

Management of Workforce Diversity and Administrative Performance of Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent to which management of workforce diversity predicted administrative performance of secondary schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State. To achieve the purpose of the study, one purpose was structured; one research question raised and one null hypothesis was formulated. Correlational research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 735 Principals and Vice Principals in Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. This includes 251 Principals and 484 Vice Principals spread across all the 251 Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. Multi-stage sampling techniques (Hat and draw method, proportionate sampling and convenience sampling technique) were used to select 294 Principals and Vice Principals representing 40% of the study population drawn from 98 Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. Two sets of instruments were used for data collection, these include: Management of Workforce Diversity Questionnaire (MWDQ) and "Principals' Administrative Performance Questionnaire (PAPQ). The instruments were face validated by three experts. The reliability of the instruments was determined using inter-item method of reliability. The instrument was subjected to Cronbach Alpha Analysis and the indices of .97 and .86 for MSDQ and PAPQ respectively were obtained. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistic was used to analyze the data. The R-coefficient of the PPMC was used to answer the research question and to test the null hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Finding of the study revealed that, principals' management of workforce diversity significantly predict their administrative performance in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. It was concluded that management of workforce diversity significantly predict administrative performance of secondary schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State. It is recommended amongst others that, Principals should nourish the diverse workforce in the school and design strategies to provide opportunities for talent development.

INTRODUCTION

The school is a social organization designed to achieve predetermined educational and societal goals. The school is a conglomeration of human, material, and financial resources that are geared towards the achievement of set goals. Out of these resources, management of human resources is most critical for goal achievement. Management of human resources is necessary because of the differences in human behavioral pattern who comes together to interact in a social organization. This is where the principal's managerial know-how comes to bear because as he/she is expected to be able to harmonize the different units and staff diversity in the school to achieve the school's set goals.

Diversity exists amongst every group of two or more persons. Diversity refers to differences existing between people. Diversity is the representation of individual differences and similarities in the majority. In other words, diversity is a mixture of different identities, backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, value judgments, ages, genders, demographic structures, professional experience, physical abilities, educational levels, family status and personal dispositions in any group, community, or organization. Stoner *et al.* (2014) noted that diversity among staff members refers to the unique advantages that each employee brings to the workplace. This means that staff diversity is part of the human resource assets that can be harnessed for the good of the organization because it exists among staff members in every organization. In the school as an organization, staff diversity

should be harnessed because of the potential advantages it can bring to bear in public secondary school administration. This implies that staff workforce diversity is a blessing and not a curse.

Workforce diversity means the understanding of individuals' uniqueness and recognition of individual differences. It is the heart of human resource management where it identifies the human attributes such as race, gender, and age in to a much broader dimension. By extension, workforce diversity includes the entire spectrum of human characteristics such as age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation (Jayne and Dipboye, 2014). In a work environment, racism, prejudice, and lack of respect for others are infused into the workplace without mutual respect for individual differences. When two or more people have different views about an issue or a subject; such can escalate into a violent force in the workplace. If the employees are not well managed to cope with diversity to reduce such occurrences, it may have negative consequences on performance of the organization (Shenita and Jamie, 2016).

Management of workforce diversity is the improvement of the organizational environment for all employees with differences and similarities that could contribute to the organization's strategic competitiveness (Thomas, 2015). Management of workforce diversity is not just bringing diverse employees together, it means to appropriately respond and appreciate their individual needs, values, beliefs, and the different needs that diverse people bring to the school. It also means finding the most effective ways to utilize talents and skills of diverse employees by correcting misconceptions about how and why different employees differ from one another. The advantages of management of workforce diversity according to Akinnusi *et al.* (2017) are the full utilization of human resources; reduced interpersonal conflicts; enhanced work relationships based on mutual respect; a shared organizational vision and increased commitment among diverse employees; greater innovations, and flexibility; improved productivity. Diversity management focuses on maximizing the skills of all employees to contribute to organizational goals. Although managing workforce diversity makes human resource management in schools a challenging task, the failure to harness its advantages can bring about the under-utilization of staff and conflict can also arise if workforce diversity is not managed.

Partners, (2017) stated that, for managers to manage diversity effectively, they have to come up with a diversity plan. That plan will involve mapping out a way to create an appreciation for diversity in all employees in the workplace. And also, consider identifying critical task, arranged in a logical order, establish priority systems and order to achieve the expected results. For organization to successfully run smoothly without diversity, they have to create a successful management of diversity programme that would set and utilize essential key components of handling diversity in the organization (Algahtani, 2014). Managers must have fair ideas or be aware of certain skills on how to necessarily organize the right tools to create, and manage diversity in workplace.

Staff who implement curriculum in secondary school are the teachers. Teachers are arguably the most important members of the school and society. They give children purpose, set them up for success as citizens of our world, and inspire in them a drive to succeed in life. A teacher's role is to shape the life chances of young people by imparting knowledge- bringing the curriculum to life. The teacher job role is expansive. It ranges from imparting knowledge to safeguarding children's welfare, inspiring critical thought and moral values. The role of a teacher is multi-dimensional but complementary. It requires great professionalism and dedication. They come into the teaching profession with their diverse personalities which must be properly managed. Thus, the principals' administrative performance can be adjudged based on their abilities in workforce diversity management.

The principal is the administrative head of the school, on his shoulders rest the success or failure of the school. The principal is vested with many responsibilities regarding the management of students, teachers, school facilities, and diversities inherent in them. The roles of school principals have been on the increase. Principals play the roles of supervisors, classroom teachers, community leaders and government's representatives. Principals are responsible for personnel management, making sure that employees are physically present and working to the best of their ability. As a matter of fact, principals are held accountable for academic achievement of all students, and their behavioural conducts. Their ability to successfully manage different aspects of the school to achieve it predetermined goals is termed effective school administrative performance.

Principals' administrative performance refers to the ability of the school principal to plan, organize, coordinate and command the resources in the school; towards achieving the intended set goals of education (Mbon and Akpan, 2015). Every principal desires an effective attainment of set goals in the school. Administrative performance of secondary school can be expressed in areas of supervision of instruction, school discipline, healthy school-community relationships, and the organization of staff meetings, handling grievances of staff, team work, effective communication, healthy school morale, decision making and conflict management among others. It is common sense to say that principals who are flexible in the management of workforce diversity in the daily operations of the school could achieve school administrative effectiveness.

Administration of schools is the main function of the school principal, and their effective performance is a function of the principals' managerial skillfulness. There are observed complaint in Akwa Ibom State and Nigeria in general that principals of schools seem to be ineffective in schools administration. This is observed from the increased rate of violation of human rights in the school, high rate of students' and staff's indiscipline, poor supervision of instruction by the principals, and staff and students' involvement in examination malpractice, poor record keeping, poor communication in the school, poor conflict management and poor interpersonal relationships. This has presently made principals to score low record in administrative performance in the state. Obasi and Igbudu, (2021) observed that a close look at some secondary schools reveals frequent cases of mutual suspicion, formation of cliques, discriminatory behaviours, favouritism and the like. All these lead to conflicts, disharmony, frustration and antagonism in an organization and consequently, impede the effectiveness and efficiency of the school.

Furthermore, the principals' failure to effectively perform their administrative duties in the school could bring about poor harmonious relationship amongst school personnel and the community, high rate of examination misconduct, fraudulent examination registration, poor instructional delivery by teachers, truancy, breaking of bounds by students, involvement in cultism, indecent relationship between teachers and students and students poor academic performance. Nwokocho (2014) observed that the seeming diverse populations in secondary schools appears to create an ideal breeding ground for conflict and misunderstanding. The author added that such situation usually result in the feelings of alienation among the teachers and between teachers and management. It is assumed that if principals are able to manage staff diversity in the school it could solve the problem of poor administrative performance in secondary schools. Hence, School administration requires the co-operation of the principals and the teachers in the smooth day to day running of the school. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the extent to which management of workforce diversity predicts administrative performance of Public Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

In Akwa Ibom State, some public secondary school principals appear to perform their administrative responsibilities poorly. This is evidenced in cases where some principals have been accused of their inability to manage the staff misconducts. The prevalence of anti-social vices in schools seems to be linked to poor administrative performance by the principals. Some principals appear to shy away from taking disciplinary actions against staff. The situation seems worse when principals share responsibilities to staff without considering the diversity that exist amongst them. This poor administrative performance seems to have negative effects on the productivity of the teachers and the administrative performance level of the principal such as poor harmonious relationship amongst school personnel and the community, poor instructional delivery by teaching staff, truancy, students' involvement in school social vices, and poor academic performance of students.

This problem seems to be blamed on principals' inability to manage workforce diversities. Poor management of workforce diversity can hinder good working relationships in school, cooperation and team spirit. It can also lead to conflict, chaos and poor performance by principals. In a school community where cultural, religious and other diversities exist, there seems to be conflict of interest among staff. Conflicts such as cultural differences, organizational politics, nepotism, refusal to place talented staff in appropriate position as a result of ethnicity and religious sentiment becomes inevitable. Principals seem to under-perform in school administration where these observed diversities are not properly managed. It is against this background that this study suggests that if staff workforce diversity among staff is properly managed, it could enhance

principals' administrative performance in secondary schools. The question therefore is, to what extent does management of workforce diversity predicts administrative performance of Public Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which management of workforce diversity predicts administrative performance of Public Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question

To what extent does management of workforce diversity predict administrative performance of Public Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypothesis

Management of workforce diversity does not significantly predict administrative performance of Public Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State.

RESEARCH METHOD

Design of the Study

The study adopted a correlational research design. This design is used because it describes the relationship that exists between two or more variables, the strength and direction of the relationship without manipulating them. Hence, the reason for the choice of this design is that it sought the relationship between the variables.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 735 principals and Vice Principals in Public Secondary Schools Akwa Ibom State. This comprise of 251 Principals and 484 Vice Principals who are working in all the 251 in Public Secondary Schools Akwa Ibom State

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample of this study consisted of 294 principals and vice principals representing 40% of the study population. Multistage sampling technique was used for the study. At first, the study area was allowed to remain in the already existing cluster of three senatorial districts: Akwa Ibom North-East, Akwa Ibom North-West and Akwa Ibom South. Schools in each cluster still remained in its local education committees (LEC). Hat and draw method was used in selecting 98 out of 251 Public Secondary Schools. This represents 39% of secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Then proportionate sampling was used to select 294 out of 735 Principals and Vice Principals in secondary schools. This represents 40% of principals in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Convenience sampling technique was used in selecting 2 teachers to rate each principal's administrative performance. Teachers do not constitute the population of the study. The reason for choosing two teachers per principal was as a result of need for uniformity in the number of teachers who rated each principal and also to avoid principals being biased in rating themselves.

Instrumentation

Two sets of instruments were used for the study. These include: a researcher's developed questionnaire entitled; "Management of Workforce Diversity Questionnaire (MWDQ)" and "Principals' Administrative Performance Questionnaire (PAPQ)". MWDQ was used to generate data from teachers on how principals manage staff diversity. Thirty-five items on MWDQ were developed in line with the constructs of the independent variable while PAPQ, made up of twenty items was designed to obtain information from Teachers on the level of Principals' effective performance. Twenty items were developed in line with the constructs of

the dependent variable. Both instruments were measured on a four-point rating scale: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A) – 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2 points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point.

Validation of the Instrument

The instruments were validated by three validates: one from the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, and two experts from the Department of Educational Management and Planning, all from Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo.

Reliability of the Instruments

To establish the reliability and internal consistency of the instruments, an inter-item method of reliability was used. The instruments were administered once to 20 teachers from the population not selected for the study. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient Analysis. The result of the analyses indicated reliability indices of .97 and .86 for MWDQ and PAPQ respectively. These showed that the instruments were reliable enough for the study.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistic was used to answer the research question and to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Decision Rule

In answering the research questions, the decision rule by Uzoagulu (2011) was used to determine the extent of prediction between Management of Staff Diversity and Principals' Administrative Performance.

RESULTS

Research Question: To what extent does management of workforce diversity predict administrative performance of Public Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 1: Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for the extent of prediction between management of workforce diversity and administrative performance

n=291					
Variable	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal	Decision
Workforce diversity	8457	489169	46441	.506	Moderate Positive Relationship
Administrative performance	29882	1752498			

Result in Table 1 shows the type and strength of relationship between management of workforce diversity and administrative performance of secondary schools Principals. The results reveal that the calculated r-value of .506 is moderate in nature and in a positive direction. This therefore, means that there is a moderate positive prediction of administrative performance of secondary schools Principals by management of workforce diversity. The positive relationship occurs because increase in principals' management of workforce diversity leads to their high administrative performance of secondary schools.

Testing of Null Hypothesis: Management of workforce diversity does not significantly predict administrative performance of Public Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Result Analysis of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for the extent of Prediction between Management of Workforce Diversity and Administrative Performance of Secondary Schools Principals

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value	r-crit	Decision at $P \leq 0.05$
Workforce diversity	8457	489169	46441	.506	.088	.001*
Administrative Performance	29882	1752498				

* = Significant at $P \leq 0.05$, $N=291$; $df= 289$, Source: Field survey (2024)

The result of the analysis presented in Table 2 revealed that the calculated-r value of .506 is greater than the critical r-value of .088 at .05 level of significance with 289 degree of freedom. The result is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that “Management of workforce diversity does not significantly predict administrative performance of Public Secondary Schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State” is rejected. This means that, there is a significant extent of prediction between management of workforce diversity and administrative performance of secondary schools Principals.

Finding Based on Research Question

Management of workforce diversity to a moderate extent predict administrative performance of secondary schools Principals

Finding Based on Research Hypothesis

There is a significant extent of prediction between of management of workforce diversity and administrative performance of secondary schools Principals.

DISCUSSION OF FINDING

Management of Workforce Diversity and Administrative Performance

The result of Hypothesis showed that there is a significant extent of prediction between management of workforce diversity and administrative performance of secondary schools Principals. This result simply means that principals who want to perform well in their school administration should consider the diversity of workforce in the school. The reason for the outcome of this study may be due to the fact that responsibilities are given to teachers based on qualification, experience and without ethnic inclinations. Some principals could have also paired younger teachers with the old ones for mentorship. With these, the diversity found in staff workforce is controlled and school administration could be seen as highly performing. This finding is in line with the findings of Usulor *et al.* (2023) who found in their study that wrong perception and interpretation of workforce diversity affects employees’ performance. This finding is in line with the findings of Chinyere, (2022) who found that the ways of managing workforce diversity in public secondary is an encompassing that will result in minimizing the impact of the diversity in schools.

This finding is also in line with the findings of Agbaeze *et al.* (2019) who agreed that workforce diversity is a vital dimension in the progress of manufacturing firms. According to the authors, for an organization to succeed, it is important for to know the benefits of having a diverse workforce and when an inclusive environment is established, it can lead to better service delivery, increased productivity and improved

employee commitment to the organization. It is therefore necessary that principals should have some administrative strategies put in place for the management of workforce diversities among teachers.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded based on the findings that management of workforce diversity significantly relate to administrative performance of secondary schools Principals in Akwa Ibom State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended based on the finding and conclusion of this study that:

- i. Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups should organize sensitization programmes that will promote national consciousness and religious tolerance in diversity amongst secondary school personnel.
- ii. Principals need to nourish the diverse workforce and design strategies to provide opportunities for talent development.

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