



Administrative Leadership Styles Of Male And Female University Administrators: A Difference Without Significant Difference

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Abstract:

The study determined the distribution of leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of public Universities in Nigeria. The study also compared leadership styles of the senior administrators based on their gender. One hundred and forty-eight (148) senior administrators were involved in the study. A 60-item questionnaire, Styles of Leadership Survey (SLS) with reliability index of 0.85 was used for data collection. One hundred and twenty-five (125) of the 148 copies of questionnaire were duly completed and used for data analysis. It was found that 100 (80.0%) of the senior administrators were males while only 25 (20.0%) were females. There was no significant difference in distribution of leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of the public universities in Nigeria. It was recommended that more female administrators should be given the opportunity to participate in administration of universities in Nigeria.

Introduction

Higher education currently faces complex visible but uncharted problems which affect the administration and leadership of colleges and universities. In the past years, institutions of higher learning have gone through many revolutions which include research, adult education, students' protests, service to society and a revolution of rising expectation on the part of those left behind in the early years (Tukur, 2004).

Most of these pressing problems are the outgrowth of trends such as declining enrollments of traditional-age students, reduction in federal and state funding, reduced public support, collective bargaining and decentralization of governing boards. This rapid increase in problems has resulted in an increase in the responsibilities of senior administrators of public universities in Nigeria (Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Bursars and Librarians). (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). These administrators are supposed to lead their institutions, provide a sense of direction, motivate others toward attainment of predetermined goals and build consensus among respective constituencies (Anikpo, 2000). Senior administrators' effectiveness depends largely on how well they gain the co-operation of respective constituencies involved in the development and progress of their institutions such as legislature, trustees, faculty, staff, students and various community groups. No doubt, leadership is an important human factor that is developed through training and exhibited through interaction with members of an institution who voluntarily accept the responsibility to work for the achievement of common goals and objectives (Nwafor, 2012).

Senior administrators often turn to personnel for assistance in carrying out their ever-increasing responsibilities. Leadership styles of these senior administrators may vary from situation-to-situation, however, in any situation where they rely on personnel for assistance, their leadership styles which motivate the personnel greatly influence the achievement of the group. A number of leadership styles are found in higher education administration. They include autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, employee-centred, production-centred, task-centred and the like (Fielder, 1974); Golightly, 1976; Tagg, 1994 and Okorie, 2004). These terms are used to describe the general approach used by leaders, but most leadership styles rely on a leader's basic assumptions about the attitudes of others toward work and organizations. These assumptions affect a leader's attitude and behaviour and, therefore shape the leader's style or approach to leadership. Thus, senior administrators' assumptions about schooling, the place of education in

society, how institutions should be organized and operated and how people should be treated are the guiding principles that become the cornerstone of their leadership styles.

The future of higher education institutions is affected by the leadership styles of senior administrators more than by any other similar-sized group of individuals within the university community. Therefore, to study the administrators' leadership styles, what they do and how they do it, is to study higher education in general because the administrators are central to the development and progress of higher education. Thus, the administrators' leadership styles which allow their subordinates to exercise initiative, make decisions and be generally active are important to the progress of an institution (Anikpo, 2000; Akubue Enyi, 2001 and Tukur, 2004).

The academic administrator grid (Blake and Mouton, 1981) and the leadership grid model (Hall and Williams, 1986) are among the outstanding behavioural grid models that are significant in the study of leadership styles. These two leadership models emphasize that a person's leadership style falls on a continuum between extreme positions (9/9, 5/5, 9/1, 1/9, 1/1). Also, these behavioural grid models were designed to show the extent to which an administrator expresses concern for people or concern for purpose. For instance; leadership style 9/9 – collaborative reflects a maximal concern for both purpose and people; style 5/5 - strategic reflects a moderate concern for both purpose and people; style 9/1 – directive reflects a maximal concern for purpose and a minimal for purpose and a maximal concern for people and style 1/1 – bureaucratic reflects minimal concern for both purpose and people.

Using these learning aids and/or assessment models, an administrator can determine his own leadership style and at least one back up style. Hall and Williams (1986) emphasized that once a leadership style is known, one's leadership style can be changed by learning what assumptions are held about people and purpose and acted upon when working with and through others, and what alternative assumptions provide more effective results. The leadership grid model of Hall and Williams measures the degree of concern for, not how much or the amount of factual production or actual behaviour toward people.

The aim of the study was to determine the distribution of leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of in three groups of public universities in Nigeria. The study also compared leadership styles of senior administrators of public universities in Nigeria based on gender. The null hypothesis was that there will be no significant difference in distribution of leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of

37 public universities in Nigeria. The significance of the study is that it will create data for the process of planned conscious change in leadership behaviour which will contribute to effective administration of the public universities in Nigeria.

Method

A survey design was used in which data are analyzed in order to compare and infer meaning from them. The population of the study consisted of 185 senior administrators (Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Bursars and Librarians) in 37 public universities in Nigeria. The senior administrators used in this study were grouped according to the enrollment of their institution:

- o Institutions with enrollments up to 5,000
- o Institutions with enrollments from 5,001 to 10,000 and
- o Institutions with enrollments of 10,001 or over.

The division of the 37 universities into three groups according to size or population was an arbitrary decision for the purpose of data collection and analysis. The institutions' names, total enrollments and addresses are listed in the *Guide to Higher Education in Africa*, (2002), published by International Association of Universities.

One hundred and forty-eight (148) senior administrators (representing four participants from each of the 37 public universities) were selected using random sampling technique to give equal opportunity to every male and female administrators. The instrument used for the study was a well-designed questionnaire, which was divided into two parts (I and II). Part I contains personal and institutional information such as age, gender, qualification and population of institution. In part II, a Styles of Leadership Survey (SLS) was adapted from Hall and Williams (1986) and modified to suit the purpose of the research. The SLS, designed primarily as a learning aid, is made up of 60 leadership alternatives presented five at a time under twelve different situations centred on behaviour of individuals as they carry out their administrative functions as leaders of groups or organizations. The 60-item SLS which was framed on a ten-point Likert format scale was validated by two experts in the area of measurement and evaluation with a test-retest reliability coefficient index of 0.85.

Out of 148 copies of questionnaire administered by the researcher and his assistants, 130 were completed and returned. Finally, 125 of them were found useable for data analysis as shown below. Descriptive and inferential statistics including percentages and t-test were used to analyze the data at .05 level of significance.

Results And Discussion

Gender of senior administration	Enrollment of institutional group			N	%
	Upto 5,000 (1)	5,001 to 10,000 (2)	10,001 or more (3)		
Male	33	32	35	100	80.0
Female	5	11	9	25	20.0
Total	38	43	44	125	100.0

Table 1: Distribution of male and female senior administrators of public universities in Nigeria

Table 1 shows that more than three-fourths of the senior administrators (80.0%) were males. Thirty-three (33) male administrators were in group 1, 32 in group 2 and 35 were in group 3 institutions. About one – fifth (20.0%) of the respondents were females. Five (5) female administrators were in group 1, 11 were in group 2 and 9 were in group 3 institutions. The combined ratio of the administrators responding to the study was four males to one female (4:1).

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in distribution of leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of public universities in Nigeria.

Leadership Style	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	TTP	Decision
9/9-Callaborative	Male	100	76.38	10.00			Not significant
	Female	25	73.20	11.03	1.25	0.215	
5/5-Strategic	Male	100	36.20	12.04			Not significant
	Female	25	37.90	10.22	-0.58	0.562	
9/1-Directive	Male	100	66.51	13.63			Not significant
	Female	25	72.50	13.29	180	0.075	
1/9-Supportive	Male	100	64.57	11.64			Not significant
	Female	25	61.70	12.72	0.97	0.335	
1/1-Burearucratic	Male	100	88.07	11.63			Not significant
	Female	25	93.55	11.43	-1.91	0.059	

Table 2: Two-sample t-test results on leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of public universities in Nigeria

Note: N = 125, TTP = Two – Tailed Probability

Df= 123, critical value t = 1.96 P > .05 is significant.

The hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in distribution of leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of the public universities in Nigeria. The t-test was used to analyze this hypothesis at the .05 level of confidence because only two groups (male and females) were involved. The results are presented in Table 2. As indicated in this Table, there was no significant difference at the .05 confidence level in male and female senior administrators' preference for 9/9, 5/5, 1/9 1/1 leadership styles. The null hypothesis was therefore retained in all the leadership styles because none of the calculated t-values was greater than the critical value of 1.96.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that there is no significant difference in distribution of leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of the public universities in Nigeria. Many studies on leadership behaviour of administrators of organizations support the findings of this study. For instance, Hall and Williams (1986) reported that leadership style preferences differed as a function of age, number of people supervised,

administrative level or rank and organization (institutional) type, but Hawker and Coke (1981) pointed out that age was correlated to the supportive and bureaucratic leadership styles, but found no correlation between gender and preference for leadership styles. They stressed further that male female administrators who occupy parallel positions and performed similar functions exhibited similar patterns of relationship behaviour and levels of effectiveness. The results of this study also show that more than three-fourths of the senior administrators (100) were males while only 25 were females. This finding was supported by Nwafor (1991) who reported that out of 101 administrators of public universities in Texas, 81 were males while only 20 were females. This result is not surprising because of the nature of societies involved. However, generally men feature more in higher education administration worldwide.

Conclusions

This study has shown that there are more male than female senior administrators in the three groups of institutions that participated in the study. The combined ratio of the senior administrators responding to the study was four males to one female (4:1). Thus, generally men feature more than women in university and/or higher education administration in Nigeria. Also, there was no significant difference in distribution of leadership styles of male and female senior administrators of the public universities in Nigeria. This research has created the knowledge that male and female administrators who occupy parallel positions and performed similar functions exhibit similar patterns of leadership behaviour.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations should be considered.

- 0 More female administrators should be given the opportunity to participate in administration of universities in Nigeria.
- 0 The establishment of leadership training programmes for leadership practices such as those in the instrument used for this study in order to create an awareness of leadership styles and facilitate interpersonal relationship.

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