



## Gender and Politics as Determinants of Effective Education Management for the Attainment of SDGs in Nigeria

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**Key words:** Gender, politics, principals' attitudes and education management

**Abstract:** In this study, gender and politics were investigated as determinants of principal's attitude towards education management in Imo State, Nigeria. The main purpose of this study was to determine the nexus between gender, politics and principals' attitude towards education management. Two tentative statements served as Hypothesis to guide the study. Up to 150 randomly selected principals of secondary schools (upper basic education level schools (JSS 1-3) and senior secondary schools) to serve as respondents. These principals are all principals in secondary schools in Imo State. A questionnaire that contained gender/politics scale and principals attitudes towards education management was administered for data collection. Multiple regression listed at 0.05 level of significance was used to analyse the hypothesis. The findings revealed that the criterion variable which is principals' attitudes towards education management showed that principals' attitudes towards education management correlate positively and low towards politics. It was also realized that gender was not a determinant of both principals' attitude towards education management and politics. Principals informed the researchers that they are not interested in politics of Imo State, that what they need is to gain their promotions and retire in peace. They further noted that the government of Imo State, under the leadership of Owelle Anayo Rochas Okorochoa has not been effective in giving them their entitlements, allowances and full remunerations.

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### INTRODUCTION

In education management in Nigeria in particular and the rest of the world in general, gender and politics are

perceived as important factors that determine who attains an education management position, male or female. Even with the era of digitalization, globalization and modernization, things have not tremendously changed.

Most importantly, the importance of gender determining who leads or manages educational institutions or parastatals can not be under-emphasized. Anyanwu has defined gender as “a set of qualities and behaviours expected from a female or male by society. In other words, gender refers to the significance a society attaches to the biological categories of male and female.” For Akani<sup>[1]</sup>, gender are “sets of relationships, attributes, roles, beliefs and attitudes that defined what being a man or a woman is within the society”.

For Anyaogu, gender is seen as “identities socially formed of men and women which are highly valuable across cultures and are continually subject to change”. According to Benwari and Igwesi<sup>[2]</sup>, gender means “the social, cultural, psychological attributes and responsibilities which different societies ascribe to females and males”. Furthermore, Obasi<sup>[3]</sup> also said that “gender is central to the way the society is organized be it the family, religion, race or any other management at all levels of education system/endeavour.

The core of this paper is on principals’ attitude towards effective education management. The principals are very important in this write-up. On attitude, Cetin<sup>[4]</sup> said that “attitude is a tendency attributed to individuals and creates ideas, feelings and behaviours about a psychological object in an orderly manner”. Therefore, principals’ attitudes will have to do with their perception, behaviour, acceptance or rejection of a particular concept, strategy, process, technique, pattern, method and so on. In Nigeria, principals are referred to as individuals (males or females) in the helm of affairs of upper basic education level schools (JSS1-3) and senior secondary schools. They are responsibility for the day to day running, administration, planning, management, coordination of the secondary schools. At one time or the other, they rose to the status of secondary school principals’ from teaching. Their attitude towards effective education management for sustainable development may be positive or negative.

Also, Babalola pinpointed that education management is “being synonymous with strategizing planning, organizing, running, governance and supervision of the entire process of teaching and learning that takes place at all levels of the formal education system”. Peretomode<sup>[5]</sup> on his own part noted that education management is “concerned with the planning and formulation of educational politics or programmes with a view to achieving educational goals”. Education management, if effectively handled, no doubt can bring about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For SDGs, Mezieobi and Nwajiuba<sup>[6]</sup> mentioned that there were right time-bound international development agenda or goals called the millennium development goals which lasted from year 2000-2015 and hit the rocks in failure. “The MDGs were re-named sustainable

development goals in order to further give that commitment another perhaps determined push to the positive”. This means that the failure of the initial MDGs gave rise to the formation of the SDGs which we hope will be a success.

More significant is the possibility of noting that several writers have written on various variables that serve as determinants of attitudes like students’ attitudes, teachers’ attitudes, parents’ attitudes and so on. This is the major reason for carrying out this study on gender and politics as determinants of principals’ attitudes towards effective education management for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria with particular interest in Imo State, Nigeria.

**Hypothesis:** These hypothesis were formulated to guide the researchers in this study:

- There is no significant composite effect of gender and politics on principals’ attitude towards effective education management
- There is no relative significant influence of gender and politics on principals attitude towards effective education management

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research design:** The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey design. Nworgu<sup>[7]</sup> noted that “the use of surveys as systematic means of data collection dates back to the ancient times”. He further pinpointed that “survey research also requires a good deal of research knowledge and sophistication. The competent survey investigator must know sampling questionnaire and schedule construction, interviewing, the analysis of data and other technical aspects of the survey” (54-55).

**Setting of the study:** The setting of the study was Owerri education zone of Imo State, Nigeria. Imo State is a state located in the South East Geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It contains 3 education zones namely Owerri Education zone, Orlu Education Zone and Okigwe Education Zone. It is surrounded by Anambra State, Abia state, Rivers State and so on . It is mainly made up of Igbo language speaking people.

**Participants of the study:** Participants are the respondents of this study. Out of the over 600 principals of secondary schools in Owerri Education zones 1 and 2, 150 principals was selected for the study. Out of the 150 respondents, 75 are males while 75 are females.

**Instrument for data collection:** A questionnaire was used for data collection. This questionnaire was titled:

Gender Scale and Principals' Attitude Towards Effective Education Management Inventory (GSPATEEMI). The questionnaire was made up of 3 sections A-C. Section A contains the bio-data of respondents while Sections B and C contain (15) questions each that have to do with gender and principals' attitude towards effective education management. The questionnaire was structured in a manner of 4-Likert scale of SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree).

**Validity of the instrument:** Content and face validity were ascertained by two experts, one from Educational Management and Planning and the other from Measurement and Evaluation from Imo State University, Owerri.

**Reliability of the instrument and data analysis:** Test retest and Pearson moment correlation coefficient were adopted to test for internal consistency of the instrument and to analyze data, respectively. A coefficient of 0.72 was obtained with a scoring of items in the questionnaire as follows: SA = 4 marks, A = 3 marks, D = 2 marks and SD = 1 mark for positive items while negative items had reversed scores.

**Procedure:** The researchers and with the assistance of two research assistants administered the questionnaires to the principals. Some secondary schools in Imo State had more than one principals (principal for senior secondary and principal for upper basic education level schools). The researchers and two research assistants also advised the respondents on how to fill up the questionnaires. The questionnaires were also returned on the spot.

**Data analysis:** Multiple regression was used to analyze the data collected with the most of the questionnaire from the principals. SPSS 15.0 statistical package was also used for computation.

## RESULTS

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant composite effect of gender and politics on principals' attitude towards effective education management (Table 1).

From the results above, the respondents values of principals' attitude was  $M = 14.8733$ ,  $SD = 2.22342$ , Gender was  $M = 14.6067$  Standard Deviation = 2.55121, while politics had  $M = 1.45 = 4.99$ . There was a positive correlation between gender and politics and principals' attitude towards effective education management. There was also a low outcome towards gender.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no relative significant influence of gender and politics on principals' attitude towards effective education management (Table 2).

**Dependent variable:** Principals' attitude towards effective education management. Results show that the regression analysis of principals' gender with the regression coefficient (b) of 0.258 and a beta weight of 0.296 significantly contributed to principals' attitude towards effective education management. The prediction equation is thus, principals' attitude towards effective education management =  $11.500 + 0.258G - 0.270P$ . The hypothesis was accepted for gender and rejected for politics:

- Dependent variable: principals attitude towards effective education management
- Predictors: gender, politics

Table 3 from the analysis of the variance indicated the f-ratio 7.531 and was found to be insignificant at 0.05 levels.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for the relationship between the predictor variables and criterion variables

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Principal altitudes towards effective Education Management	Gender	Politics
Principal altitudes towards effective Education Management	150	14.8733	2.22342	1.000	0.299	-0.076
Gender	150	14.6067	2.55121	0.299	1.000	-0.051
Politics	150	1.45	0.499	-0.076	-0.057	1.000

Table 2: Co-efficient and t-value of the said regression of the predictor to principals' attitude towards effective education management

Variables	Unstandard coefficients		Standard coefficients		Significant
	B	SE	Beta	t-values	
(Constant)	11.500	1.158	-	9.928	0.000
Gender	0.258	0.069	0.296	3.759	0.000
Politics	-0.270	0.351	-0.061	-0.771	0.442

Table 3: The summary of multiple regression analysis between the predictor variable and criterion variable

Model	Sum. Squares	df	Mean square	f-value	Significance
Regression	68.461	2	34.231	7.531	0.3683
Residual	668.132	147	4.545	-	-
Total	736.593	149	-	-	-

Multiple (adjusted) = 0.3059; multiple R<sup>2</sup> (adjusted) = 0.093; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.081; SE of the estimate = 2.13193

### DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 as stated above showed that the matrix correlation between the two variables (gender and politics) and the criterion variable (principals' attitude towards effective education management) correlate positively and low towards politics. This in a way implies that effective education management is based on gender. The male principals have more time to effectively implement innovations, show charisma and so on towards education management unlike the female principals who have other domestic duties to handle.

Hypothesis 2 shows that the result of the regression analysis implies that only principals' gender with the regression co-efficient (b) of 0.258 and a beta weight of 0.296 significantly contributed to principals' attitude towards effective education management while the contribution of politics was not significant in predicting principals attitude towards effective education management.

### CONCLUSION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are important in contemporary Nigeria even though majority of those goals were not contextualized. Gender, politics and principals' attitudes towards effective education management are important factors that can determine whether or not sustainable development goals can be attained in Nigeria. The principals' so far are trying their best in carrying out their managerial and administrative duties even amidst lack of resources-financial and material. They need to be adequately encouraged by individuals and the government to be more effective and efficient in their managerial duties.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Principals should be duly mobilized to carry out their duties without hitches. This will help in the achievement

of effective education management and by extension attainment of sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Principals' should be encouraged to have effective rapport and work ethnics with their teachers, students and students' parents. Continuous career development is important for principals of secondary schools in Nigeria. Work environment should be made conducive. Promotion of teachers to the rank of principals should not be politicized but should be done on merit. Principals' with exceptional leadership charisma should be encouraged and motivated. Principals should be given free hand and sufficient resources to develop their secondary schools.

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