



Demographic Variables as determinants of Head Teachers Administrative Practices in Public Primary schools in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. The study investigated demographic variables as determinants of head teachers' administrative practices in public primary schools in Edo state. To guide the study, four research questions were raised. Research question 1 was answered directly while 2 to 4 were hypothesized and tested at 0.05 alpha level. This study was a survey research that adopted correctional design. The population of the study was one thousand and forty-two (1042) public primary schools and the one thousand and forty-two (1042) head teachers in Edo State. The multi-stage method was adopted to select the sample size. A questionnaire titled: "demographic variables as determinants of head teachers' administrative practices questionnaire (DVDHTAPQ)" which had two sections A and B was used to collect data for the study. Analyses were carried out using mean, standard deviations, ranks and independence T-test statistics. The findings from the analysis of the study revealed that the common administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state were: instructional management, staff personnel administration, student personnel administration, school plant management, financial management and School-community relations; The study revealed that there is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state based on gender. The finding further showed that there is a significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state based on age and educational qualifications. Based on the findings, the study recommended that Age and Qualification should be considered as a factor when appointing head teachers in primary schools in Edo state. However, Gender should not be considered as a factor when appointing head teachers because the administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state do not differs based on gender.

Keywords: Demographic Variables, Head Teachers, Administrative Practices.

1. Introduction

Primary school education serves as a child's first introduction to the world of education, a world which would dominate and shape their lives in the subsequent years. A child's economic and social success is determined to a significant extent by how well he or she performed in school during the first critical years under the guidance of the teachers. These teachers in turn are supervised by the head teachers.

Head teachers as the school manager of primary schools are charged with the daunting administrative task of managing teachers, pupils, parents, physical facilities and other resources available for the attainment of the objectives of education in the primary schools. Head teachers are responsible for the overall running and control of the school and for the maintenance of the tone and all- round standards. The organisation and control of the teaching and non-teaching staff are all part of the head teachers' administrative tasks. Importantly, the head teachers must check the teaching standards by making reference to schemes of work, lessons notes, and records of work done and pupils' exercise books. Some of the administrative tasks of the head teachers include preparing internal rules and regulations in accordance to the school goals, guiding the behaviour of pupils and teachers, ensuring the preparation and update of staff files, signing pupils school scripts or certificates and other official documents, authorizing circumstantial leave of staff members of the school, motivating staff and pupils, coordinating school ceremonies and carefully listening to staff pupils and help them find adequate solutions to their problem (Mosiori & Thinguri 2015).

Head teachers are the custodian of primary schools' administration, they keep track of educational events and implement educational policies; head teachers keep records, monitor students and staff in the school environment. They are also seen as the father and mother of primary school administration. In this regard, a head teacher is expected to be competent in his administrative practices. According to Eberechukwu and Nsan (2012), for primary schools to do well, head teachers must employ good administrative practices. They observed that head teachers provide instructional leadership and run the day-to-day activities in primary schools. Head teachers oversee the activities of staff and students, monitor students' progress in education, motivate and inspire teachers, besides maintaining standards set by educational policies (Eberechukwu & Nsan). The head teachers run students' career counseling among other students' services, besides maintaining school-community relationship. Head teachers are the fulcrum on which the success of primary school education revolves; hence, they interpret educational policies and put them into action through their administrative practices.

According to The Wallace Foundation (2012), Administrative practices are administrative behaviours, actions or activities administrators carry out for the success of their organization. It emphasized that the success of the practice itself is dependent on its rate and quality. Good administrative practice is a sine qua non to school success. Administrative practices of head teachers are the various ways or methods of carrying out their numerous administrative roles to attain the objectives of their office. Procter (2004) opined that administrative practices include both the method of working and the habitual carrying out of the management of the affairs of institutions, including primary schools. Head teachers' administrative practices are a collection of strategies that the head teacher adopts to achieve intended outcomes. Shelton (2011) succinctly categorized head teachers' administrative practices into six which are: instructional management, staff personnel administration, student personnel management, school plant management, financial management, and school-community relations management.

Instructional management or instructional leadership behavior has to do with what the school head teacher does to promote or direct teaching and learning in schools. Instructional management involves planning of instruction, organization, promotion, supervision and evaluation of instruction as well as taking new decisions about improvements of instructions (Mgbodile, 2004). In this context, Haruna (2008) notes

that instructional management is the first and the most important responsibility of a school head teacher. He further explained that schools exist primarily to inculcate worthwhile values, attitudes, skills and competencies in students which should be the main spotlight of a head teacher. This could be one reason why Carter (2008) asserted that the basic guide for evaluating head teachers rest squarely on the head teachers' leadership ability in instructional management. Similarly, Chika and Ebeke (2007) observed that among many factors that influence school learning and achievement in primary schools, head teachers' instructional management appears to be the major prevailing factor.

The second cardinal administrative practices or behaviors of the school administrator are those related to staff personnel administration. Oboegbulem (2004) sees staff personnel administration as manpower or human resource management in an organization. Staff personnel administration includes such activities as: recruitment of staff, maintenance, training and development, compensations, policies and evaluation of staff for educational activities (Mgbodile, 2004). In a similar view, Kontz in Haruna (2008) defined personnel administration as an act of planning, directing/leading, and coordinating the activities of individuals to achieve a goal. It involves instructing, monitoring, motivating and coordinating the performance of people to attain desired success.

Beside staff personnel administration, Boe (2001) has identified head teachers' administrative practices as directly related to student personnel administration. In this regard, effective student personnel management with its resultant academic improvement of the students is the most viable measure of effective student personnel management. Obegbulem (2004) stated that students personnel administration involves all the activities and services, apart from the normal classroom interaction, rendered to the students by the head teacher, staff (tutorial and non-tutorial), the students themselves and even the community that are geared towards making an individual in the school an all-round educated, law-abiding citizen of his community. Haruna (2008) posited that student personnel administration in primary school involves all the activities and services that are rendered to the students for the achievement of educational objectives, which are not the normal classroom instructions. He maintains that it is viewed by educators as one of the main tasks of school administration, a task which involves the co-operation of the head teacher, the staff, students and the community in pursuing the common goal of the school

The school plant refers to the school site, the buildings, the playground, the equipment and other material resources provided in the school for effective teaching and learning (Onuorah, 2004). Similarly, Mgbodile (2004) described the school plant as the space interpretation of the school curriculum. For Engman (2008) the school plants are basically educational facilities. Against this background, Osahn in Onwurah (2004) grouped the educational facilities (school plant) into various types. These are: School building, equipment and school records/books, among others. According to Obi (2004), Educational facilities are necessary tools in the school for effective teaching and learning. As noted by Mgbodile (2004), school plants are needed for developing the cognitive areas of knowledge, abilities and skills which are needed for academic achievement. In view of this, Ezugwu (2004) argued that properly designed and fully utilized school plant with wide array of teaching aids provide effective delivery of school's curriculum are positively related to academic achievement.

Financial management is an integral part of the overall administrative practices of a head teacher. Hence, the management of funds disbursed to schools is the responsibility of the school head teacher (Abayi, 2002). Financial management is the efficient use of economic resources like capital funds (Corbally, 2006). Parsuramen (2003) submitted that financial management practices deal with procurement of funds and their effective utilization in an organization, including schools. However, as Abayi (2002) observed, the financial management helps the stakeholders in ensuring that resources allocated for provision of education, are used for the intended purposes effectively and economically. Similarly, Haruna (2008), on financial management, hold the view that financial management is the raising of funds, utilization of funds, planning of future operations and controlling current performances through financial accounting, budgeting and statistical analysis.

A school community relationship is a series of pined activities and media through which the schools seek to learn about the community, inform the community about and interpret, when necessary, the purposes, programmes, problems and evaluating school policies and progress (Bortner, 2019). It is a mutual interaction between the school and the community whereby they gain mutual help and understanding from each other as well as being fully aware of one another's activities, policies, plans, programmes, problems, progress and failures (Afolabi, 1998). Fostering good school-community relationship is another essential aspect of administrative practices of a school head teacher (Paul, 2008). Although, there are laws and minimum standards guiding establishment of primary schools, it

is certain that the schools cannot operate successfully without public support. For example, having effective school plant requires that the head teacher should have effective public relations that give support in the provision of certain material resources. School-community relations can be referred to as the degree of rapport, understanding and goodwill between the school and the community (Oboegbulem, 2004). This also focuses on the school as a social institution planned to serve the needs of the society. Thus, the school cannot operate in a vacuum; it must operate within the ambit or domain of the society it serves.

Operationally, administrative practices of head teachers refer to the head teachers' methods, ways, steps or strategies for carrying out their administrative obligations or duties. It is a process of implementing administrative ideas, theory or plans by the head teachers to achieve school success. Head teachers' administrative practices in this study relate to the way head teachers carry out their instructional management, staff personnel administration, student personnel management, school plant management, financial management, and school-community relations management. Meanwhile there has been so much debate on how the demographic variables of head teachers could influence their administrative practices in primary schools.

Demographic variables, as conceived by Gregoire (2009), are the characteristics or peculiarities of a given population that vary among members of that population. Specifically, demographic variables of head teachers as used in this study are the characteristics, attributes or peculiarities of head teachers that vary amongst the head teachers, while, demographic variables as determinants of head teachers' administrative practices are the characteristics of the head teachers that may influence head teachers' administrative practices. Demographic variables of interest in this study are gender, age and educational qualifications of the head teachers.

There has been so much debate on how gender could influence the administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools. Pollard and Morgan (2002) describes Gender as the socially constructed belief for male and female behaviours, which also delineates the responsibilities, rights and obligations between male and female. It is social and historical constructs derived from biological sex that demarcates masculine and feminine roles, behaviours, attributes and ideologies. Some studies reviewed believe that no significant difference exists in the way both gender carries out their administrative practices. While some other studies reveal that males are more successful in

their administrative practices than their female counterpart. Therefore, gender was considered as a factor in this study.

Another focus of interest in this study is the influence of a head teacher's age on his administrative practices. The age of head teachers could also be a factor that could influence their administrative practices; this assertion may not be unconnected with the fact that experience increases with age. This further suggests that the older a head teacher is, the better his or her administrative practices could be. However, in some quarters, there is a disagreement on the relationship between age and the head teachers' administrative practices for instance, some studies reviewed argued that age may not affect head teachers' administrative practices while other studies believe that age could influence the head teachers' administrative practices because the older the head teacher, the better his or her administration prowess could be. Hence the consideration of the influence of head teachers age on their administrative practices.

Achievement with regard to school administration requires that a head teacher should possess the necessary educational qualification in order to fulfill his/her administrative obligations. Head teachers' educational qualifications refer to the different levels of educational qualifications the head teachers possess. Educational training of head teachers exposes them to knowledge, skill, proficiency and sophistication required for excellent administrative practices. Head teachers' administrative practices may differ based on their educational qualification. Some studies contend that educational qualification of head teachers may not always impact on their administrative practices while other studies believes that educational qualification may influence head teachers' administrative practices. Therefore, educational qualification of head teachers was considered as a factor in this study.

It must therefore be pointed out that effective administrative practice of primary school head teachers is crucial in the realization of primary school goals and objectives as stipulated in the National policy on Education. A country can only actualize its various purposes of education when the objectives of primary education are met and this would further depend on the effectiveness of administrative practices of the public primary school head teachers as they perform or execute their administrative tasks among other factors. It is on this premise that this study is carried out to investigate the influence of demographic variables on head teachers' administrative practices in public primary schools in Edo state

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It is quite in place to assert that the head teacher is the foundation upon which the success of primary school administration revolves. In this context, the success of primary school administration is supposedly contingent upon the head teacher's administrative practices. Consequently, head teachers' administrative practices can make or mar the success in the school. However, it has been speculated by relevant stakeholders in education such as teachers, parents and Ministry of Education officials that the administrative practices of most head teachers in recent times are poor, ineffective and inefficient. This is due to the seemingly poor coordination of the school activities. For instance, it has been observed that head teachers of public primary schools devote more of their time attending to visitors instead of supervising instructional activities in the school.

Also, it has been observed that there is high rate of truancy and indiscipline among teachers, high incidence of students' transfer from one school to another, high rate of teachers' absenteeism, lateness to school and low productivity which suggest poor administrative practices of head teachers

Other visible challenges appear to be improper handling of parental complaints and lack of cooperation with other community agencies, inability to keep the school office running smoothly, improper accounting of school finances, inadequate maintenance of the school's plants through the repairs and replacement of school facilities or new construction as the need arises.

Could the difference in demographic variables of head teachers be responsible for the perceived poor administrative practices of some head teachers in public primary schools in Edo State?

This study is, therefore, carried out to investigate demographic variables as determinants of head teachers' administrative practices in public primary schools in Edo state

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- What are the common administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state?

- Is there any difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on gender?
- Is there any difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on age?
- Is there any difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on educational qualification?

1.3 Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on gender

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on age

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on qualification

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate head teachers' demographic variables as determinants of head teachers' administrative practices in public primary schools in Edo State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- find out the common administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state ;
- ascertain if there is any significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on gender;
- find out if there is any significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on age;
- determine if there is any significant difference in the administrative practices of

head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on qualification

2. Methodology

The study adopted a survey design of correlational approach. This is because the descriptive survey will enable the researcher to collect information from a sample of a specified population. The design was considered appropriate for this study because the purpose of the study was to determine if demographic variables had influence on head teachers' administrative practices in public primary schools in Edo state. The target population consist all public primary school head teachers in Edo State. The sample of this study comprised 104 head teachers from 104 primary schools. Multi stage sampling technique was used to select the subjects for the study. In stage 1, the state was stratified into three senatorial districts of Edo State namely: Edo South, Edo North and Edo Central.

In stage 2, approximately ten percent (10%) of public primary schools were randomly selected each of the senatorial districts using the simple random sampling technique which was fifty (50) public primary schools from Edo South senatorial District, thirty-one (31) public primary schools from Edo North Senatorial District and twenty-three (23) public primary schools from Edo central senatorial district. in stage 3, pick each of the head teacher from the selected primary schools. The instrument for data collection was a structured Questionnaire titled: "demographic variables as determinants of head teachers' administrative practices questionnaire (DVDHTAPQ)". To ensure the reliability of the instruments, the Cronbach's alpha statistics was utilized to establish the consistency of the research instrument that was administered. To do this, 20 questionnaires were administered to head teachers in the primary school which were not part of the study and the result of the reliability test was 0.85. Research question 1 was answered using mean, standard deviation and rank order. Hypotheses were tested using independent T-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the common administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores on the common administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Rank
1	Instructional Management	104	3.16	0.42	1st
2	Staff personnel administration	104	2.63	0.91	6 th
3	Student personnel administration	104	2.81	0.72	4 th
4	School plant management	104	2.81	0.39	4 th
5	Financial management	104	2.88	0.42	3 rd
6	School-community relations	104	2.91	0.33	2 nd

N=104, Mean score less than 2.50 is disagreed, while 2.50 and above is agreed, SD: standard deviation, significant mean is ≥ 2.50

Data in Table 3 showed the descriptive data of the common administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state. All the indices of head teachers' administrative practices according to the analysis had mean values ranging from 2.63 – 3.16 and standard deviation ranging from 0.33 – 0.91 respectively.

Since the mean of instructional Management is higher than the other, it can be concluded that the instructional Management is the predominant administrative practice of head teachers in public primary school in Edo State.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state based on gender

Table 2: t-test of administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on gender Headteachers

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	46	43.31	1.69	102	1.298	0.197	not significant
Female	58	42.90	2.10				

Not significant at $p > 0.05$

The data in Table 2 revealed that the mean of administrative practices of male head teachers was 43.31 while that of female head teachers was 41.27. This means that male head teachers had higher performance in their administrative practices than their female counterparts; the table also shows that the difference in the administrative practices between male head teachers and female head teachers was not significant since t value of 1.298 at $df = 102$ and p value of 0.197. Thus, there is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on gender

Hypothesis two

There is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state based on age

Table 3: t-test of administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state based on Age

Headteachers' Age	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Below 40 years	2	40.00	0.00	102	-2.342	0.021	significant
40 years & Above	102	43.1	1.91				

significant at $p < 0.05$

The data in Table 3 revealed that the mean of administrative practices of head teachers below the age of 40 years was 40.00 while that of head teachers of 40 years and above was 43.18. This means that head teachers of age 40 years and

above had higher performance in their administrative practices than head teachers below the age of 40 years; the table also shows that the difference in the administrative practices between head teachers whose age is below 40 years and head teachers whose age is 40 years and above was significant since t value of -2.342 at df = 102 and p value of 0.021. Thus, there is a significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on age

Hypothesis three

There is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state based on qualification

Table 4: t-test of administrative practices of head teachers in primary schools in Edo state based on Qualification

Qualification	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Decision
NCE/B.Sc.(Ed)	74	42.66	0.56	102	-2.294	0.024	significant
PGDE/M.Ed/MSc.	30	41.93	0.52				

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Data in Table 4 revealed that the mean of administrative practices of head teachers who hold NCE/B.Sc.(Ed) was 42.66 while that of head teachers who hold PGDE/M.Ed/MSc was 43.18. This means that head teachers with higher qualifications had higher performance in their administrative practices than head teachers with lower qualifications; the table also shows that the difference in the administrative practices between head teachers with lower qualifications and head teachers with higher qualifications was significant since t value of -2.342 at df = 102 and p-value of 0.021. Thus, there is a significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on educational qualifications

4. Discussion of findings

The common administrative practice of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state is instructional management. Although the head teachers engage in other administrative practices like personnel administration (staff and student), school plant management, financial management and school-community relations management, it is not as common among them as they carry out instructional supervision. The reason could be that the head teachers are aware that the main strategy that could lead to administrative success in the school system is the effectiveness and efficiency of instructional supervision. This validated the claim of Haruna (2008) that instructional management is the first and the most important responsibility of a school head teacher. This study is in agreement with Adeniyi and Omotoso (2014) who categorized principals' and head teachers' administrative practices or behaviours as instructional management, personnel administration (staff and student), school plant management, financial management and school-community relations

management. This study is also in agreement with Mgbodile (2004) who grouped head teachers' administrative practices or behaviours about school administration into six broad areas namely: school-community relationship, curriculum and instruction, pupil personnel, staff personnel, physical facilities, equipment and business management.

The findings from hypothesis one revealed that there was no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on gender. This could be because the male and the female headteachers are conversant with their roles as the administrative head of the primary school system and as such strive to put in their best in their duties to succeed in their leadership roles to portray themselves as good examples for their subordinates to emulate. This finding conformed to the findings of Ekere (2021) who found that there was no significant difference between male and female principals in the utilization of legal provisions in secondary school administration in Cross River State, Nigeria. This study is in line with Nwaribeaku, Francis, Nwamaka and Nwakaegohis (2021) whom in their study revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female principals on their utilization of mandatory school records in secondary school administration in Anambra State.

The findings from hypothesis two revealed that there was a significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on age. One possible explanation for this is that young head teachers are open to new ideas and are more dynamic in performing their administrative tasks thereby adapting easily to the changes in administrative practices as a result of the dynamic nature of the world. Also, the significant difference observed could be because the older head

teachers are more experienced in carrying out their administrative tasks and more effective in their duties since experience comes with age. The result of this study supports the findings of Onubuleze (2018) who found that there was a significant difference in the performance of principals in the task areas of management of secondary education in Nsukka Education Zone based on their ages. However, this study disagrees with the findings of Batool, Sajid, Khattak, and Saleem (2016) who found no significant difference in the impact of conflict management style at the secondary school level based on the principal's age

The findings from hypothesis three revealed that there was a significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on qualification. This could be because head teachers with higher are more exposed academically and pedagogically as a result of more training and education that they have acquired over time. This finding agrees with the findings of Walson and Vita-Agundu (2023) who found that there was a significant difference in principals' performance in the management of senior secondary schools in Rivers State based on their qualifications. However, the finding of this study disagrees with the finding of Mohammed, Edu and Etoh (2020) who found no significant difference between principals' educational qualification and their administrative competence in senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

5. Implication for Educational Administration

Primary school education serves as a child's first introduction to the world of education, a world which would dominate and shape their lives in the subsequent years. A child's economic and social success is determined to a significant extent by how well he or she performs in school during the first critical years under the guidance of the teachers. These teachers in turn are supervised by the head teachers. Its goals therefore cannot be fully achieved if primary schools are not effectively and efficiently administered and supervised by the head teachers. It is therefore important that school administrators should adequately perform their administrative tasks effectively regardless of their gender, age or educational qualification so that the objective for which the primary school education was established can be achieved.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was observed that the common administrative practice of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state is instructional management; there is no significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on gender. There is a significant difference in the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state based on age and qualification.

7. Recommendations

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

- The head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state should be dynamic in adopting their administrative practices to improve the school's effectiveness in the state
- Gender should not be considered as a factor when appointing head teachers in public primary schools because gender does not have significant influence on the administrative practices of head teachers in public primary schools in Edo state
- Age should be considered as a factor when appointing school head in public primary schools in Edo state because experience increases with age and the experience can make a difference as the head of the school system.
- Educational Qualifications should be considered as a factor when appointing school administrators in public primary schools in Edo state because administrators with higher academic qualifications tend to perform better in the position of leadership due to their academic exposure.

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