



## FEMALE PRINCIPALS FOR EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The deplorable state of public secondary schools in Nigeria can be attributed to ineffective administration. Principals are at the helm of affairs in secondary schools and are the educational leaders, hence, the quality of principals is more than any single factor that determines the success or failure of schools in accomplishing goals and objectives. However, gender literature shows that educational management is dominated by males all over the world. In Nigeria it is not surprising that a higher percentage of principals are males, thus, leadership in this area is male dominated and females are under-represented. This is as a result of gender stereotype, and traditional beliefs that leadership is a masculine activity. This paper looks at female principals as better options for effective administration of public secondary schools in Nigeria. Women have a lot of qualities that make them great leaders, some examples are: they are good at multitasking, they have high emotional intelligence, they are strong communicators, they are motivated by challenges, they are good financial managers etc. This has been substantiated by the emergence of great female leaders in all sectors; global records show that there are presently fifteen world leaders of countries as women, some examples are, the president of Germany, Bangladesh, Nepal, and New Zealand just to mention a few. There should not be any gender bias in educational leadership if women can rule great countries so it is not about been male or female but it should be based on individual strength and personality traits. The paper concludes that consideration of more females as principals of public secondary schools in Nigeria will bring about a complete positive turn around in effective administrations of these schools that in turn will impact positively in all sectors in Nigeria and suggests among other things that more females be appointed as principals like their male counterparts, and given the opportunity to lead because the quality of an effective principal is not based on gender but on personality, courage, clear vision with clear ambition to achieve goals of the school.

**Keywords:** Female Principals, Leadership, Effective Administration, Secondary Schools.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is recognized as the cornerstone of sustainable development in any country, also it is a social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, skills, attitudes and cultural norms for the development of self and the nation. Thus, the importance of education cannot be overemphasized and in recognition of this the Nigerian Government has given education prominence as evident in 2020 financial budget that education was allotted six hundred and ninety-one billion naira. In addition, building effective schools has been the Nation's primary goal of education since the 1980s (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004). Secondary school is that sector of education pyramid that usually comes immediately after primary education and before tertiary education. The National Policy on Education states that secondary school education shall prepare the individuals for useful living within the society and for higher education (FRN, 2004). Furthermore, secondary education helps provide learners acquire the needed skills and knowledge for advancement. Unfortunately, these objectives have experienced unsteady achievements due to various factors such as poor leadership, poor planning, misappropriation of funds and inadequate funding in summary administrative ineffectiveness by educational leaders.

Administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools has been a great challenge in the education sector. In the administration of secondary schools, the principal is central. In Nigeria, the educational leaders in the public secondary schools are the principals who are at the helm of affairs; hence, a high premium is placed on the contributions of principals, because they have a significant role to play in the development of the entire educational system and the country at large. Furthermore, the quality of the leader is more than any single factor that determines the success or failure to accomplish set goals in a school. It is in the light of this Ehiemator (1998) cited in Okoroma (2016) opined that principals significantly influence the degree of goals achievement in secondary schools. Principals in secondary schools are either male or females.

However, gender literatures show that education management is dominated by males in most areas of the world. Throughout history many have come to believe that leadership is traditionally a masculine activity. Women face this uphill task in achieving leadership position because of the prejudice of many men and women against women leaders. Many men and women buy into the gender stereotypes of women as emotional, caring and gentle and do not have the active, competitive, independent and self-confident traits of men needed in a leader. This has been proved wrong by the emergence of great female leaders in all sectors, globally we have fifteen world leaders of countries as women. Some examples are the president of Germany, Bangladesh, Nepal, and New Zealand just to mention a few. There should not be any gender bias in educational leadership if women can rule great countries so it is not about been male or female but it should be based on individual strength and personality traits.

An effective public secondary school is one with quality leadership, high expectation from students, ongoing screening of student performance and development, for a safe and orderly environment and existence of goals and direction for the school. However, in the contrary most public secondary are not ran effectively. This is because of gender bias against females in appointing them as principals. Kolb (1997) cited in Matheri et al. (2015) opined that globally there are fewer women heads of educational institution. In public secondary schools in Nigeria, principalship is dominated by males; females in general are under-represented at secondary leadership level. The under representation of females in education leadership position is common

in most countries in the world. The numbers of women principals are dismal when compared to their male counterparts. Even when the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) states that discrimination is not allowed. Women should be given the same opportunities like their male counterparts by appointing them as principals, this is because good leadership is not based on gender and besides women have a lot of qualities that make them great leaders some examples are they are good at multitasking, they have high emotional intelligence, they are strong communicators, they are motivated by challenges, they are good financial managers etc. I believe that if more women are appointed as principals in public secondary schools in Nigeria administrative effectiveness of these schools will improve tremendously. The concepts used in this paper are reviewed to give a better understanding to readers.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Principles of Leadership**

Leadership principles are set of actions or guiding beliefs that leaders can implement to move them towards success. Leadership is the most studied concept in behavioral sciences, however, leadership is arguably one of the most observed, yet the least understood phenomena on earth Burns cited in Abbasialiya (2010). According to Bass (1990) leadership is often regarded as the single most important factor in the success or failure of institution". Leadership involves a type of responsibility aimed at achieving particular ends by applying the available resources (human and material) and ensuring a cohesion and organization in the process (Ololube, 2013). Northouse and Rowe (2007) described leadership as a process whereby, an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. There is no particular style of leadership that is universal according to researchers who have proposed different styles of leadership. Even though there are divergent styles of leadership, a good or effective leader inspires, motivates, and directs activities to help achieve group or organizational goals. There are certain principles that are found in all styles of leadership which makes a leader involved in their work genuinely and have the interest in seeing the organization succeed.

The framework of actions leaders can take to inspire others to work together towards achieving a common goal and success in organizations are leadership principles. The United States army (1983) has identified eleven principle of leadership and means of implementing them:

- Be technically proficient: As a leader, you must know your job and have a solid familiarity with the tasks of your different employees.
- Develop a sense of responsibility in your workers: Help to develop good character traits that will help them carry out their professional responsibilities.
- Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised; and accomplished: Communication is key. A leader must be able to communicate effectively. Leaders should spend most of their day engaged in communication. Older studies, in fact noted that organizational leaders (managers) spent 70 to 90 percent of their time each day on communication and related activities (Barrett, n.d);
- Keep your workers informed: Know how to communicate with not only junior staff, but senior staff and other key people as well;

- Know your people and look out for their well-being: Be well versed in basic human nature and recognize the importance of sincerely caring for workers;
- Know yourself and seek self- improvement: In order to know yourself you have to understand what you are, know what you know, and what you can do (attributes). Seeking self -improvement means continually strengthening your attributes. This can be accomplished through self-study, formal education, workshops, reflection, and interacting with others;
- Make sound and timely decisions: Use good problem solving, decision making, planning tools;
- Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your action: Search for ways to guide your organization to new heights. When things go wrong, do not blame others. Analyze the situation, take corrective action, and move on to the next challenge;
- Set the example: Be a good role model for your employees. Employee must not only be told what is expected of them, but see leaders embodying organizational qualities and ethics. Leaders must embody what they wish to see in their employees;
- Train as a team: Do not focus on just your department, section, or employees, but envision the whole organization entity that must learn and succeed together; and
- Use the full capabilities of your organization: By developing a team spirit, you will be able to employ the abilities of your entire organization towards organizational goals.

## **Educational Leadership**

Educational leadership has become a priority in education policy programs worldwide. It plays a crucial role in refining school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capabilities of the teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. Great interest in educational leadership began in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century because globally it has been recognized that schools need effective leaders to provide best possible education. According to Bush (1999) and Atkinson (2013) there is great interest in educational leadership because of the belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and students outcomes. In Africa, governments are realizing that their main assets are their people; hence, the development of highly skilled workforce is important. Operative of educational leadership is vital to improve the efficiency and pertinence of education. Educational leadership responsibilities should be adequately defined through an understanding of the practices that are required to make an improvement in teaching and learning. In many countries, the school administrators and the principals have heavy work- loads, they are over-burdened with work. Most of these individuals are reaching the retirement age and it is difficult to find leaders with capabilities and competencies. Educational leadership functions can contribute in making provision of guidance on the main characteristics, tasks and responsibilities of proficient leaders in the field of education (Pont et al., 2008).

The recruitment of educational leaders should be based on important characteristics. They should possess appropriate educational qualifications, capabilities, competency, proficiency, effective decision making skills, leadership skills, and resourcefulness. Researchers believe that secondary school administrative effectiveness depends on the effective leadership of principals. Educational leaders play a pivotal role in affecting the climate, attitude and reputation of their schools. They are the cornerstone by where communities function and grow. With successful school leadership, schools become effective incubators of learning, places where students are not

only educated but challenged, nurtured and encouraged. Ololube et al. (2012) posited that effective educational leadership is very essential to school effectiveness and improvement. Thus, the importance of educational leadership is of great interest to researchers to bring a positive paradigm shift in the education sector. The making of a highly effective principal requires certain strategies, skills, traits and beliefs that most of the effective school leaders share. The following are qualities are common among most successful school leaders:

- **They Understand the Importance of Building Community:** Effective school leaders build and sustain community partnerships and leverage those partnerships to cultivate inclusive, caring and culturally responsive school communities. The school leader needs to be visible in their schools and community to build these community networks to develop trust and create a sense of transparency and shared purpose with students, staff, parents and community members.
- **They Empower Teachers and cultivate Leadership Skills:** Effective school leaders know that an effective school or a successful school is made up of great teachers and colleagues, thus, they must fully support and motivate teachers and staff by encouraging them to continually learn, develop and, perhaps most important, become leaders themselves.
- **They Utilize Data and Resources:** Successful school leaders use data, including standardized and site-based assessments, to drive continuous improvement through site-based decision making for the express purpose of promoting equitable and culturally responsive opportunities for all students.
- **They Have a Vision and a Plan:** Effective school leaders are able to articulate their school visions and goals. They are visionaries, they have goals that can unite a team around and a plan to help them get there.
- **They create Collaborative, Inclusive learning Environment:** The best school leaders provide inclusive learning to all students with flexible learning choices and effective path to achieving educational goals in spaces where they experience belonging. In addition, they prioritize inclusive learning also typically believe that every person can contribute to greater learning community and therefore encourage collaboration between staff and students.
- **They are Passionate About their Work:** Passion is important for school leaders, who have great influence on their school's climate and culture. Effective school leaders are passionate people that emit contagious energy that greatly affect teacher satisfaction and drive as well as student performance.
- **They Lead by Example:** An effective principal who leads by example position themselves as tremendous role models for not only the students in their school or districts but for colleagues and parents as well.
- **They Encourage Risk -Taking:** Just as teachers should encourage risk-taking amongst their students in order to spur growth, truly effective leaders encourage risk-taking amongst subordinate and colleagues by creating a supportive environment that rewards not just successful ideas or initiatives but effort as well, no matter the outcome.
- **They Are Lifelong Learners:** The most important qualities of great school leaders are their unquenchable thirst for knowledge. As John f. Kennedy said, " leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." Effective principals are endlessly curious individuals who never who never stop questioning and learning.

## Leadership Styles and Theories

The leadership styles refer to a leader characteristics behavior when directing and motivating guiding and managing a group. What all successful leaders have in common is the use of leadership styles that are conducive for growth. The particular leadership styles of the principal set the tone for the school as well as professionalism. It is a considered a precondition for effective school. The importance of leadership styles of principals cannot be overemphasized in developing and maintaining effective schools. Many researchers of leadership theory concur with regard to particular elements; that principals can shape cultures, communicate vision or mission and determine overall school achievement. The study therefore reviews leadership theories and leadership styles and the influence of principals' leadership styles in effectiveness of schools in Nigeria. The theoretical framework is anchored on three theories and they are:

- Behavioral Theory
- Transactional Theory
- Relational / Transformational Theory

**Behavioral Theory:** This is a big leap from trait theory, because it assumes that leadership capability can be learned, rather than been inherent. This theory is based on the principle that behaviors can be conditioned in a manner that one can have specific response to stimuli. This theory focuses on the actions of leaders, not on mental qualities or internal states. According to this theory, people can learn to become leaders through teaching and observation. Naylor (1999) notes that interest in the behavior of leaders has been stimulated by a systematic comparison of autocratic and democratic leadership style. This approach states that a leader uses three skills to lead his followers. These skills are technical, human and conceptual. This theory assumes that a particular behavior of a leader will make him a good leader while the opposite would discard him as a leader. It is observed that groups under this type of leadership perform differently:

- The autocratically led group all the powers are with the Principals who makes all the decisions, the group works well only when the leader is present, in the absence of the leader they are displeased and express hostility with the leadership style.
- The democratically led group the focus of power is more with the group as a whole and there is greater interaction with the group. This group performs nearly well as the autocratic group. Group members are pleased with leadership style the efforts of the group members continue to work well even when the leader is absent.
- The laissez-Faire led group the subordinates make the decision and hence the leader takes no real leadership role other that assuming position. Most times there is lukewarm attitude of members in the group because the leader is tolerant and merely symbolic.

**Transactional Theory:** The transactional style of leadership was first described by Max Weber in 1947 and then Bernard Bass in 1981. This theory focuses on basic management process of controlling, organizing, and short- term planning. In this theory employee are motivation by reward and punishment. These theories base leadership on a system of rewards and punishments (Charry, 2012) the leader creates structure and the employee know what is expected clearly in terms of meeting or not meeting targets. The duty of the followers is to obey instructions of the leaders. If followers do what is desired, they will be rewarded but if they do the opposite the

appropriate punishment follows. The exchange between leader and follower takes place to achieve routine performance goals.

**Relational/ Transformational Theory:** Transformational theories also known as relationship theories is a theory of leadership where a leader works with teams to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group. The focus in these theories, is the connections formed between leaders and followers. Leaders are visionary, inspiring, daring, risk-taker and thoughtful thinkers. Leaders in this group often have high ethical and moral standards (Charry, 2012). The transformational leaders have a charismatic appeal. According to (Bass, 2005), the four attributes of transformational leadership are defined as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, Idealized influence and individualized consideration.

## **Leadership Styles**

Leadership styles are not “a one size fits all” phenomenon. Leadership styles are the approaches used to motivate followers in an organization. The principals of schools in Nigeria need to be careful in selecting and adopting leadership styles to fit their school, situation, groups and individuals. It is advantageous for Principals in Rivers State to have a proper understanding of the different leadership styles to arm them with the appropriate knowledge to lead schools effectively (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Below are six highly effective education leadership styles:

**Autocratic Leadership Style:** The leader has complete power over staff and it is an extreme form of transactional leadership. The autocratic leader drives followers towards a goal that needs to be achieved and makes all the decisions. Followers have little or no opportunity to make suggestions, even if it is in the best interest of the school. This leadership style is best used when decisions are to be made quickly and best used in crisis situation. The merits of autocratic leadership is that, this style is incredibly efficient. The drawback is employees are not be bonded or connected as the leader makes all the decision.

**Democratic/ Participative Leadership Style:** In this style of leadership team members are included in decision making but the democratic leaders make the final decisions. Creativity is highly encouraged in this style and team members are involved in projects and decision making. Collaboration can be seen in the school. The benefits of this style are enormous. The democratic style of leadership helps to develop employee skills, also team members tend to have more job satisfaction and are productive because they are involved. The disadvantage of this style it is not appropriate when quick decisions are to be made during crisis, a team can waste valuable time in gathering information. Another drawback is team members without expertise or knowledge to provide high quality input.

**Laissez-Faire Leadership Style:** This style the leader allows followers to work on their own, laissez-faire is a French phrase “let it be”. In this style the leader provide team with resources and advice, if needed but does not get involved. This style occurs when leaders don’t have sufficient control over their staff. Team members are given complete freedom to do their work and set deadlines for themselves. This style is effective when team members are experienced,

skilled and self-starters. Laissez-Faire style is effective when leaders monitor performance and give feedback to team members regularly. The merits of this style is that it can increase productivity and high job satisfaction to team members. The drawback is if employees do not have knowledge, skills or motivation to do work. Another danger is when team members do not manage their time properly.

**Coaching Leadership Style:** This leadership style assist team member to develop their future. Many researchers believe that to fit and excel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century this style of leadership is appropriate in the education sector. Employees are pushed to try new things and this will propel them to grow and develop. Coaching leaders give lots of instructions and get feedbacks. The leader is good at delegating. The merit of this style is that, employees will develop their skills and knowledge and will be bonded to the leader and organization. The danger of this style is it is time consuming approach and only works when employees are already aware of their weakness and want to improve, it will fail when leaders are unskilled coaches.

**Transactional Leadership Style:** The idea of this leadership style is that team members agree to obey the leader when they accept the job. The exchange which is the transaction is the organization paying team members for their efforts and compliance. In this style employees who meet up with appropriate standards the expectation of the leader are rewarded while those who do not meet up are punished. The advantage of this style is team members because of the reward will be more productive. The drawback is employees must obey leaders even if leaders might be misleading the organization. The leaders focus on completing task without seeing why it's necessary. The team members will not be bonded to the organization because everything they are doing is for rewards and punishments.

**Transformational Leadership Style:** This approach is collaborative style that empowers the school team to have a say in decision making and enables collective goal setting. The leader is charismatic. The leader through role modeling creates a culture of innovation and improvement and shared sense of purpose and these sets the foundation for growth and success. Transformational leaders are able to influence school outcomes by developing people through individual support, outlining high-performance expectation, building productive relationships and providing instructional support. The merits of this styles according to researchers increases teams job satisfaction and strengthens their commitment to professional growth hence it reduces staff turnover. Furthermore, in schools it has direct impact on staff willingness to improve on their jobs. The result is improved student outcomes and lasting progress across the school system. The drawback is there is too much focus on the bigger picture, the leaders tend to overlook details meaning certain protocols or processes can be missed out. Transformational leaders are risk takers but if they go too far it might be detrimental to the organization. This style can put pressure on team members and it could lead to burnout because of too much weight on the team members.

The relevance of this leadership theories and styles to principals in Nigeria is very important because they set the tone or climates in their schools. The knowledge and application of the appropriate leadership styles will bring effectiveness to schools in Nigeria. Researchers have posed that there is no "one size fits all" phenomenon when it comes to leadership styles but they agree that the best is a combination of the leadership styles depending on several factors such as size of the school, stakeholders, culture of where the school is located, goal congruency.



Furthermore, schools in Nigeria will do better if the leader is transformational leader and when it is necessary use other leadership styles for example if a quick decision is to be made the leader has to use autocratic leadership style. In other for principals to run schools effectively they must know the right mix to use.

### **Effective Administration in Public Secondary Schools**

Administration has been defined by different authors and researchers in diverse ways. The earliest definition of administration was advanced by Griffith (1959), he said that administration is the process of directing and controlling life in a social organization. He added that it is also the act of developing and regulating of decision making, process in the most effective manner possible. Administration does not refer to any single process or act. It is the like a broad umbrella encompassing a number of processes such as planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and evaluating the performance. The success of any school or organization depends on effective administration. Ajadi and Adedeji (2009) in the same vein stated that administration consist of those activities that are related to general administrative operations services of an institution. These activities include: the administration of personnel programme, facilities, and space management, purchase and maintenance of supplies and materials, communication and transportation services, health and safety.

In addition, administration is the process of systematically organizing and coordinating materials and human resources and utilizing in any organization with the aim of achieving set goals in an organization. In the same light administration is defined as the careful systematic arrangement and use of (human and material), situations and opportunities for achievement of specific objectives of a given organization (Nwagwu, 2005). Also, Effiong (2015) opined that administration can be a discipline concerned with facilitating the accomplishment of goals through systematic utilization of human and material resources. When applied to school system the process is referred to as educational or school administration. Researchers have offered different definitions of educational administration, in simple term it is the process in which the school administrator organizes and coordinate both human and material resources available in a school, to achieve educational goals in the educational system. School administration can also be a process of systematically utilizing the human and material resources to implement educational programmes within the guidelines of educational policies in order to achieve goals in education. Omoregie (2005) cited in Effiong (2015) defined school administration as the arrangement of human and material resources and programmes available to education for the attainment of educational objectives.

Secondary school is the bridge between primary and tertiary education, thus it is very critical in the education system in Nigeria. Secondary education is the basic or raw material provider for desired future manpower resources. The important of secondary education cannot be overemphasized because it is the source of mid -level manpower production that is necessary to sustain and improve our economy in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of Secondary Education in Nigeria**

The primary goals of secondary education according to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) are two folds:

- Prepare learners the individuals for useful living within the society.
- For participation in higher education.

Derived from the goals are the specific objectives for secondary education in Nigeria, and they are:

- Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunity for education of higher quality, irrespective of sex, social, religious and ethnic background.
- Diversify its curriculum to cater for differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course.
- Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology.
- Develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural heritage.
- Raise generation of people that can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate those values specified under our broad national aims and live as good citizens.
- Foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.
- Inspire students with a desire for achievement and self -improvement both at school and in later life (Obanya, 2002).

These goals and objectives stated above if implemented in secondary schools will bring a positive dynamic shift in the educational system in Nigeria thus producing a dependable source of manpower supply for specialized skill production at the tertiary level. It is appalling that public secondary schools in Nigeria are gradually decaying as the years go by in all areas hence, they have not been able to achieve the goals and objectives they are established for. Secondary schools are educational organization and just like other organizations, to achieve the goals and objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education there must be effective and efficient leadership whose responsibility is to equality and quality education performance, efficient management of human and material resources to achieve educational goals and objectives. In secondary school this responsibility is carried out by the administrators who are the principals. The decline in the quality of public secondary schools has to do with incompetent principals, that is, principal that are not effective administrators. In Nigeria most of the public secondary school principals are male and the female are few. This is due to gender bias for women in leadership position in the education sector. I believe that if more women are given the opportunity to be principals, secondary schools in Nigeria will be able to achieve educational goals and objectives.

### **Gender/Gender Stereotype**

The word gender is an analytic concept which emphasizes the sociological roles, cultural expectations and responsibilities of men and women in any given society. Human beings belong to masculine or feminine gender while non-living objects belong to neuter gender. The term gender equally projects these characteristics that distinguish group organisms according to their reproductive and cultural expectant roles, inhibitions and limitations. Gender is therefore culturally based while sex is biologically based. Izuagba (2013) sees gender as a “social and cultural construct because it underlines the expectations the society has of someone because

he/her is male or female". Such expectations or characteristic sharply distinguish male from female right from the first day of birth till end of life.

Gender expectations and inhibitions are integrated into the process of socialization of all members of a given society. All curricular activities at home, peer-group setting, playground and even home work place are designed to reflect role expectations as approved by culture. For instance, boys right from early childhood stage are encouraged to be brave, brilliant, bright, bold, courageous, competitive, adventurous, achievers, inquisitive, independent, fearless, forthright, leaders and pace setters to mention but a few. Girls, on the other hand are encouraged to be beautiful, attractive, meek, mild, seen not heard, submissive, homely, tender loving, easy-going, dependent, tolerant and domestic oriented.

According to Okunna (2014) who opined that gender refers to a system of roles and relationship between women and men that are determined not biologically but by the political and economic context. Gender can equally be seen as the process by which individuals who are born into biological categories of men and women through the acquisition of locally defined attributes of masculinity and femininity beyond biological differences, all other differences between men and women are socially constructed and no logical relationships with their biological compositions. All such gender-based social constructs which govern the totality of a child's being permeate from culture to the curriculum and finally anchor in the career world. They depict stereotypic ways of socialization based on gender.

As Okeke and Njoku (2013) observed that the child rearing practices at home, reflect the gender ideologies of parents. The boy-child is usually allowed games and toys that will prepare him for science and technical education. On the contrary, the girl-child is allowed to own toys and participate in activities that will prepare her for other learning than science and technology. While the girl-child is given cooking kits and dolls. Thus, the boy-child rather than the girl-child develops science-learning readiness. Where the girl-child despises all these initial inhibitions, denial of opportunities and dives into science and technology discipline the workplace is expected to be free of gender stereotype. Differences in the way boys and girls are encouraged to socialize, mature and make career choices will result in differences in self-esteem and self-confidence.

Gender stereotype, therefore, refers to the inherent tendency to have fixed set of ideas (right or wrongly) about the roles, expectations, approvals and characteristics of males and females in a given society or cultural setting. Umezurike (2011) affirms gender stereotype thus; Gender stereotype permeates the school system, manifesting in both direct and subtle ways. For instance, there are masculine subjects such as Science, Technology and Mathematics. There are also feminine subjects such as Home Economics, Literature and Secretarial Studies. The language and illustrations used in textbooks and readers also portray gender bias. Boys are generally portrayed as brave, intelligent, decisive and adventurous. Girls on the other hand, are shown as shy and timid in classroom interaction between teachers and pupils also favour boys to the detriment of girls, other manifestations of gender stereotyping in schools are described as hidden curriculum which send messages to girls to conform to role expectations.

This scenario among other things discourages girls to go into science, technology and mathematics courses, to a great extent in the past. These days, the situation has changed as girls disregard such inhibitions and dive into science and technology courses. However, the development of leadership qualities is still far-fetched on the part of girls. This is because the curriculum process they underwent encouraged them to develop low self-esteem, low confidence and low self-concept, as evident in some textbooks and pictorial illustrations. Onyene (2016)

observes that leadership role is trans-organizational, implying that it affects every sphere of formal endeavour. Thus, education, government, defense, service, trade investment and the entire rubric of economic development should see men and women as working in complementary manner based on gender sensitive principles of equity meritocracy, emotional cum, mental readiness as well as within the sequel energizing mechanisms motivation.

This buttresses the fact that even when girls despise all odds and delve into masculine-perceived field of study or career, there is still gender stereotype as regards leadership. Gender issues in leadership do not emphasize ordaining one sex be it male or female to be the perpetual leader whether or not the person is qualified. They also do not emphasize employing cultural constructs blindly in the selection of leaders. They emphasize meritocracy and mental alertness. This is because the continuous and consistent absence or near-absence of one sex especially the female sex in top management and leadership in prominent fields or career are very discriminatory, it is an act that negates the world stipulation of 30% of women representation in such positions.

### **The Role of Principals**

The principal is the person given the responsibility of administering secondary schools; therefore, the principal is the chief executive of public secondary schools and therefore has multifarious tasks to accomplish, for successful administration of the school system. For any public secondary school to be to achieve its predetermined goals there must be effective and efficient leadership and the leader is the principal who is responsible for to plan, organize, coordinate, control, budget and report the efforts of others. Several authors and researchers have described the functions and roles of school principals. Amadeker (2005) describes the functions and roles of school principals as 'head teacher, principal, leader of school, school father adviser, chief administrative executive, public relation officer, curriculum director, innovator, policy maker, organizer, communicator, school authority educator, perfectionist and philosopher. The roles of school principals have been on the increase. Principals presently serve as supervisors, classroom teachers, community leaders, government's representatives etc. In the words of Barth in Sergiovanni (2001), school principals too often must deal with these aspects of work superficially. The reasons for this can be understood as one examines the full range of responsibilities that principals have. He further describes the extent of such responsibilities as almost everything that happens in school and out. In that case, principals are responsible for personnel, making sure that employees are physically present and working to the best of their ability. As a matter of fact, principals should be accountable for academic achievement of all children, their minimum standards at each grade level, for the gifted, and of those who are neither. The principal has become a provider of social services, food services, health care, recreation programs, transportation and even security and expected to do more in inclusive programmes, with all children, abled and disabled, learning together in the same classroom. Success or failure of our school programmes, depends on the individual principals' ability and skills to utilize school resources towards achievement of the set goals as they perform the following major management functions:

- Planning
- Funding and accountability
- Record keeping

- Reporting
- Supervision

### Female Principals’ Administrative Competencies

Female principals should not be taken for granted as they have the potentials, skills and abilities to effectively manage secondary schools in Nigeria. The records made available globally of world female leaders indicates a very high index of achievements so far by leading women in Business, health, politics and other thriving industries or sectors of the economy. The educational sector is not left as female principals can change the narratives on educational leadership and administration of schools especially in the secondary level of education. It on this backdrop that the following factors will be considered as administrative competencies of female principals.

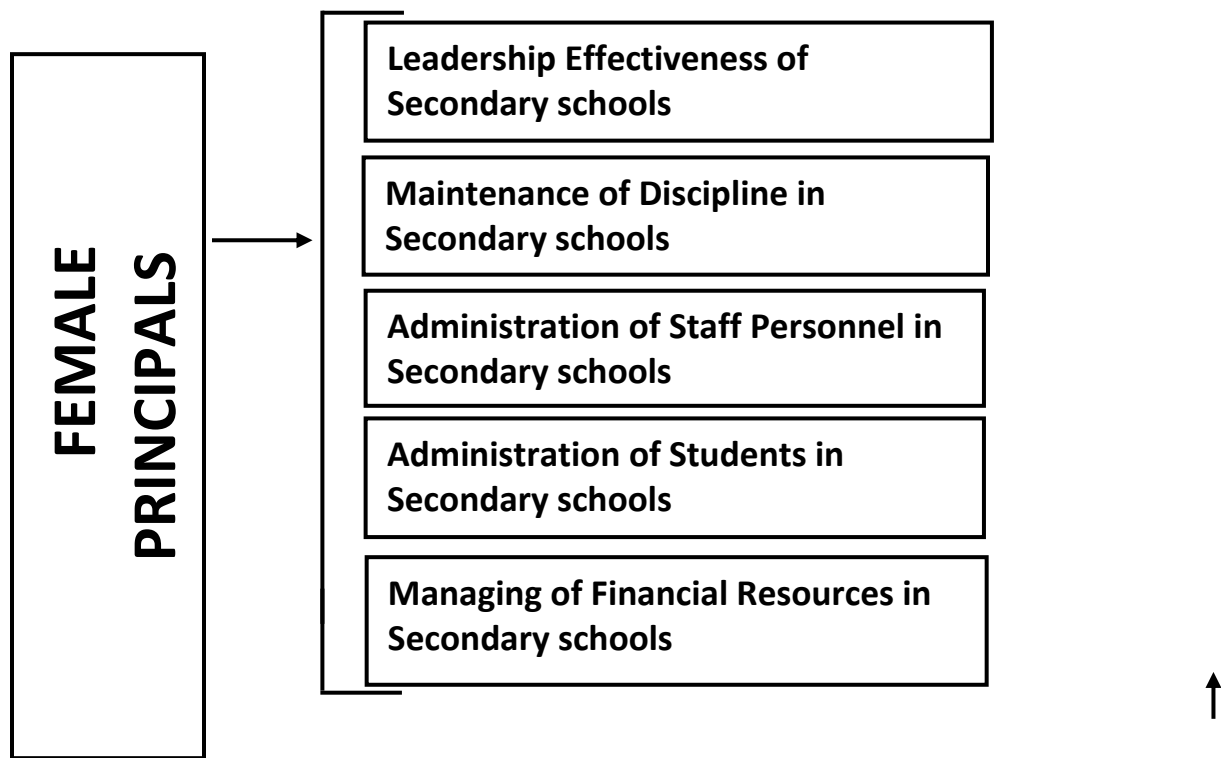


Figure 1: Female Principals’ Administrative Competencies Model

### Female Principals and Leadership Effectiveness in Secondary Schools

Educational leadership has a critical role in the transformation of society, and for changes to happen, effective leaders are key. Along with the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes, there is also increasing recognition that effective school leaders and managers have to be developed if they are to provide the best possible education for their learner. Throughout history, many have come to believe that leadership is a traditional masculine activity.

Kolb (2014) argued that if women in organizations are to emerge as leaders, it is important that they be perceived as individuals who can influence or motivate others. A look at

research dating back to the 1970's indicated that there was a tremendous amount of gender bias regarding women's achievements in the business sector.

Thomas (2014) says that research has demonstrated that there are far more similarities than differences in the leadership behaviours of women than men, and that they are equally active. Still, women are less likely to be pre-selected as leaders, and the same leadership behaviour is often evaluated more positively when attributed to male than to a female. Bunyi (2015) found that when males were in the majority, they emerge as leaders 100% of the time. When females were in the majority, females did emerge as leaders but not beyond the expectations one would have on the basis of chance. In contrast, Schneier (2010) observed that the likelihood that a woman will emerge as a leader did increase as the number of women in the group increased. Kent (2014) argued that women were slightly more likely than men to be perceived as leaders by good members when the percentage of women per group was controlled statistically. If more females are given a chance to be principals they will be more effective administrators in because they are good listeners, they focus on team work, they consistently demonstrate passion, enthusiasm and immense capacity to serve and be served by others. Women make bold and wise decision while collaborating with their team. They make the school environment less authoritarian and more cooperative and family -like. Consequently, this will motivate and influence staff positively and make public secondary schools function optimally.

### **Female Principals and Maintenance of Discipline in Secondary Schools**

In effective schools, somehow find time to develop a vision of what the school should be and to share that vision with all the members of the community (Leithwood, 2010). Successful principals can articulate a specific school mission and stress innovation and improvement. He continued to compare less effective school heads and vague about their schools and focus on maintaining the status quo. It is essential that Heads of schools share their vision with stakeholders so that they understand the school's goals, and work together for achievement. Effective school Heads ensure that their schools allow learners to put learning at the center of their daily activities. A healthy school environment as Goldring (2013) puts it is characterized by basics like safety and orderliness as well as less tangible qualities such as supportive and responsive attitude towards the children and teachers that are part of the community. Females are good at multitasking and can wear many hats this enables them pivot, adjust and focus for solutions to problem. With these attributes female principals have the capacity to maintain discipline in public secondary schools and this will be a panacea to the present sorry state of public secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **Female Principals and Administration of Staff Personnel in Secondary Schools**

Female principals can be good administrators of their staffs, especially as they do to their homes. Ibukun (2011) presupposes that it is important for the leader to understand his/her abilities. Your staff observes you, and how you handle yourself affects their acceptance of your leadership as much or more than anything you say. Effective leaders are trusted for their knowledge and competence, so don't over-react or claim false expertise. Be true to your personal style. Conduct yourself in a way your staff can trust and respect you. The type of work or service one does may attract different types of employees. For example, information technology businesses may attract younger workers who thrive in a collaborative environment. This work style is open, with tasks

spread across several employees. With a horizon flow of ideas, a leader may rely more on two-way communication than in an office with staff independently in cubicles. How closely you work with employees affect your interactive style (Avery, 2014).

Yukl (2016) argues that law of information is at the core of effective leadership. While the conditions and styles of communication change, the need to express one clearly in all situation remains. Regular meetings may be difficult to implement in high-productivity manufacturing situations and they may be essential in collaborative workplaces. Likewise, written and verbal communications have appropriate places. Avoid at all costs situations in which your employees feel that they have no information. This appears as abandonment of leadership. Communication is a key trait of successful principals fortunately various studies have shown that one of the strongest skill among females is communication. Thus, female principals will do better than their male counterpart because they are able to communicate effectively with all stakeholders creating a good school culture and climate that will translate to effective administration in public secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **Female Principals and Administration of Students in Secondary Schools**

Schools exist so that students can learn and teachers can facilitate that learning. This truism is central to any effort to define effective leadership. School leaders, of course, do teach students on a full-time basis in public schools. Effective Heads of schools are quick to dispel the notion of culture deficit and are committed strongly to improving teaching and enhancing learning in order to keep students under control. They place a strong emphasis upon students' achievement and learning and those conditions that can lead to higher students' performance. They set high expectations for the learners, emphasizing consistency in teaching practices and provide clear rules about behaviour and discipline. The central developmental focus is on improving the quality of teaching and learning. In this sense, they are also effective instructional leaders. Therefore, their impact on student learning is accomplished indirectly (Ibukun, 2011).

Naturally females are great in nurturing, this they do as mothers; and this vital role of nurturing in female principals assist team members develop skills and strength that harness the performance of student to achieve academic excellence. The appointment of more female principals will solve decline in performance of student in secondary schools in Nigeria.

### **Female Principals and Management of Financial Resources**

This is the specialized functions directly associated with top management; this refers to the efficient and effective management of funds in the school to accomplish the educational objectives of the school. Secondary schools like other organizations have limited finances; hence finances must be utilized prudently. Different gender is rated differently on use of financial resources (Ibukun, 2011). The principal is expected to supervise financial and physical resources of his school. These include purchasing and requisitioning supplies and materials, accounting for school monies, and maintaining an inventory of school property. The fundamental principle in the school finance is not how money goes into the system but how well the available funds are effectively put to use. The leadership required in planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluating financial and physical resources represents a dynamic and demanding aspect of the principal role (Ibukun, 2011).

If more female principals are appointed, a lot of misappropriation of funds will be done away with. Females are good at managing limited resources, this skill most of them acquire as wives and mothers. Females also pay attention to details, therefore they will be able to supervise financial and physical resources compared to male principals. When funds are managed properly this will lead to effective administration of public secondary schools.

### **Females in Modern Career in Nigeria**

Women are virtually involved in all careers in Nigeria, their limitation as regards enrolment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics courses are no longer as conspicuous as was the case about two decades ago. Thus, there is high sense of career development on the part of both men and women in Nigeria. Denga in Ajoku (2008) sees career development as “the total constellation of psychological, sociological, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to shape the work (career) of any given individual”. This emphasizes the fact that sociological, educational and among other factors readily come into play during one’s career aspirations. Thus, the appropriateness or otherwise of these factors will certainly affect and influence the nature of one’s career depending on the person’s gender.

Shertzer and Stone in Ajoku (2008) recognized factors that influence career choice as “intellectual ability, aptitude, schooling, family, personality, self-concept, self-esteem, values, interest, stereotype and expectations as well as environmental influence”. Some careers cited by Ajoku (2008) showed significant career-choice differences between males and females along the line of engineering, technology and humanities. This scenario of two decades ago has changed significantly in the sense that females and males to a large extent, delve into science, technology and humanities careers. Nevertheless, some factors observed by Schertzer and Stone in Ajoku (2008) still impinge upon maximal attainment of equitable participation, acceptance and assessment of females in all ramifications in the modern career world. Thus intellectual ability, aptitude and schooling are relative under control. Other influences/factors namely stereotype, values and expectations still come into scene of career-world especially at higher discussion making levels. As Okunna (2008) observes, gender relations in Nigeria are characterized by a lot of imbalance to the disadvantage of women. This is the twenty-first century, yet tradition, culture, religion and other factors have continued to widen the disparity between Nigerian men and women, by keeping them in the subordinate position to men. The larger society and the sub culture still see women as their subordinates, resulting in a situation in which the marginalization, trivialization and stereotyping of women are glaring aspects of Nigerian life.

These are some of the ways values and stereotype mar career aspirations and attainments of women in Nigeria. Even though they (women) possess the mental capabilities to function in any career of their choices, tradition and culture will press it on them to remain as subordinates. Okunna (2008) takes a look at the career of politics in Nigeria in the twenty first century and reports thus: in the area of politics, the plight of women is equally pathetic, although women make up at least half the electorate in Nigeria, their presence in policy/decision making positions is very low. Again a number of factors militate against their effective participation in democratic politics. These factors, many of which have their roots in women’s subordinate position in society, include illiteracy, poverty, low self-esteem, ignorance, lack of confidence in other women, violent and non-conducive political environment (money politics, intimidation and violence) cultural stereotype, religious barriers, high restoration fees (which most women cannot



afford) harmful traditional practices, etc., above all, the chauvinistic tendencies of male rulers of the land over the years, denied women any meaningful participation in politics.

Politics as a career is very fundamental in the development equation of Nigeria and Nigerians. No singular sex should therefore suffer any initial disadvantage in it as regards qualification, participation and formulation of policies therein. Convincing evidence should overtly be on display to demonstrate that it is a career couched in transparency. Honest and established criteria. As Denga in Ajoku hinted, as indicated earlier, all the sociological, psychological, economic and educational factors that guide and govern politics as a career should be clearly stated, abilities and known to all who delve into it. This act definitely excludes sociological or cultural gender stereotypes, in relations to the particular sex (gender) of those that make the rules that govern politics and approved political acts in Nigeria. What readily comes to mind of readers should include electoral/returning officers, chairpersons of the highest electoral bodies in Nigeria. One should wonder aloud on what percentage of these persons are women at any point in time. Open-mindedness on who chooses, performs or excels in a particular career should prevail. However, as Okorie (2000) observed many employers have a preconceive idea of types of jobs suitable for women. They consider only a very narrow range of jobs as open to women and in this way women's opportunities are more restricted than those of men. Lack of physical strength and inability to supervise are the main reasons given for restricting jobs for women. Indeed, Nigerian women are restricted in the choice of politics as a career. Unless and until that imbalance is duly addressed it will remain a mirage to expect significant number of Nigerian women to emerge as President, Speaker Federal/House of Assembly and so on. There are some merits on the lack of comparable physical strength on the part of women. The other issue in that context is whether women also lack the skill, knowledge, intelligence and wisdom to operate/manipulate the automatic machines installed in modern industries and factories of this present era. Most machines in industries are operated through press of button and technological gadgets.

For instance, while smaller household electric generators are operated through energetic pull attached strings, the bigger and more sophisticated generator sets that can give a whole university campus electricity for many hours can be operated through pressing on the appropriate button. The thorough reading cum comprehending manuals of such big machines or plants equips and further empowers one to understand the functions of their various parts. The same skills are required in computer services and the like. With this type of background the careers of engineering, technology and computer services become relevant and attractive to men and women. One's initial training and sustained interest and not gender and physical strength empower one to serve at the higher or low levels.

This can serve as means of checking the trend of career opportunities availed to women in Nigeria. This prevalence of trend indicated by Okorie (2000) is still pertinent and calls for concern as one ponders on gender neutrality of modern careers in Nigeria. It is through the social organization of women in Nigerian societies, that women are confined to certain occupations or careers like teaching, nursing, clerical work and home-making which have lower status, lower pay and require less skill. On the other hand, men are assigned jobs that involve physical strains, logical thinking leadership and competitions. Thus pre-conceived ideas or factors tend to be criteria for fitness into modern careers. Thus, to say the least, negates human resource as well as national development. The extent to which modern careers are gender neutral, to that extent, will equitable operation exist for both men and women on the jobs. It becomes pertinent, at this

juncture, therefore, to consider some gender natural indices in modern careers that will guild the expected dividends of equity, justice and fair-play.

### **Female Administration Problems in Secondary Schools**

The school like every other organization has problems. The varieties of problems that present themselves in the schools can be identified through the processes by which its functions are performed, these problems are not peculiar to a particular gender, rather they are experienced by both males and females administrators alike. Some of these problems include; inadequate instructional supervisory functions, poor resources supply, financial problems, etc. Supervision which is one of the activities through which the school administrator attempts to achieve acceptable standards of performance and result is most of the time neglected by some principals, the reason being that they are very much occupied with other administrative functions in the offices. Hence, some teachers develop non-chalant attitudes towards their teaching to the detriment of the students and parents.

There is also the problem of poor resource supplies to the schools. Limits are placed on the quantity of resources made available to the administrators because the authorities will always answer, “resources are scarce”. Peretomode (2001) stated that the concept of scarce resources is an economic one that attempts to rationalize spending in order to avoid waste. The concept also prescribed minimum input in order to sustain organizational efforts for the purposes of goal attainment. These resources can be classified into human, material/financial resources. The quality and quantity of teaching personnels may be important sources of problems to an effective school administration. As for adequate supply of teachers in the right quantities and qualities, this has defiled every solution. Combs (2008) asserted that “the problem of teachers supply is not just one of numbers it is first and foremost a problem of quality –of getting a large enough quantity of the right quality”.

Financial/material problems which the school administrator faces are another thing which affects the smooth running of the school. Finance is the most delicate economic factor to manage in order to ensure a successful educational administration “When it is not available, it constitutes a problem and even when it is available, its management could constitute a greater problem if not well handled” (Enaohwo, 2000). The administrator cannot provide the necessary materials for teaching to the teachers but the needs the sponsorship of the government and community to make it possible. These materials include tables, chairs, chalkboard, chalk, noted for lessons preparation, etc.

The administrator is also confronted with numerous problems and complaints from the teachers on individual or group basis. This is consequent upon the fact that problems are bound to arise in any human institution because of man’s imperfections (Ozigi, 2007) one of such problem is –staff management and conflict resolution. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defined conflict as “a situation in which people; group or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or argument”. Occasions may arise when teachers are engaged in a serious disagreement on issues concerning the institution, teacher against teacher, students, official or members of the public. The ability of the principal to handle these problem areas demands competence and effectiveness. These two qualities are determined to a large extent by the demands and circumstances of the situation in which the principal functions and not on gender per-se. Despite all these general problems, there is still the belief that the females face greater problems in administration of schools.

Most institutions continue to drag their feet in accepting women as sources of executive participants. They believed that no women no matter how highly qualified can be as good as the man in holding the same type of job position. Gardner (2005) observed that “there is the general belief that women make poor supervisors; that they are too emotional and take things personally, that they cannot command the loyalty and respect of their subordinates”. Ndu (2000) noted that even when women are qualified for managerial positions, they are pushed aside as a result of some stereotypes which assume that women are unable to meet certain work demands for emotional toughness and stability; that women are timid about accepting leadership positions; that the women’s responsibilities at home are seen as more important than those outside the home in paid jobs, and that women do not want to be managers because it would involve extra work loads which would interfere with their family obligations.

McGregor supporting the above views said that the model of manager in our culture is a masculine one. It calls for characteristics which are masculine in nature – aggressive, competitive, strong, assertive, ability to remain cool and control one’s emotions, adventurous, imaginative unconditional, independent, firm and just. In this regard, a manager is not feminine, he is not soft and yielding, dependent or intuitive in womanly sense.

They believe that for a woman to become a successful administrator, she requires to make a personality shift which must incorporate more masculine characteristics. This is because she has to contend with problems posed by men who find it difficult to work under the women. This Herbert (2010) testified to when he said that; the difficulties I had working under a woman largely stemmed from my own feelings concerning her status in a bureaucratic hierarchy. Many men for whom I have worked, frankly have been more difficult to please than women for whom I had worked, but I accepted the difficulties of working for a man as part of the working world in which I live. The cause of my difficulty was not so much the woman under whom I worked, but my own resentment and unwillingness to accept a woman as professional equal or superior.

The female administrator has also to contend with problems arising from her fellow women workers. It is generally observed that females are more relaxed with male administrators. Hence, Madumere–Obike (2004) reporting the response of a female principal when asked why she preferred male teachers to female ones: I feel very much at ease working with the male teachers than the female teachers. This is because, we women do not like each other and even will if possible work our fellow women down.

There are also problem of internal conflicts which female administrators face. These conflicts are rooted in the process of socialization. Females are traditionally taught to nurture and please the males and being engulfed in administrative functions will not allow them to perform their roles perfectly. Hence conflicts will arise in the homes. Despite all these problems, female administrators still perform their duties creditably and in most cases, better than the males. Women are more concerned with preserving the integrity of the educational enterprise and its ultimate goals (effective teaching and learning). Then women like to prevent crisis in their establishments by making sure they devise a more strict but acceptable ways of administration to ensure effectiveness in the education sector. Government should realize that all efforts towards equality have a limited effect if management practice is such that in recruitment and promotion preference is given to men.

The issue of gender is being universally acknowledged now and many researchers have made series of studies in that area, all in the bid to find out whether there are differences between males and females in leadership positions especially in administration of schools. Hence, Spencer and Kocham delved into the problems of women facing more serious attrition than their

male counterparts in the area of school administration in Alabama despite the fact that they perform better than the males in many areas. This issue is further compounded by the fact that women receive less compensation than the males and they also advance within the organization at a slower rate.

They therefore focused on determining the status of women administrators in Alabama in terms of demographic and career patterns. They sought to find out the degree to which females were represented in the administrative ranks and whether there were discernable barriers hindering their entrance into these positions. Their findings suggest that there have been increase in the number of females entering the principalship positions in recent years and they have higher levels of education and experience than their male counterparts. This contributed to women ranking their competencies and confidence in knowledge and skills more than the males. However, they affirmed that the roles of principalship in today's schools are very complex and difficult for both males and females alike, but rather stressed that the females are more both males and females alike, but rather stressed that the females are more likely to feel more stress and difficulties in their roles because of other responsibilities in their homes. They however advised that women should be encouraged to take up administrative functions by advising institutions planning programmes in educational administration and urging women to pursue them.

Also contributing to this issue of gender and school administration, Okafor (2009) stated that there have been problems associated with the perceived deprivation and sometimes complete denial of females from their rights to occupy some administrative positions despite the fact that they may be more qualified and more experienced. Thus, she went on to examine the levels of effectiveness of male and female principals in school administration and to identify if there are peculiar problems faced by the female principals which the males do not face or whether both gender perform administrative roles equally.

The researcher was able to find out from respondents to the research instrument (questionnaire) that there are no differences between the administrative tendencies of male principals from those of the female ones; that female principals also perform equally well in areas like decision making, supervisory functions, school/community relationships as well as maintaining discipline in their schools. Coleman (2002) posited that internationally, the teaching profession tends to be numerically dominated by women, but in most countries, they do not occupy a commensurate proportion of senior leadership and management positions.

This raises the issue of social justice within the pluralistic society. They argued that the reason was that the females cannot effectively perform the roles of school leaders because of their other responsibilities, hence an extract from the law of the People's Republic of China (1992) presenting the line of women's argument said (Fu Jun. 2005). Women and men are like athletes running on the same track. But the men run free while the women balance children in one hand and kitchen-wares in the other. And even if the encumbered women run as fast as the men, people then criticize them for not running gracefully.

Coleman further stated clearly that women are so much discriminated against that most of them have decided not to talk about it. He cited that in 2004 promotions, that a woman principal that complained of discrimination was asked to explain how, and she answered "too difficult to specify, just feelings/perception/manner of being talked down to, therefore, I have said no". However, he made the following submissions to stress the unreasonableness of gender discrimination. That a survey of principals in England showed that gender equity issues are still present with at least half of the women perceiving discrimination in relation to appointments and

in working with their colleagues; that more than 70% (seventy percent) of women stated that they feel constrained by the expectations of others to prove themselves as women who are principals; that women and men principals in the survey are at least equally well qualified for the role and equal opportunities may technically allow more access to more women; that one of the reasons why women are not favoured as principals is the stereotype that women leaders are likely to be soft, indecisive and generally unsuited to the demands of a role that is thought to require masculine qualities of decisiveness, assertiveness and dominance.

Madumere (2004) also went in to say that males have long dominated every facet of management and wonders whether it is cause by the women both being pushful or committed to their jobs? Or whether there are sections of the constitution which stated that there should be different standard for men and women? Or if there are anywhere standards are set for women's positions to be denied? Therefore, their study was geared towards finding out the extent to which educational qualifications of women as well as their styles of management, interpersonal relationships and role conflicts accounted for the differences in women's perceptions of their low representation in management positions.

She was able to find out that in the area of low representation of women in management and administrative positions that the women's educational qualifications do not account for their low representations, that both in role and performance, administrative styles and interpersonal relationships, female principals perform as well as their male counterparts. She finally concluded that the main problem is the stigmatization and politics of gender. Furthermore, she opined that the system is so politicized that such appointments are never based on merit. The women who are qualified to take up such posts are even more in number than the men, but often times, the men are favoured.

## **CONCLUSION**

An effective public secondary school is one with safe and positive learning environment where the students will be able to achieve their goals and develop their skills. It is the duty of the government to fund our secondary schools and appoint competent individuals as principals of secondary schools. The principal's serves as the head of administration in the school. He/she utilizes the scarce resources in achieving the school's organizational goals. The administrative ineffectiveness of the public secondary schools in Nigeria spurred my interest. The government should appoint more females as principals' of secondary school to enable them use their managerial expertise in improving the administration of schools. It has been shown overtime that women are not extravagant in their spending of financial resources. In addition, women are good at multitasking, they have high emotional intelligence, they are strong communicators, they are motivated by challenges, they are organized and experienced etc. These virtues of women distinguish them for handling managerial positions that will bring a transformation in public secondary schools in Nigeria.

## **Suggestions**

Based on the observations above, the following suggestions were made:

- The government should appoint more females as principals' of secondary school to enable them use their managerial expertise in improving the administration of schools.

- There should not be any gender bias in educational leadership, if women can rule great countries so it is not about being male or female but it should be based on individual strength and personality traits.
- More females should be appointed as principals like their male counterparts, and given the opportunity to lead because the quality of an effective principal is not based on gender but on personality, courage, clear vision to achieve school goals.

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