H0<sub>3</sub>:** Administrative performances of secondary school principals in Ebonyi state do not significantly depend on gender

**Table 6:** t-test on the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent their administration performances are influenced by their gender.

Sources of variation	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Decision
Male	129	2.77	0.26	223	2.41	1.96	0.05	sig
Female	96	2.85	0.35					

The result on table 6 showed that at 0.05 level of significant and 223 degree of freedom, the calculated t value of 2.41 is greater than the critical value of 1.96. The null hypotheses is therefore, not upheld. The researchers concluded that the mean scores of the principals on the extent their administrative performances are influenced differ significantly according to their gender.

#### **IV. Discussion of Results**

Result on table one showed that principals professional qualifications influence their administrative performances in Ebonyi state secondary school to a low extent. This might be that most of them do not possess the required professional qualifications needed for administrative task. Therefore for principals' administrative performance to be enhanced and for them too to qualify for the post of principal they should possess educational qualifications that are anchored on educational courses. This is in line with FRN (2002) which pointed out that to qualify for the post of principal, they should acquire Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) or its equivalent, and or Bachelor's Degree in Education (M Ed) or its equivalent. The corresponding hypothesis was upheld meaning that there is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the extent their professional qualifications influence their administrative performances.

Result on table two indicates that the respondents' opinions were that principals' job experience influences their administrative performances to a low extent in Ebonyi state secondary schools. This is because experience and literature too revealed that some principals are appointed on the basis of government interest instead of by merit. This is in agreement with some writers who stated that principals with little years of experience will perform below expectation than principals with long years of experience. In line with this, Okolo (2001) affirmed that there was a significant difference in performance between the head of a school with duration of experience ranging from 4 to 11 years and those with 20 years of experience and above. The corresponding hypothesis was not upheld meaning that the extent administrative performances of principals in Ebonyi State secondary schools significantly depend on their job experience.

Findings on table three showed that the gender of principals is a critical factor in administration of secondary schools in Ebonyi state. The opinions of the respondents were that gender of principals influences their administrative performances of secondary schools to very low extent. This findings supports the view of Agwara (2009) who reported that women performed poorly in administrative positions because of gender. In the same vein, Wiles, Hane, Grobman and Hiries (1996) opined that men ranked significantly ahead of women as democratic leaders. The corresponding hypothesis was rejected showing that there is significant difference on the extent gender influence the administrative performances of principals in Ebonyi State secondary schools

#### **V. Conclusion**

Principals' attributes are critical variables in administration of secondary schools. Some of such attributes that influence their administrative performances that were discussed in this study are professional qualification, job experience and gender. The findings from those attributes showed that they influence the administrative performances of principals to a low extent.

#### **VI. Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should be appointed by government based on professional qualifications.
2. Principals should also be appointed by government on merit, meaning that only principals with long years such as 20 years and above be appointed to hold the position of principal.
3. More men than women should also be appointed by government to the position of principals since literature showed that men perform better in administrative work than women.

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