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**GENDER LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF
BASIC EDUCATION HEAD TEACHERS IN OSUN STATE**

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Abstract

A descriptive study was carried out to examine the influence of gender on leadership styles and administrative effectiveness of basic education head teachers in selected schools on Osun State. In pursuance of this study, two hypothesis were framed. The research is a quantitative study hence it employed survey design in collecting data. Two sets of questionnaires - Head teacher's Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (HSEQ) and Head teachers' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (HAEQ) were constructed and used to collect data. The reliability of the instruments was obtained through a test-retest method and a coefficient of 0.5 was obtained. From the population targeted for the study, 447 respondents, comprising head teachers, assistance head teachers and classroom teachers were randomly selected from 40 Early Childhood Care and Primary branch of basic education schools in Osun State. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis independent t-test, chi-square and cronbach alpha reliability method. The results of the study showed there is no significant relevance between the leadership styles adopted by male and female head teachers in the basic education schools. And there was a significant gender influence on head teachers' administrative effectiveness in terms of human relations. It was recommended, therefore, that there should be no bias on the basis of gender in the appointment to the office, inasmuch as, the head teacher irrespective of the gender is committed to the concern for the growth and development of the child.

Keywords: Gender, Leadership Styles, Administrative Effectiveness, Basic Education, Head teachers

Introduction

The position of the head teacher assigned to lead the Early Childhood Care and Primary branch of basic education school is very important in the organisation of the basic education school system. According to Okolo (2002), apart from directing the affairs of the school, the head teacher is responsible for the efficient utilisation of human and material resources and coordination towards realisation of the organisation goals. Being at the apex of school administration, the success of the school in implementing the educational programmes depends largely on

the head teacher, in spite of gender. The term gender, according to Odulolwo (2011), can be confusing and it may be misunderstood to mean the same thing as sex. Sex is the physical condition of being male or female. Oduolowu further stated that gender is such a pervasive aspect of an individual's identity and culturally oriented. However, in human societies, female and male are usually socialised to behave, feel and think differently.

As it is a known fact that education contributes an important premise in the development of the human resources needed

for the nation's productive sector. As observed by Ishola (2014), the need to maintain good human relation as part of school administration cannot be overemphasised. This, nevertheless is a drive in ensuring effectiveness in educational administration.

However, educational systems have been alleged by parents and the general public of not being capable of maintaining maximum use of the available resources and providing effective administrative arrangement for meaningful educational development. According to Adesina (1990), the level of ineffectiveness in the administration of the school system is associated with the rampant cases on allegations about insufficient staff, low quality of staff, insufficient staff training and development, insufficient supervision, cases of child abuse or negligence, misappropriation or recklessness in handling of school materials, rebellious staff, among others, all which negates professional ethics and conducts expected in basic education sector. Suffice to say, head teachers in basic education sector are having morale problems, in particular with their staff (Ishola, 2014).

According to Okolo (2002), there is an underlying evidence that the effectiveness of the school is closely related to the administrative role of the head teacher. This, to most parents and teachers, the issue of administrative effectiveness in basic education sector is a matter of the person occupying the office of the school head teacher. However, this has generated a lot of controversy as to who can be a more effective school administrator, the male or female head teacher.

Invariably, women are influenced by the societal belief that they occupy subordinate positions, are poor supervisors, too emotional, take things personally and cannot

cope with disciplinary problems arising from learners' undesirable behaviour. This however has led to non-recognition or acceptability of women in certain key positions in government industry and academics as men are always given preferential appointment over them (Barter, 2001). Awe (1990), however revealed that this arisen as a result of the cultural stereotyping of males and females by different communities and cultures.

The findings of Eferakeya & Onyene (1999) and Ogunsanwo (1997) lent credence to the findings that the task of administering the basic education school system involves a number of factors. These include the application of requisite skills in harnessing and utilizing available resources, ability to effectively co-ordinate the school, setting relevant goals and objectives, formulating plans and defining the jobs to be done by each unit. The attainment of each task therefore requires application of effective leadership styles, the stereotype effects notwithstanding.

In addition, empirical findings according to Igwe (1990) have shown that within the Nigerian educational sector, the percentage of male school administrator has exceeded that of their female counterparts despite the fact that women constitute a large proportion of the teaching force. However, this study focuses on basic education sector, known to be highly feminised field. It therefore brings new perspectives to understanding of leadership and its enactment within the basic education subsector. It is on this note, that the unending debates on who is or could be the best basic education school leader is according to Edem (2007) emanated for effective management.

School Management according to Awe (1990) has been stereotyped as a masculine

area. In a study conducted by Lasiele (1999) it was found out that women suffered discrimination in seeking executive appointments and that parents and communities preferred male head teachers to their females' counterparts. The assumption that men are better head teachers than women was previewed in studies conducted by Rinehart and Kols (2018), and Ezeigbo (2006). The result revealed that women ranked significantly ahead of men as democratic leaders and exhibited significantly more effective administrative practices than men. Also, female head teachers were perceived significantly higher than their male counterparts in terms of administrative effectiveness.

Dantiye and Garba (1991) identified some common features among Nigerian women which single them out for managerial appointments to include tolerance and endurance, high need for association, frankness in matters considered serious, persuasiveness, stubbornness to a belief, emotional stability, consideration and fairness. Amali (1991) found out that there was no justification in the argument that males exhibit appropriate leadership styles than females in their executive appointments. Leadership is an important human component in an organised system which is developed through training and experience exhibited through interaction with members of the group who voluntarily accept the responsibility to work for the achievement of common goals (Olagboye, 2004). Ejiogu (1985) in his study asserted that irrespective of gender the relationship between the group members and their leader is critical to the leadership process.

Teachers as subordinate in the line, however may be committed to their jobs and contribute to the success of the school in a

favourable social climate characterised by democratic leadership. In support of this, Olagboye (2004) found out that leadership styles adopted by school head teachers always influence their subordinates' attitude and subsequent performance in achieving organisational goals in spite of gender difference. Also, learners' perception of a head teacher's leadership style could affect the type of attitude in which they exhibit within the school. Hence pupils' positive attitude towards the school and learning resulting from their perception of the head teacher's leadership styles would always influence the tone of the school and its academic performance.

Theoretical Perspectives

Social scientists and management theories have carried out extensive studies in the field of leadership. According to Iqbal, Anwar & Haider (2015), the factors which affect leadership in an organisation include the leader's behaviour, leadership qualities, behaviour of the members, environmental factors, the existing organogram, tasks' expectations, and subordinates' expectations from their leader. Dantiye and Garba (1991) are of the opinion that for administrative effectiveness, a school head teacher should adopt reasonable leadership style so as to endear the staff, pupils and parents to him/herself, since his/her leadership style has a direct effect on the social climate of the school.

Thus an effective management process is a function of appropriate leadership styles of the person at the head of an organisation. Leadership style therefore has direct influence on the administrative effectiveness of the school system. Leadership styles in peculiar to education sector include democratic, laissez-faire, autocratic,

transactional and pseudo-democratic. The application of these styles in an organisational setting are however based on the situational theory of leadership, which suggest that no single leadership style is the best, rather appropriate on the situation at hand. For effectiveness, the leadership style should be both task and human oriented, that is, showing concern for people and concern for production. Concern for people refer primarily to sound and warm interpersonal relations, self-esteem and the personal worth of members. Concern for production denotes successful accomplishment of organisational tasks.

Administrative effectiveness considers two adjuncts of the administrator's functions, namely: administration and effectiveness. Administration deals with planning activities which include describing the tasks to be performed in order to attain set goals, making subordinates perform efficiently within defined limits, enforcing the rules and regulations of the organisation and drawing on the expertise of the head teacher to reach appropriate decisions. Effectiveness on the other hand results from efficient utilisation of available resources to achieve the desired objectives of the organizations.

Administrative effectiveness therefore, can be defined as the means of attaining the goals and objectives of an organization and can be ensured in terms of how the head teacher can control, motivate and inspire his subordinates (human relations) towards the successful completion of assigned tasks.

Purpose of the Study:

In the light of the aforementioned.

The purpose of the study is to find out if gender has any significant influence on the administrative effectiveness and leadership

styles of basic school head teachership in Osun State. In particular, the highly feminised nature of the basic education field requires attention be paid to issues of gender and its influence on the way leadership is understood and enacted.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were generated for the study:

H₀₁: The head teacher's administrative effectiveness in terms of human relations is not significantly influenced by gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of the gender of the head teacher on his or her leadership style.

Methodology:

The study employed a descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study included all the head teachers and assistant head teacher in selected basic education schools in Osun East (Ife-Ijesa) education zone of the Osun State. It covered four Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the zone. These were Ife Central, Ife East, Ilesha West, and Oriade LGAs. The head teachers were used in the study because effective administration in the sector rests on their shoulders. The assistant head teachers by virtue of their position in the school system take up the mantle of leadership when the head teachers are not around. They share in the responsibility of the day to day administration of the school organisation. Teachers used in the study are those who have worked for at least three years, the assumption being that having spent some time with the said administrators, they would be in a better position to validly access the administrative effectiveness of their head teachers and their assistants. Therefore, the

population of the study was made all head teachers, assistant head teachers and some selected classroom teachers in the zone. In which 447 responded. As enumerated in table 1. Two different sets of questionnaires were constructed and used for the study. The Head teacher's Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (HSEQ) was designed to obtain information from the head teachers while the Head teachers' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (HAEQ) was designed for the teachers to assess the effectiveness of their head teachers in terms of human relations.

The instruments were scrutinised by an expert in educational management and two experts in pry-primary and primary education to ascertain the instruments' face and content

validity. After few amendment made, the items on the instruments were judged to a large extent unambiguous and relevant to administrative effectiveness of school head teachers. The reliability of the instruments was obtained through a test-retest method and a coefficient of 0.5 was obtained. Validated instruments were administered to 30 head teachers/assistant head teachers and 15 teachers, respectively. The data obtained were coded and subjected to statistical analysis using cronbach alpha reliability method test given the fact that the leadership styles yielded categorical data. The gender of the school head teacher was used as the differentiating variable and the result is presented in table 2.

Results:

Results are presented in tables based on the hypothesis raised for the study.

Hypothesis One: The head teachers' administrative effectiveness in terms of human relations is not significantly influenced by gender.

Table 1: Difference in the Leadership Styles used by Male and Female Head teachers

Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Cronbach Alpha Reliability	Z	Sig
Female	330	226.45	74730.00	18495.000	-0.743	0.458
Male	117	217.08	25398.00			
Total	447					

Table 1 shows the differences in the leadership styles adopted by the head teachers on the basis of their gender categories. It can be seen from the table that the Z-value obtained in the test is -0.743 at $p = 0.458$. Since the p-value surpasses the 0.05 threshold, the hypothesis cannot be rejected. It can therefore be concluded that there is no

significant influence of leadership styles adopted by male and female head teachers on their administrative effectiveness. Therefore, gender do not influence their human relation.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of the gender of the head teacher on his or her leadership style.

Table 2: An Independent T-Test Analysis of Gender differences Head teachers' Administrative Effectiveness in terms of Human Relations.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t. cal	DF	Sig
Female	261	28.15	9.84	14.27	567	.05
Male	186	21.21	9.74			
Total	447					

The result of the analysis reveals a significant t-value of 14.27 at .05 level of significance with 567 degrees of freedom. Consequent upon this finding, the null hypothesis was rejected while the research hypothesis was

Discussion of Findings

In Table 1, the result indicated that the female head teachers significantly performed better than their male counterparts in their human relations. The women administrators were scored high on human relations because they were less seen to be officious in their relationship with people including staff, students, and visitors. Although, most women were equally weighed down by the demands of their offices. Men on the other hand were seen to be resilient and better able to camouflage their emotional problems to the extent that they could easily handle difficult situations. The result of this finding agreed with the findings of study conducted by Eagley, Karau & Johnson (1998) who suggests that female school administrators are somewhat more concerned about organising school activities to carry out necessary tasks and to reach explicit goals. However, this study lends credence to the argument that male and female head teachers do utilize different leadership styles, in achieving expected goals.

The result in table 2 reflected a non-significant influence of gender on the administrative effectiveness of head teachers in terms of leadership style. Leadership effectiveness was seen as a prerequisite to effective management. A study by Ezeigbo

retained. The result therefore means that there was a significant gender influence on head teachers' administrative effectiveness in terms of human relations.

(2006) revealed that the leadership styles exhibited by school administrators have a significant on their subordinates' attitude and subsequent performance in achieving the organizational goals. This finding corroborate the report of Barter (2001) who concluded that for seasoned administrators there should be an underlying principle that the success of any organization depends on the leadership style demonstrated, irrespective of gender. The studies also confirmed that male and female head teachers should adopt different styles as the situation demands. This supports the justification of the findings of the study by Hard (2005) that there was no significant of gender on the leadership styles of school head teachers.

These results are consistent with the findings of Awe (1990) and Evans (2015). Their findings revealed that leadership styles are dependent on the situation, innate abilities of different leaders, and the characteristics of those occupying a leadership position. However, the finding revealed that there is no correlation between genders leadership styles and administrative effectiveness of head teachers. This study was supported by Northouse (2007) that female and male leaders did not differ in overall in effectiveness. The finding is in line

with Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky (2009) who indicated that it is the fit between leaders and gender and the specifics of the leadership role that influences leadership effectiveness. Also, in meta-analysis and literature reviews performed on fifty studies that compared the administrative leadership of styles of male and female principals of public schools, of over three decades by scholars (Northouse (2007); Eagly, et.al. (2009); Rinehart, W. and Kols, A. (2018) indicates that both gender had some similar characteristics, but however, this study identified similar and different factors as constraining their leadership potential.

Conclusion

Within the limits of these study, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of the basic school system in Osun State is closely related to the administrative role of the head teachers, their gender notwithstanding. It is obvious from the results of the findings that both genders demonstrated effectiveness within the limits of specific administrative indices within the school situation. This shows that there can be no claim as to which of the genders has absolute right to appointment into executive or managerial positions as basic school administrators. There is therefore no justification to assert that men perform better than women as basic school leadership and vice versa. Rather, the yardstick should be based on what index of administrative ineffectiveness is under consideration.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. In pursuant of effectiveness in administrative duty of the office of the

basic education head teachers. There should be no bias on the basis of gender in the appointment to the office. The selection of basic school head teachers should be based on competence. This would ensure that only qualified and competent teachers are appointed to handle the affairs of the basic school system, irrespective of gender.

- ii. With the importance and prestige accorded to the office of the basic school head teachers, many teachers aspire to become head teachers. However, this may tempt the aspired staff to lobby or manoeuvre themselves into the managerial positions without having the prerequisite competence for the office. To prevent this, Education authorities should ensure equity in head teachers appointments.
- iii. Head teachers irrespective of gender, should maintain a harmonious working relationship with the staff, students, parents, visitors, the immediate community and education authorities. This will create a healthy atmosphere that permeates all aspects of the school and will bring out the best from all stakeholders.
- iv. Both males and females head teachers should be exposed to refresher courses, seminars and workshops on modern management practices, especially in human relations, thus, to further enhance their effectiveness in human relations, which cumulatively lead to the desired quality of service rendered in the interest of the child and the basic education programme as a whole.

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