



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MALE AND FEMALE PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP ROLE PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

<sup>1</sup>Obiekwe, Kingsley K., <sup>2</sup>Mbonu, Obianuju Adaobi & <sup>3</sup>Ikedimma, Ifeanyi Francis

<sup>1&3</sup>Department of Educational Management and Policy, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup>Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze, Anambra State, Nigeria

Corresponding author: \*Kingsley K. Obiekwe

Email: kayceeobiekwe@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

The study compared male and female principals' leadership role performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study and Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted 6,382 teachers in state government owned secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State. A sample size of 2,439 teachers was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. A researchers' developed instrument titled "Principals' Role Performance Questionnaire" (PRPQ) structured on a four point scale and validated by three experts was used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficients of 0.84, 0.86, and 0.81 for the three parts of the PRPQ. Of the 2,439 copies of the instrument administered, 1,860 were retrieved and used for the analyses. Mean score was used to analyze the research questions and t-test for testing the hypotheses. The findings of the study shows that teachers perceived male principals performance in maintenance of discipline and management of conflict to be greater than that of their female counterparts. Teachers perceived male and female principals performance on supervision of instruction to be the same. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government should as a matter of urgency organize training programs for the principals on strategies for maintaining discipline in the schools. The State Government should also consider appointing male principals to those schools worst-hit by indiscipline.

### KEYWORDS

Leadership roles, Leadership, Role performance, Principals' performance.



## Introduction

Various researchers have tried to compare men and women in leadership positions in various organizations. For example, Alhourani (2013) argues that gender does not have any impact on leadership effectiveness, adding that women leaders are as effective as men leaders. Thomas (2004) emphasized that there are far more similarities than differences in the leadership behaviour of men and women and that they are equally effective. However, Olaoye (1999) opined that men and women in management are viewed differently and in nearly all cases, the biases are in favour of the male managers. The equality of men and women in organisational settings have tended to focus on stereotypes and biases which has frequently been directed towards the female managers. Female managers are seen as possessing less desirable characteristics for a managerial position and the performance and credentials of women are rated less favourably than those of an equivalent man.

In school organization, for example, in secondary school system, researchers have often compared male and female principals based on their performance in leadership. For instance, Hang (2015) conducted a research in which he compared the leadership capacities of male and female principals and found there was a significant difference between male and female principals' leadership capacities. Female principals were perceived significantly higher than their male counterparts. Cheloti, Matheri and Mulwa (2015) in their study reported no significant relationship between principals' gender and their effectiveness in management of personnel, students and finance. Nworji (2006) found that female principals were equally effective as male principals, adding that male and female principals did not differ significantly in school personnel management. Also Luo and Najjar (2009), Mondol (2009), Abe, Ibukun and Oyewole (2011) reported that no significant difference exists between male and female principals in their leadership performance in secondary schools.

In a study that reviewed the leadership style of public school principal found some evidence for difference between male and female principals. Female principals scored higher than their male counterparts on task-oriented style measures but about the same on interpersonally oriented style measures. Female principals appear to generally adopted a more democratic or participative style as compared to male principals. Moreover, male and female principals have been compared in the area of maintaining discipline in the school. A large part of any school principal's job is to handle students' and staff discipline. The first step in having effective student discipline is to make sure that teachers know what are expected when it comes to student discipline. Nakpodia (2010) perceives discipline as a training that develops self-control, character, orderliness and efficiency. To Oboegbulem (2004) discipline means conduct of an individual which is exhibited through training in self-control and in habit to socially approved standards of thoughts and action. In relation to the view of Oboegbulem, discipline is the ability of students to respect authority and observe conventions and established rules and regulations that govern the class or the school. This translates to students showing respect for teachers, being attentive in the class, peaceful class interaction, engaging in learning activities, among other things.

School discipline is the system of rules, punishments and behavioural strategies appropriate to the regulation of children and the maintenance of order in schools. Its aim is to create a safe and conducive learning environment in the classroom. Researchers such as Cheloti, Matheri and Mulwa (2015) reported that there is a significant relationship between principals' gender and their ability to manage discipline in the school. According to Ikoya (2009), male principals differ from female

principals in handling discipline in secondary schools: the level of application of preventive discipline practices by female principals is higher than for male principals.

Furthermore, the principal is also responsible for supervision of instruction in the school. Supervision is a part of school administration. It is an age long device for improving teachers' knowledge, attitudes and skills which focuses on the teaching/learning process for the purpose of ensuring the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Some researchers have assigned several definitions and interpretations to supervision, but almost all of them center on a common aim or objective. The main objective of supervision is to improve teacher' instructional practices which may in turn improve student learning. Supervision is believed to provide a mechanism for teachers and supervisors to increase their understanding of the teaching-learning process through collective inquiry with other professionals (Nolan & Francis, 1992).

Supervision is also a creative and dynamic process of giving friendly guidance and direction to teachers and pupils for improving themselves and the teaching-learning situation for the accomplishment of the desired goals of education. The supervisory role is best utilized as a continuous process rather than one that responds only to personnel problems. Principals with supervisory responsibility have the opportunity to have tremendous influence on school programme and help ensure the benefits of a strong programme of instruction for children. Asuquo and Usoro (2009) in their study discovered no significant difference between male and female principals in supervision of instruction in secondary schools. They also discovered that administrative experience had great influence on male and female principals' supervision competencies.

It is also the responsibility of the principal to manage conflict in the school. Szilagyi (2000), defined conflict as a disagreement between two or more organizational members concerning the manner to be used to achieve certain goals. Conflict can also refer to struggles, contradictions, mutual hostility in inter human relationship. Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently. Since conflicts are a natural part of the work place, it is important that the principal understand issues of conflict and know how to manage them. Conflict itself, has to do with disagreement, but contrary to popular belief, conflict does not necessarily involve fighting. The ability of the principal to manage conflicts arising from the students, teachers, non-tutorial staff and the community where the school dwells determines to a large extent the success of the school. Researchers such as Onyebuchi, (2009) found that no significant difference existed between male and females in the management of conflict in schools. Available literatures have also shown the necessity for both male and female principals to possess skills for managing conflicts effectively in the school.

### Research Questions

1. What are the mean performance scores of male and female principals in maintenance of discipline in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What are the mean performance scores of male and female principals in supervision of instruction in secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What are the mean performance scores of male and female principals in management of conflict in secondary schools in Anambra State?

## Hypotheses

1. Male and female principals do not differ significantly in their mean performance scores in maintenance of discipline in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. Male and female principals do not differ significantly in their mean performance scores mean performance scores in supervision of instruction in secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. Male and female principals do not differ significantly in their mean performance scores mean performance scores in management of conflict in secondary schools in Anambra State?

## Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. From a population of 5,219 teachers, a sample of 500 teachers, 250 teachers serving under male principals and 250 serving under female principals was drawn using simple random sampling procedure. A researcher developed instrument titled "Teachers' Rating of Principals' Role Performance Questionnaire" (TRPRPQ) which was validated by three experts was used for data collection. The questionnaire was structured on a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficients of 0.84, 0.86, and 0.81 for the three parts of the TRPRPQ. The instrument was considered reliable in line with Nworgu (2015), who stated that if the co-efficient obtained for an instrument is up to 0.70 and above, the instrument should be considered good enough to be used for a study. The direct administration and retrieval method was used for data collection. A total of 500 copies of the questionnaire were administered while 488 were retrieved and was used for data analysis. Mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

**Table 1. Teachers' Mean Scores of Male and Female Principals' Performance on Maintenance of Discipline**

	Teachers under Male Principals (N=243)		Teachers under Female Principals (N=245)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Maintenance of discipline</b>	3.26	.36	2.93	.10

Table 1 shows the mean scores of teachers on male and female principals' performance on maintenance of discipline in the school. The mean for male principals was 3.26 and it is higher than that of the female principals who had 2.93. This shows that teachers perceived male principals performance in maintenance of discipline to be greater than that of their female counterparts. The standard deviation scores for the two groups indicated that there is more variability in the responses on the performance of male principals than that of the female principals.

**Table 2. Teachers' Mean Scores of Male and Female Principals' Performance on Supervision of Instruction**

	Teachers under Male Principals (N=243)		Teachers under Female Principals (N=245)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Supervision of instruction</b>	3.28	.35	3.28	.36

Table 2 shows that the mean scores of teachers on male and female principals' performance on supervision of instruction. The mean score for male and female principals was 3.28 respectively. This indicates that teachers perceived male and female principals' performance on supervision of instruction to be the same.

**Table 3. Teachers' Mean Scores of Male and Female Principals' Performance on Management of Conflict**

	Teachers under Male Principals (N=243)		Teachers under Female Principals (N=245)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Management of conflict</b>	3.27	.39	3.06	.21

Table 3 shows that the mean score of teachers on management of conflict for male principals was 3.27 which is higher than that of the female principals 3.06. This is an indication that teachers rated male principals' performance on management of conflict in school to be higher than that of their female counterpart.

**Table 4: t-test comparison of Mean Scores of Teachers regarding Male and Female Principals' Performance on Maintenance of Discipline in School**

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Teachers under Male Principals	243	3.26	.36	486	3.60	1.96	Sig
Teachers under Female Principals	245	2.93	.10				

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 3.60 is greater than the critical value (1.96). This is an indication that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of teachers under male principals and those under female principals regarding the performance of male and female principals in maintenance of discipline as perceived by the teachers. Therefore the null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

**Table 5: t-test Comparison of Mean Scores of Teachers regarding male and female principals' performance on supervision of instruction in School**

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
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Teachers under Male Principals	243	3.28	.35	486	.09	1.96	Not Sig
Teachers under Female Principals	245	3.28	.36				

The result in Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value of .09 is less than the critical value (1.96). This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of teachers regarding male and female principals' performance on supervision of instruction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Table 6: t-test Comparison of Mean Scores of Teachers regarding Male and Female Principals' Performance on Management of Conflict in School**

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Teachers under Male Principals	243	3.27	.39	486	7.31	1.96	Sig
Teachers under Female Principals	245	3.06	.21				

The result in Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value of 7.31 is greater than the critical value (1.96). This is an indication that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of teachers regarding male and female principals' performance on management of conflict. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

### Discussion of Findings

One of the findings of the study shows that a significant difference exists between male and female principals in terms of their performance in maintenance of discipline in the school. Teachers perceived male principals' performance in maintenance of discipline to be higher than that of the female principals. The above findings is in line with the declaration made by Cheloti, Matheri & Mulwa (2015) that there exist a significant difference between principals' gender and their ability to manage discipline in the school; and in direct contrast, the finding of Ikoya (2009) indicated that the quality of school discipline is higher in schools headed by female principals than in those headed by male principals. The finding of the present study is also different with that of Bradley (1979) who argued that there is no significant gender related difference in leadership behaviour of male and female principals.

The study also found out that there is no significant difference between male and female principals in terms of their performance in supervision of instruction in the school. Teachers' perceptions of the performance of male and female principals in terms of supervision of instruction in the school were the same. This finding is in line with the finding made by Asuquo and Ussoro (2009) that male principals were not significantly better in supervision of instruction than their female counterpart. Again, the finding is in line with Thomas (2004) that there exist more similarities than differences in the leadership performance of men and women.

Another finding of the study showed a significant difference between the performance of male and female principals in terms of management of conflict in the school. Teachers rated male

principals' performance higher than that of their female counterpart. This finding contrasts with that of Hang (2015) that female principals are perceived to be higher than male principals in leadership capacity regarding management of conflict.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that a significant difference exists between male and female principals' performance in terms of maintenance of discipline and management of conflict. However, no significant difference exists between male and female principals' performance in terms of supervision of instruction in the school. These findings suggest that male principals will perform better in schools with disciplinary issues and conflict management problems while both male and female principals will do well in terms of supervision of instruction.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that the State government should as a matter of urgency organize training programme for female principals on strategies for maintaining discipline and management of conflict in the school. The government should also consider appointing male principals to those schools worst-hit by indiscipline and conflict.

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