

## EFFECT OF PRINCIPALS' GENDER, AGE AND MARITAL STATUS ON ADMINISTRATIVE PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EDO STATE

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### **Abstract**

*This study was conducted to ascertain the perceived influence of principals' gender, age and marital status on their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State. Three specific purposes, three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample of the study was 408 respondents. The data obtained were analysed using Cronbach Alpha Statistics. Then, the reliability co-efficient of 0.85 was obtained. The data collected for the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that: the gender of the principals, their age, and their marital status did not influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State. The test of the hypotheses indicated that there was no significant difference in the administrative performance of the principals based on their gender, age and marital status. Based on these findings, some recommendations were made, among others that male and female teachers should be given equal opportunity in the appointment of principals in the public secondary schools since gender has no influence in the principals' administrative performance.*

*Keywords: Age; Gender; Marital status; Performance; Public schools*

### **Introduction**

The works of principals are highly complex and important. Principals have many administrative jobs to be carried out in secondary schools. Administrative tasks or performance refers to duties which principals are to undertake in the course of running secondary schools. According to Alabu (2013) administrative performance refers to duties performed by head teachers in secondary schools. Edge, Stein and Book (2005) stated the following roles of the principal to include; responsibility guidelines, student safety, student instruction, student supervision, staff supervision, staff evaluation, staff co-operation, school administration, access to school, building maintenance, community relations, school advisory group and reports to district.

The administrative performance of secondary school principals varies. The variation is as a result of principals' attributes. The principals' attributes that may influence their administrative performance are professional qualifications, job experience, gender, age and marital status. These principals' attributes of professional qualifications, job experience, gender, age and marital status determine to a large extent the success or failure of the secondary school system. Education Gazette (2001) stated that principal's personality does influence the aspirations and goals of the school system.

It is a common belief that age play very important role in leadership behaviour. Age is one of the variables that may affect principals' duties. When principals are ageing, they tend to be less useful and energetic in their administrative performance. Some young principals are active and more zealous in their duty posts like coming to school early, handling indiscipline cases among students and teachers and adequate supervision of student instructions. Young principals are principals who are forty-four (44) years and below in age. On the other hand, old principals are principals who are forty-five (45) years and above (Alabu, 2013). The old principals work with accumulated experience and this positively show in the achievement of the goals of secondary schools through proper staff personnel management and school community relationships. Okolo (2001) reported that age influence administrative performance of any school head.

In addition to age, gender is one of the variables that contribute to the success or failure of any school head. Gender is the state of being male or female. Principals' gender may influence their administrative performance. Mansaray in Agwara (2009) reported that women performed poorly in administrative positions because of gender factor. Moreover, Wiles, Hare, Grobman and Hiries (1996) noted that men ranked significantly ahead of women as democratic leaders. In the same view, Yusuf and Alabi (2010) revealed that women managers, primarily because of their sex (the weaker sex), have extra challenges because sometimes sex-role expectations are combined with managerial effectiveness.

Furthermore, the administrative performance of principals may be influenced by their marital status. Marital status is referred to as conjugal status of a person is single, married, widowed or divorced. According to Iwuagwu (2014), marital status is perceived by some researchers to be a predictor of teachers' job performance. The reason for this perception is that married male teachers sometimes transfer family problems to work while married female teachers go for maternity leave and these can affect job performance. One would expect that married women and men with children are likely to have more responsibilities and would have different work challenges than spinsters and bachelors, who do not have family responsibilities and hence may have higher performance at work.

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of principals' gender, age and marital status on administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo state. This study will be of great benefit to numerous people. The findings of this study will be of great benefit to government, policy makers, Ministry of Education, future researchers, principals, teachers, students, parents, guardians and the society.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Research Design**

The study employed descriptive survey research design for this study. Descriptive survey research design is a design in which data are collected from a sample of large population through questionnaire. It involves measurement, classification, analysis, comparison and interpretation of data. Descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing and administering questionnaire to sample of individuals Orodho in Alabu (2013). This design was considered appropriate for this study because data were collected from sample of principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Edo State seeking their opinions on the influence of principals' attributes on administrative performance using questionnaire.

### **Area of Study**

This study was conducted in Edo State. The capital of Edo State is Benin City. Edo State had six hundred and sixteen public secondary schools spread across the three education zones in the State. It had many higher academic institutions. For examples, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, University of Benin, Benin City, Igbinedion University Okada, Benson Idahosa University Benin City, Samuel Adegboyega University Ogwa, Edo University Iyamuh, Auchi, Auchi Federal Polytechnic Auchi, Usini Polytechnic Usini, College of Education Igueben, College of Agriculture Iguoriakhi, and Nigerian Advanced School of Theology, Ewu. The major occupation of the people of Edo State was farming. Edo State is bounded in the North by Kogi State, in the West by Ondo State, in the South by Delta State and Atlantic Ocean and in the East by River Niger. The researcher chose Edo State for the study because she is familiar with some of the educational problems in secondary educational system.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study was four thousand and seventy-eight (4078) principals and teachers. This comprised of six hundred and sixteen (616) principals and three thousand, four hundred and sixty-two (3,462) teachers in the six hundred and sixteen (616) public secondary schools (SSS and JSS) in Edo State as at 2015/2016 school year (Post-Primary Education Board, Benin City, 2016).

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample of the study was four hundred and eight (408) principals and teachers sampled through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. This comprised sixty-two (62) principals sampled through stratified sampling technique. All the principals heading public secondary schools were stratified into male and female principals in the three education zones in Edo State. Ten percent each of male and female principals from each education zone were sampled. This gave rise to 31 male principals and 31 female principals sampled from the three Education zones in Edo State and were used as respondents for the study. 346 teachers were sampled through random sampling techniques. Ten percent of teachers in each Education Zone were sampled. The principals and teacher ten percent sample sizes were in line with Ani ten percent sample sizes.

Sixty-two (62) public secondary schools with their principals were sampled through stratified sampling technique. The sixty-two public secondary schools were stratified into male principal headed secondary schools and female principal headed secondary schools. Thirty-one (31) male principal headed secondary schools and thirty-one (31) female principal headed secondary schools were sampled for the study through stratified sampling technique. This gave rise to sixty-two (62) public secondary schools sampled and used for this study.

Twenty-seven (27) secondary schools were sampled from Benin Education Zone (fourteen male principal headed secondary schools and thirteen female principal headed secondary schools). An average of one principal and nine teachers were taken from each secondary school, to get a total of two hundred and seventy-two (272) principals and teachers taken from Benin Education Zone.

Fourteen (14) public secondary schools were sampled through stratified sampling technique from Ubiaja Education Zone (seven male principal headed secondary schools and seven female principal headed secondary schools). An average of one principal and three

teachers were taken from each secondary school to get a total of sixty-six (66) principals and teachers from Ubiaja Education Zone.

Twenty-one (21) secondary schools were sampled through stratified sampling technique from Auchi Education Zone (ten male principal headed secondary schools and eleven female principal headed secondary schools). An average of one principal and three teachers were taken from each secondary school to get a total of seventy (70) principals and teachers from Auchi Education Zone.

In total, sixty-two (62) public secondary schools were sampled through stratified sampling technique for the study. Sixty-two (62) principals (31 male principals and 31 female principals) were sampled through stratified sampling technique and three hundred and forty-six (346) teachers were sampled through simple random sampling technique, totalled four hundred and eight (408) principals and teachers used as respondents for this study.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The data for this study were obtained through the use of structured questionnaire which was developed by the researcher. The structured questionnaire was titled "Principals' Administrative Performance Assessment Scale (PAPAS)". The structured questionnaire was completed by principals and teachers. The questionnaire was made up of two parts – part 1 and part 2. Part 1 contained the bio-data of the respondent. Part 2 was divided into three (3) sub-headings of clusters 'A' to 'C'. Cluster 'A' gathered data on gender of the principals with twelve (12) items. Cluster 'B' got information on the age of the principals with twelve (12) items, while cluster 'C' elicited information on marital status of the principals with twelve (12) items. The structured questionnaire was based on four (4) points rating scale of Highly Influenced (HI), Influenced (I), Not Influenced (NI), and Highly Not Influenced (HNI) with their nominal values attached as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

### **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The following research questions guided the research work.

1. In what ways does principals' gender influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State?
2. In what ways does principals' age influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State?
3. In what ways does principals' marital status influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State?

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers and the principals on the perceived influence of gender of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers and the principals on the perceived influence of age of the principals' on their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers and the principals on the influence of marital status of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

Face and construct validation of the instrument were done. The research instrument was given to three experts; one expert was taken from Science Education Department while two experts were taken from Educational Administration Department of Educational Foundations Department of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. These experts reviewed the items of the structured questionnaire in terms of appropriateness of the items, language clarity and adequate coverage. The items of the reviewed instrument were compressed under sub-headings of the variables of principals' attributes but later to sub-headings of principals' six major administrative tasks, latter to the variables of the principals' attributes. Many of the items were retained; some were amended while few were dropped. The items of the instrument dropped were numbers 27, 30, 40 and 43. Based on the reviewers' comments, amendments and suggestions, corrections were incorporated in the final copy of the instrument.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The instrument was subjected to reliability test. This was done by administering twenty-five (25) copies of the instrument to twenty five (25) principals and teachers (5 principals and 20 teachers) in five (5) secondary schools in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State, which was different from the study area but had the same characteristics as the study area.

The data collected from the administration of the instrument were analysed using Cronbach Alpha Statistics. The sub-scales and values of the reliability coefficient were: Curriculum and instruction management = 0.90, staff and pupil personnel management = 0.99, school community relation management = 0.09, physical facilities management = 1.17 and financial management = 1.08. In total, the Cronbach Alpha statistics yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.85. This showed that the instrument was reliable. Ogbazi and Okpala (1994) reported that if the Coefficient Alpha obtained in an instrument for data collection in a study is up to 0.60 and above, the instrument is considered to be reliable for any study.

### **Method of Data Collection and Analysis**

The researcher and three (3) instructed research assistants, who were briefed on how to administer and collect the instrument, administered 408 questionnaires but retrieved four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire while eight (8) copies of the questionnaire were not retrieved because the respondents lost them. The retrieval percent was 98%.

The data collected were analyzed using mean statistics with standard deviation for the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses formulated. In taking decision for the research questions, 2.50 was used as bench mark for decision taking. The 2.50 was derived by adding the nominal values of the rating scales and divided by the number of cases. Thus:  $4+3+2+1 = 10 \div 4 = 2.50$ . Therefore, any item in the instrument with the mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as the factor that influenced the principal's administrative performance and any item with the mean score below 2.50 was adjudged as the factor that did not influence the administrative performance of the principal. The t-calculated was compared with the t-critical, a situation where the t-calculated was less than the t-critical, the null-hypothesis was accepted while if the t-calculated was greater than the t-critical, the

null-hypothesis was not accepted at the reasonable degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### Research Question 1

In what ways does principals' gender influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the perceived influence of the principals' gender on their administrative performance in public secondary schools N = 400**

S/N	Items	X	SD
1.	Principal participates in internal classroom supervision of teachers and students.	1.54	0.73
2.	Principal ensures that lesson notes of teachers are always checked.	1.50	0.75
3.	Principal ensures that students who come late to school are disciplined.	1.55	0.77
4.	Principal makes him available for consultation with students.	1.54	0.74
5.	Principal allows teachers a measure of authority in doing their duties.	1.71	0.82
6.	Principal views teacher's attendance to class as very important.	1.71	0.82
7.	Principal encourages good interactions between the school and outer communities.	1.97	0.84
8.	Principal ensures good school discipline among students for societal benefits.	2.28	0.97
9.	Principal maintains school buildings.	2.13	0.90
10.	Principal maintains school laboratories.	1.86	0.93
11.	Principal encourages the auditing of the school account.	1.87	0.88
12.	Principal keeps financial records of the school.	1.81	0.98
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>1.78</b>	

Table 1 revealed that all the items had their mean scores below the cut off- point of 2.50 with their standard deviations ranged between 0.73 to 0.98. This showed that the principals' gender did not influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State, and the opinions of the respondents did not differ far from each other as shown by the standard deviations.

### Research Question 2

In what ways does principals' age influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the perceived influence of the principals' age on their administrative performance in public secondary schools? N = 400**

S/N	Items	X	SD
1.	Principal regularly preaches against examination misconducts in the school	1.51	0.72
2.	Principal encourages educational programmes like seminars, sports etc.	1.50	0.69
3.	Principal ensures the orientation of new students in the school.	1.78	0.78

4.	Principal shows concern on school performance in examination.	58	1. 0.78
5.	Principal encourages the training and retraining of teachers for optimal performance.	58	1. 0.76
6.	Principal recommends hardworking teachers for promotions.	67	1. 0.82
7.	Principal understands the values of the society in which his school operates.	97	1. 0.90
8.	Principal encourages community in provision of security agents in the school.	00	2. 0.96
9.	Principal employs carpenters to amend school broken chairs and tables.	05	2. 0.83
10.	Principal hires technicians to repair damaged classroom equipment.	85	1. 0.89
11.	Principal coordinates money spending to avoid unnecessary expenses.	67	1. 0.87
12.	Principal evaluates the use of financial resources in his school.	72	1. 0.90
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>1.72</b>	

Table 2 revealed that all the items had their mean scores below the cut off-point of 2.50 which ranged between 1.50 and 2.05 with the corresponding standard deviations which ranged between 0.69 and 0.96 which showed close deviation. This implied that the respondents were of the opinion that the age of the principals did not influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.

### Research Question 3

In what ways does principals' marital status influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State?

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the perceived influence of the principals' marital status on their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State? N = 400**

S/N	Items	X	SD
1.	Principal resolves learning difficulties of students.	1.50	0.72
2.	Principal encourages frequent evaluation of students.	1.52	0.69
3.	Principal resolves conflict among students.	1.67	0.76
4.	Principal ensures that recalcitrant behaviours in the school are punished.	1.62	0.83
5.	Principal delegates duties to staff to ensure wider participation of teachers in decision making.	1.71	0.85
6.	Principal encourages punctual attendance to schools by teachers.	1.83	0.80
7.	Principal involves the community on school projects like building classrooms and laboratories.	2.08	0.98
8.	Principal ensures regular evaluation of school community relations of his school.	2.19	0.95
9.	Principal protects school land by fencing the school compound.	2.10	0.86
10.	Principal encourages the planting of citrus trees for protection of school	1.91	0.82

	buildings.		
11.	Principal organizes fund raising programmes in the school.	1.74	0.92
12.	Principal encourages philanthropists to donate money for school upkeep.	1.81	0.98
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>1.80</b>	

Table 3 revealed that all the items had their mean scores below the cut-off point of 2.50, which ranged between 1.50 and 2.19 with their corresponding standard deviations which ranged from 0.69 to 0.98. This showed close relationship in the responses of the respondents. Also this signified that the respondents were of the opinion that the marital status of the principals did not influence their administrative performance in the public secondary schools in Edo State.

### 3.4 Hypothesis

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers and the principals on the perceived influence of gender of principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.

**Table 4: t-test analysis of the perceived influence of gender of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools. N = 400**

S/N	Items	Groups	X	SD	N	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Level of sign.	Interpretation
1.	Principal participates in internal classroom supervision of teachers and students.	Teachers	3.45	0.74	340	398	0.62	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.46	0.80	60					
2.	Principal ensures that lesson notes of teachers are always checked.	Teachers	3.50	0.75	340	398	0.63	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.58	0.82	60					
3.	Principal ensures that students who come late to school are disciplined.	Teachers	3.44	0.75	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.62	0.81	60					
4.	Principal makes himself available for consultation with students.	Teachers	3.13	0.70	340	398	0.08	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.14	0.73	60					
5.	Principal allows teachers a measure of authority in doing their duties.	Teachers	3.35	0.82	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.38	0.91	60					
6.	Principal views teachers attendance to class as very important.	Teacher	3.02	0.84	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.61	0.80	60					
7.	Principal encourages good interactions between the school and outer communities.	Teachers	2.71	0.97	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	2.79	0.93	60					
8.	Principal ensures good school discipline among students for societal benefits.	Teachers	3.07	0.95	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.10	0.98	60					
9.	Principal maintains school buildings.	Teachers	2.86	0.90	340	398	0.58	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	2.78	0.95	60					
10.	Principal maintains school laboratories.	Teachers	3.13	0.93	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.16	0.89	60					
11.	Principal encourages the auditing of the school account.	Teachers	3.15	0.88	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	0.18	0.89	60					
12.	Principal keeps financial records of the school.	Teachers	3.18	0.98	340	398	0.07	1.96	0.05	*
		principals	3.17	0.83	60					

\* = No significant difference

\*\* = Significant difference

Table 4 revealed that all the items had their t-calculated less than the t-table value of 1.96 at 398 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was accepted.



This implied that the gender of the principals did not significantly influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers and principals on the perceived influence of age of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.

**Table 5: t-test analysis of the perceived influence of age of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools N = 400**

S/N	Items	Groups	X	SD	N	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Level of sign.	Interpretation
1.	Principal regularly preaches against examination misconducts in the school	Teachers	3.49	0.73	340	398	0.07	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.50	0.81	60					
2.	Principal encourages educational programmes like seminars, sports etc.	Teachers	3.41	0.69	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.61	0.72	60					
3.	Principal ensures the orientation of new students in the school.	Teachers	3.42	0.78	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.60	0.82	60					
4.	Principal shows concern on school performance in examination.	Teachers	3.30	0.92	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.36	0.90	60					
5.	Principal encourages the training and retraining of teachers for optional performance.	Teachers	3.33	0.81	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.36	0.79	60					
6.	Principal recommends hardworking teachers for promotions.	Teachers	2.87	0.89	340	398	0.51	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	2.80	0.96	60					
7.	Principal understands the values of the society in which his school operates.	Teachers	2.94	0.84	340	398	0.61	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	2.86	0.87	60					
8.	Principal encourages community in provision of security agents in the school.	Teachers	3.15	0.77	340	398	0.42	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.10	0.69	60					
9.	Principal employs carpenters to amend school broken chairs and tables.	Teachers	3.28	0.91	340	398	0.37	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.23	0.88	60					
10.	Principal hires technicians to repair damaged classroom equipment.	Teachers	3.42	0.62	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.61	0.72	60					
11.	Principal coordinates money spending to avoid unnecessary expenses.	Teachers	3.43	0.68	340	398	1.07	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.29	0.91	60					
12.	Principal evaluates the use of financial resources in his school.	Teachers	3.63	0.69	340	398	1.80	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.41	0.73	60					

\* No significant difference

\*\* Significant difference

Table 5 revealed that all the items had their t-calculated less than the t-critical of 1.96 at 398 degree of freedom. This made the null-hypothesis to be accepted. This indicated that the

administrative performance of the secondary school's principals was not significantly influence by their age in public secondary schools in Edo State.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the teachers and principals on the perceived influence of marital status of principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.

**Table 6: t-test analysis of the perceived influence of marital status of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools N = 400**

S/N	Items	Groups	X	SD	N	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Level of sign.	Interpretation
1.	Principal resolves learning difficulties of students.	Teachers	3.50	0.73	340	398	0.87	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.61	0.78	60					
2.	Principal encourages frequent evaluation of students.	Teachers	3.47	0.69	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.54	0.76	60					
3.	Principal resolves conflict among students.	Teachers	3.32	0.76	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.41	0.77	60					
4.	Principal ensures that recalcitrant behaviours in the school are punished.	Teachers	3.37	0.83	340	398	0.07	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.38	0.90	60					
5.	Principal delegates duties to staff to ensure wider participation of teachers in decision making.	Teachers	3.37	0.83	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.44	0.91	60					
6.	Principal encourages punctual attendance to schools by teachers.	Teachers	3.28	0.85	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.30	0.86	60					
7.	Principal involves the community on school projects like building classrooms and laboratories.	Teachers	3.16	0.80	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.20	0.92	60					
8.	Principal ensures regular evaluation of school community relations of his school.	Teachers	2.91	0.98	340	398	0.21	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	2.88	0.97	60					
9.	Principal protects school land by fencing the school compound.	Teachers	2.80	0.95	340	398	-	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	2.86	0.89	60					
10.	Principal encourages the planting of citrus trees for protection of school buildings.	Teachers	2.89	0.86	340	398	0.74	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	2.79	0.88	60					
11.	Principal organizes fund raising programmes in the school.	Teachers	3.08	0.82	340	398	0.22	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.05	0.90	60					
12.	Principal encourages philanthropists to donate money for school upkeep.	Teachers	3.25	0.98	340	398	0.15	1.96	0.05	*
		Principals	3.23	0.84	60					

\* = No significant difference

\*\* = significant difference

Table 6 revealed that all the items had their t-calculated less than the t-critical at 398 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Then the null-hypothesis was accepted meaning that the marital status of the secondary school principals did not significantly influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.

### Findings

The results of data analysis as presented above revealed the following findings that;

1. The gender of the principals did not influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.

2. The age of the principals did not influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.
3. The marital status of the principals did not influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools in Edo State.
4. The test of the hypotheses indicated that there was no significant difference in the administrative performance of the principals based on gender, age and marital status.

## **Discussion**

### **Gender of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools**

This work revealed that the gender of the principals did not influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools. This finding was in disagreement with Okakhume (2008) who reported that the gender of a leader has many influence on the effectiveness of his or her leadership performance. Ossoskwam (2009) also reported that gender has an impact on the level of the principals' job performance which reflects to the students' performance in their academics.

In his assertion, Iwuagwu (2014) reported that both male and female principals have above average in their administrative performance. Furthermore, this finding negates the observation of Agwara (2009) who reported that women perform poorly in administrative tasks because of the gender factor. Still, the finding of this study agreed with Hemphill, Griffiths and Fredrickson (1992) who reported that male principals do not demonstrate superior performance than their female counterparts. He further stressed that men are not superior to women in their principalship. Furthermore, male and female principals equal in ability and performance in their duties. In the same vein, Alabu (2013) reported that gender do not affect the administrative task achievement of the principals at all.

### **Age of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools**

This research showed that the age of the principals did not influence their administrative performance in secondary schools. This finding is in agreement with Lotte (2011) who reported that age has nothing to do with the way workers perform their job. This implies that the age of the worker does not influence his or her performance and this is applicable to the principals of secondary schools. Furthermore, Lambert (2005) agreed with this finding in which he said that the age of the teacher does not come into play when it comes to teaching. This is further stressed that the performance of the school principals administratively has no relationship with their age. He buttressed the fact further by explaining that the young principal can do what the aged one can do as far as school administration is concerned.

This finding is also in agreement with Glasscock (1991) who reported that age do not affect principals' performance in their leadership responsibilities. He added that the young principal who is still bubbling with energy with certain level of skills and interest can equally be effective in administrating the school as the aged principal. On the other hand, Okolo (2001) pointed out that the age of the school head tends to affect his administrative tasks in the school. The Okolo's opinion disagreed with this finding because he argued that old principals who have been attending conferences, seminars and workshop training seem to perform better in their administrative tasks than the young principals.

### **Marital status of the principals on their administrative performance in public secondary schools**

One of the findings of this work was that the marital status of the principals did not influence their administrative performance in public secondary schools. This finding is in agreement with some opinions and in disagreement with others. For instance, this finding agrees with Martneau (2006) who reported that the marital status of the principal does not influence his or her administrative performance in the school. He argued that the married principal who is ready to work will do his or her work perfectly not minding that he is married. Also, a principal who is not married can equally perform his or her administrative tasks very well without minding that he or she is not married. Also, Clark (2006) reported that marital status has no influence on the job performance of the head of a school. This means that the marital status of the principal does not in any way affect his or her administrative performance in the school.

On the other hand, this finding disagreed with Bruce (2007) who reported that unmarried head of schools tends to be more effective and productive in their administrative performance than their married counterparts. This was primarily because the unmarried head of schools did not have many family responsibilities which tended to make them to be more committed in their work place. He further explained that the married heads of school make their families to be their primary constituency and in most cases are absorbed by family responsibilities which tended to make them less productive and ineffective in their administrative tasks in secondary schools.

### **Conclusions**

It had been now empirically proved by this research that the administrative performance of the principals had no relationship with their gender, age and marital status. This study had provided good and robust information that the young principals can effectively perform administratively as the old principals, likewise unmarried principals can be as effective as the married principals. Equally, it had been proved by this research that gender of the principals did not play any role in their administrative performance. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that male and female teachers should be given equal opportunity in the appointment of principals in public secondary schools since gender has no influence in the principals' administrative performance. The age of teachers and vice principals should not be a barrier to their promotion to the cadre of principalship. Married and unmarried teachers should be given equal opportunities in the appointment of principals since marital status did not have influence on the administrative performance of the principals. The findings of this research had numerous educational implications. There should not be discrimination in the appointment of principals based on gender, age and marital status in the secondary school system.

### **Disclosure statement**

The author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest

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