



Perceived Influence of Principals' Qualities on the Administrative Effectiveness in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of principals' qualities on the administrative effectiveness in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The study employs the descriptive research survey design. The population of the study was 1954 teachers comprising of 1268 and 686 from 12 and 14 Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas respectively. A sample of 518 teachers was selected through simple random sampling technique. Three research questions were answered to guide the study with corresponding null hypotheses that were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Principal's Personal Qualities on Effective Administration Questionnaire". The instrument was designed after Likert-4 point rating scale. The instrument was validated by researcher's supervisor and two experts from the Department of Educational Management, Rivers University Respectively. A reliability of 0.82 was obtained through Cronbach Alpha. Mean and Standard Deviation was used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that that principal personal planning and communication qualities influences effective administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State to a High Extent as revealed by OBALGA and PHALGA teachers. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that principals of Public Senior Secondary Schools should developed planning and communication qualities that will aid them to be effective in the administration of schools. It was also recommended that principals of Public Senior Secondary Schools should developed creativity and decision making qualities that will aid them to be effective in the administration of schools.

Keywords: Administrative effectiveness, personal planning, communication qualities

INTRODUCTION

The ever increasing public awareness of the importance of education as a tool for societal development, economic empowerment and independence has prompted the rapid establishment of schools by government and private individuals. As the demand for all levels of education continue to increase as well as the number of schools, without a proportional increase in resources, the management of educational institutions becomes more complex and therefore requires administrators with essential requisite qualities to cope with these challenges (Aghenta 2014).

As the administrative head of a secondary school, the principal is saddled with the task of coordinating all the activities of the school, manage the human resources of both academic and non-academic staff, oversee the distribution and utilization of materials, liaise with community stakeholder such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA), report to government (school inspectors) and also interact with the students as well as to attend to their individual needs. Base on this, the principal is the engine room of the secondary school system responsible for coordinating the school activities with a view to enhancing the balance of demand and supply of manpower, as well as create a pathway for higher learning for the student. He thus described the work of the principal as the most difficult task because as an administrator, his works is not only limited to ensuring harmonious teaching and learning environment, but to also ensure the existence of a cordial relationship among teaching staff, between teaching and non-teaching staff, among non-teaching staff, between students

and student as well as student and staff. This has to do with the internal administration of the school which exists in a community or in midst of communities (Adeyemo 2015). Going by Adeyemo's view, the school must have some level of interaction with the community where it is located and this certainly adds to the responsibility of the principal. Under such a complex environment with conflicting and ambiguous goals coupled with the demands of human nature characterized by insatiable needs, the principal needs greater management potentials of being energetic, assertive, ability to assume initiatives, openness to new ideas, tolerance, a sense of humour, honesty and analytical mind.

Subscribing to the view of Gordon (2015) advocated that the principals as a leader who give initiative while accepting the personal opinions of his followers, requires some personal attributes or qualities to enhance the effectiveness of his administrative roles. From the point of view of the above scholars, Peretomode (2015) listed ten characteristics that a principal must possess if he is to succeed in his administrative job. These characteristics include: A *communicator* who must be genuine with an open mind, a good listener, interacts, empathizes and connects with students, teachers and parents. An *educator* of self-directed instructional leader with a strong intellectual and personal depth of knowledge regarding research based curriculum, instruction and learning. A *disciplinarian*, who must work tirelessly to instill discipline in both students and staff with a zero tolerance for indiscipline.

The principal must be a *visionary person*, motivated by a sense of calling and purpose, focused on a vision of what schools are supposed to be and guided by a mission that has the best interest of students at heart. A *facilitator* that understands human relationship skills that includes the ability to build interpersonal relationship with students, teachers and parents. The principal is a *change agent*, flexible, futuristic and a realistic leader, able to motivate, introduce as well as manage planned changes in the school environment in an organized, positive and enduring fashion. Principals' qualities are those characteristic of the principal that make him/her different from others which enhances administrative effectiveness. It is these qualities that defines and distinguishes one principal from another.

The *culture builder* of a person who communicates and models a strong and viable vision based achievement, personal responsibility and accountability. The school principal as an *image maker*, showcases or advertizes his school to the outside world for goodwill and patronage; he projects the image of the school. A *team builder or player* who must collaborate with all stakeholders and include students, teachers, parents and the government he represents. He must always get well with peers and subordinates. And finally, a *learner* who sees correction as a way of building upon weakness, accepting mistakes and welcoming constructive criticisms.

The above characteristics which fall into one or more categories are holistically examined as personal qualities of principal as perceived by teachers against their administrative effectiveness. These are: Planning, Communication, Creativity, Decision Making, Years of experience (service) and Commitment.

From the above personal qualities of a principal, experience is acquired skills or knowledge as a result of long time spent on the job. Experience is built as the job is continually performed overtime; it includes skills acquired from internal and external on-the-job training. Most organizations count on experience as the number of years spent on the job. For such organizations the more the number of years spent on the job, the higher the experience. Experience should ideally be demonstrated, it should be practicalized, it should be seen as proficiency. For this school of thought, experience is a function of intelligence.

Experience is a combination of years of services and intelligence. Spending years in service without an open mind to learn from others amounts to emptiness. On the other hand an event would always be strange so long as similar or related situation or circumstance had not occurred or happened. No matter how intelligent an individual would be every new situation could create a novelty. Therefore, experience would require time (years of service), situations and events to happen or circumstance to occur. These must run concurrently.

Herbert (2013) did not mean to ridicule either the work of the principal or the civil service when he said "the school system cannot be managed like the civil service which is highly bureaucratic, autocratic and vindictive in pattern and content". The school principal deals with the child, the teacher, the community (parent) and the government. The child received the gift of knowledge through the wisdom and organizational abilities of the principal; the teacher works through the principals administrative ingenuity; the educational policies of the state are responsibility of the

principal to interpret and implement, all geared towards achieving the goals of the secondary education. These intertwined tasks around the principal and in the midst of unwilling students, uncooperative teachers and divergent community interest. The principal therefore does not need to be too bureaucratic while dealing with a dynamic child, teacher and community, and does not need to be too autocratic in the midst of divergent intelligence and views. Community here could be an institution that is private or public.

Many institutions both private and public have failed according to Orji (2016), to function effectively as a result of the climate created by the principal. Climatic condition according to Orji is the social climate which, has to do with the leadership style of the principal, his interpersonal relationship with other staff and students, his level of articulation with the community stakeholders, his dependability on the bases of his honesty, and has ability to communicate facts and events. A bureaucratic and autocratic school environment frustrates the system. As far as possible, it is encouraged that the principal should practice those behaviours that promote learning and learner development and success in the administration of secondary schools in Rivers State.

School administration involves managing, administering the curriculum and teaching, discipline, assessment evaluation and examinations, resource allocation, costing and forward planning, staff appraisal relationship with the community, use of the practical skills necessary for surviving the policies of organisation such as decision-making, negotiation, bargaining, communication, conflict handling, running meetings and so on (Ojo, 2009). All these tasks can be reduced to the following: planning, organising, directing, supervising, and evaluating the school system. These activities are those of the school principal who must ensure they are all directed towards efficient and effective teaching and learning in the school so as to be able to produce quality outcomes in terms of students' performance. Application of these personal qualities leads to effective administration of Public Senior Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Hornby (2011) defined administration as the activities that are done in order to plan, organize and run a business, school or other institutions. However, administration is connected with organizing the work of business or an institution. In other words, an effective principal is also responsible in assigning subjects or courses to his academic staff according to their disciplines or areas of specialization. This would lead to efficiency and productivity in the school. It implied effectiveness of the principal. The principal administrative task may extend to interpersonal relationship, which may usher conducive climate in the school as incentive for productivity or achievement as Besong (2011) noted when he studied head teachers' effectiveness in Cross River State. He found out that effectiveness of head teachers is instrumental in accomplishment of objectives through cooperative action burn by the administrative prowess of the principal .By implication, the principal of a school is a planner, director, controller, coordinator, organizer, adviser and a problem-solver in the school (Maduabum, 2002).

The hallmark of achieving an effective school begins with creating conducive school environment. It is believed that school is essentially a cooperative organisation, in which every member big or small, high or low has vital role to play. In this situation, the responsibility lies on all stakeholders in the school to work together with their school principal in order to provide a safe school environment that will facilitate meaningful instructional activities. However, a principal cannot achieve this without being able to perform his internal relations and organisational roles effectively. It is believed that an effective principal should be someone who is able to promote an atmosphere of respect and trust and makes the teachers and students have a sense of belonging. The teacher being the direct and immediate subordinate to the principal, who receives and implements instructions from the principal, passes instructions directly to the students and interacts most of the school time with the students, most of the time obviously have the perception of their principals' personal qualities as exhibited on daily bases, and their administrative effectiveness.

Perception is a feeling, an interpreted observed behaviour, an opinion or a level of understanding of a concept or event. Teachers' perception of principals' personal qualities therefore refers to the feeling of the teachers, opinion of teachers or the level of understanding the teachers of their principal exhibited characteristics behaviour and how these relate to their administrative effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, Orji (2016) observed that many secondary educational institutions have failed to function effectively as a result of the poor school climate created by the principal which exerts

adverse effect on the teachers, the students and even the community who as humans must react in one way or the other.

Ordinarily, when principals failed to perform or deliver, it is commonly blamed on poor qualification. The question is poor qualification in what? The Nigeria Teachers Institute stipulated that the minimum qualification for teaching is NCE but most of the principals have higher qualification than NCE. Professionalism is further emphasized recently by measure of possession of "Teachers Registration Council" certification which insists on teaching based Certificate before enrolment. By implication, the issue of poor qualification as a yardstick for the failure of some principals is ruled out as no head of a secondary institution nowadays holds a qualification below first degree. If this condition is met, what then could be responsible for some principal failures as administrators? What could be responsible that a given school that had been well managed and popularized under the hands of one principal will suddenly become deplorable in the hands of another principal who may even be of higher qualification?

Several works have been done on the principal's leadership styles and their administrative effectiveness, principal leadership style and students academic performances and other related studies. However, the gap is the realization that these leadership styles are a reflection of the intrinsic personal qualities in the principal besides academic qualification. Broadly speaking, these qualities could be acquired such as years of service (experience) or inherent such as commitment, creativity and communicative skills. This study therefore sought to examine the perceived influence of principals' personal qualities in administration effectiveness of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived influence of principals' personal qualities in administration effectiveness of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out how principals' planning qualities influence principals' administrative effectiveness as perceived by teachers in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. Find out how principals' communication qualities influence principals' administrative effectiveness as perceived by teachers in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. Find out how principals' creativity qualities influence principals' administrative effectiveness as perceived by teachers in public senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Questions

To guide the study as regards the perception of principal's personal qualities, the following research questions were raised.

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on ways principal's planning qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers on ways principal's communication qualities influence administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers on ways principal's creative qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested to guide the study at 0.05 significant levels.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of teachers in OBALGA and PHALGA on ways principal's planning qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of teachers in OBALGA and PHALGA on ways principal's communication qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of teachers in OBALGA and PHALGA on ways principal's creative qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive research survey design. The population of the study was 1954 teachers comprising of 1268 and 686 teachers from 12 and 14 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas respectively. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 518 teachers (OBALGA = 380; PHALGA = 138). The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled “Principal’s Personal Qualities on Effective Administration Questionnaire (PPQEAQ)”. A reliability of 0.82 was established through Cronbach Alpha. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Mean values less than 2.50 were rejected, while Mean values equal or greater than 3.00 were accepted. For hypotheses, if the calculated value of z (zcal) is less than the critical value of z (zcrit), the null hypotheses were accepted; otherwise it was rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What are the perceptions of teachers on ways principal’s planning qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?*

Table 1: Mean Scores of Teachers on Principal’s Planning Qualities on Administrative Effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/N	Item Statements	Obalga Teachers			Phalga Teachers		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	RMK
1	Your principal define objective for each unit in the school.	3.72	0.66	VHE	3.59	0.60	VHE
2	Principal plan with teachers teaching methods in subjects.	2.01	0.81	LE	2.38	1.13	LE
3	My principal plan school calendar alone.	3.99	1.03	VHE	2.68	1.01	HE
4	My principal plans for teaching aids to be available.	1.21	0.79	VLE	1.11	0.74	VLE
5	Principal plans school time table alone.	3.32	0.61	HE	3.14	0.87	HE
Average Mean/SD		2.85	0.78		2.58	0.87	

Source: *Researcher’s Field Result, 2019*

Table 1 shows the extent to which teachers’ perceived principal’s planning qualities on administrative effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The result revealed that principal’s personal planning qualities influences administrative effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools as shown in the responses of Obalga and Phalga teachers respectively. For Obalga teachers’ responses, the result shows that principals’ planning qualities influences administrative effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools to a High Extent (HE) with an average mean score of 2.85 and standard deviation of 0.78.

Research Question 2: *What are the perceptions of teachers on ways principal's communication qualities influence administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?*

Table 4.2: Mean Scores of Teachers on Principal's Communication Qualities on Administrative Effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/N	Item Statements	Obalga Teachers			Phalga Teachers		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	RMK
6	Frequently engages in discussion vital and official information and their implications with teachers in staff meeting and routine morning briefing.	3.71	0.80	VHE	2.80	1.11	HE
7	Encourages joint identification of means for attaining goals.	2.90	1.03	HE	3.38	0.82	HE
8	Relies mostly on written communication for desirable results.	2.41	0.61	LE	3.59	0.70	HE
9	Encourages face –to-face communication for enhanced performance.	3.52	1.11	VHE	2.80	0.93	HE
10	Encourages teachers to discuss their major classroom problems with him/her.	3.69	0.72	VHE	2.74	0.66	HE
Average Mean/SD		3.25	0.85		3.06	0.84	

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2019*

Table 2 shows the extent to which teachers' perceived principal's communication qualities on administrative effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The result shows that principal's personal communication qualities influences administrative effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools as shown in the responses of Obalga and Phalga teachers respectively.

Research Question 3: *What are the perceptions of teachers on ways principal's creative qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?*

Table 3: Mean Scores of Teachers on Principal's Creative Qualities on Administrative Effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/N	Item Statements	Obalga Teachers			Phalga Teachers		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	RMK
11	My principal jumps to conclusion when faced with problem.	3.76	0.90	VHE	2.53	0.62	HE
12	He needs all the facts to take a decision.	3.22	1.04	HE	3.66	0.76	VHE
13	Do your principal believes the decision making process is creative.	3.02	0.87	HE	3.01	0.66	HE
14	He believes problems should not be approached in the same way.	3.70	0.51	VHE	2.90	1.11	HE
15	Your principal does not have difficulty defining a problem.	1.53	1.22	LE	3.20	0.73	HE
16	He used disciplined problem solving techniques.	2.85	0.82	HE	3.57	0.69	VHE
17	The principal is committed to school activities and avoids absenteeism.	3.51	0.72	VHE	3.34	0.91	HE
18	The principal encourages teachers on professional development like in service training.	2.33	1.03	LE	1.42	0.50	VLE
19	The principal continually hold meetings with staff and students to discuss school matters.	1.03	0.89	VLE	1.14	0.75	VLE
20	Teachers' activities are closely monitored to enhance teaching and learning.	2.22	0.71	LE	1.40	0.59	LE
21	The students are continually evaluated to assess their performance.	3.21	0.60	HE	3.88	0.74	VHE
22	A cordial relationship exists between the principal, staff and students.	3.41	0.55	HE	3.07	0.81	HE
Average Mean/SD		2.82	0.82		2.76	0.74	

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2019*

Table 3 shows the extent to which teachers' perceived principal's creative qualities on administrative effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The result shows that principal's personal creative qualities influences administrative effectiveness in Senior Secondary Schools as shown in the responses of Obalga and Phalga teachers respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be formulated and tested to guide the study at 0.05 significant levels.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of teachers in OBALGA and PHALGA on ways principal's planning qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 4: z-Test Analysis of Principals' Planning Qualities on Administrative Effectiveness

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	zcal	zcrit	Decision
OBALGA	380	2.85	0.78	516	1.19	1.960	Not Rejected
PHALGA	138	2.58	0.87				

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2019*

The result in Table 4 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of teachers from OBALGA and PHALGA on principal's planning qualities on administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Since the calculated value of z (1.19) is less than the critical value of z (1.960), the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers on principal's planning qualities on administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of teachers in OBALGA and PHALGA on ways principal's communication qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 5: z-Test Analysis of Principals' Communication Qualities on Administrative Effectiveness

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	zcal	zcrit	Decision
OBALGA	380	3.25	0.85	516	2.23	1.960	Rejected
PHALGA	138	3.06	0.84				

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2019*

The result in Table 5 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of teachers from OBALGA and PHALGA on principal's communication qualities on administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Since the calculated value of z (2.23) is greater than the critical value of z (1.960), the null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers on principal's communication qualities on administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of teachers in OBALGA and PHALGA on ways principal's creative qualities influence administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 6: z-Test Analysis of Principals' Creative Qualities on Administrative Effectiveness

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	zcal	zcrit	Decision
OBALGA	380	2.82	0.82	516	0.79	1.960	Not Rejected
PHALGA	138	2.76	0.74				

Source: *Researcher's Field Result, 2019*

The result in Table 6 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of teachers from OBALGA and PHALGA on principal's creative qualities on administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Since the calculated value of z (0.79) is less than the critical value of z (1.960), the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. Hence, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers on principal's creative qualities on administrative effectiveness in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result from Table 1 shows how principal's personal qualities in planning influences effective administration of Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The study revealed that effectiveness in administration of Senior Secondary Schools are achieved through principal's personal qualities such as principals' definition of objective for each unit in the school, principal plan with teachers teaching methods in subjects, principal plans school time table alone. These were agreed by the respondents. The finding of this study is in line with Akomolafe (2012) who conducted a study on comparative study of principals' planning and administrative effectiveness in public and private secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Result from Table 2 shows how principal's personal qualities in communication influences effective administration of Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The study revealed that effectiveness in administration of Senior Secondary Schools are achieved through principal's personal communication qualities such as principals' frequent engagement in discussing vital and official information with staffs, encouraging face –to-face communication to enhanced performance, encouraging teachers to discuss their major classroom problems with him/her relies on written communication for desirable results, encourages joint identification of means for attaining goals. The finding of this study is in line with Nwosu (2017) who carried a research on Principals' Communication Strategies and effectiveness in administration in Secondary School in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State Nigeria. The result of Nwosu (2017) revealed that a positive significant relationship was found between principals' communication strategies and effectiveness in administration of Senior Secondary Schools. This confirms the result of this study.

Results from Table 3 shows how principal's personal creative qualities influences effective administration of Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The study revealed that effectiveness in administration of Senior Secondary Schools are achieved through principal's personal decision making qualities such as principals' commitment to school activities and avoids absenteeism, believes problems should not be approached in the same way, encourages teachers on professional development like in-service training, continually holding of meetings with staff and students to discuss school matters. The finding of this study is in corroboration with that of Nader and Elaheh (2011) who found that there is a significant positive relationship between each of the four dimensions of creativity (Initiating, Flexibility, Motivation, Endure) and schools' happiness to enhance effective administration. Multiple regression analysis indicated that dimensions of creativity are significant predictors of schools' happiness.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that principal personal planning and creative qualities influences effective administration of Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State to a High Extent as revealed by OBALGA and PHALGA teachers. Also, principal personal communicating and decision-making qualities influences effective administration of Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State to a High Extent as revealed by OBALGA and PHALGA teachers. The effectiveness in

administration of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis depends on the qualities of the principal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study findings, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. That principals of Public Senior Secondary Schools should developed planning qualities that will aid them to be effective in the administration of schools..
2. That principals of Public Senior Secondary Schools should developed creative qualities that will aid them to be effective in the administration of schools.
3. That principals of Public Senior Secondary Schools should developed communication qualities that will aid them to be effective in the administration of schools.

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