

# Chronometric Attitudes and Administrative Tasks' Performance of Principals in Lagos State Secondary Schools, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish if there is any significant relationship between Principals' time management as an independent variable and administrative tasks' performance as the dependent variables in Lagos State Junior and Senior Secondary schools. The study divides administrative tasks into five broad headings, namely: school personnel task, school instructional supervisory task, school business task, school plant maintenance task and school public relations task. Two instruments were used for this study titled, Time Management and School Administrative Tasks' Performance Questionnaire I (TMSATPQ I for Principals), the second instrument, Time Management School Administrative Tasks' Performance Questionnaire II (TMSATPQ II, for teachers). 446 Principals and two thousand, two hundred and thirty Teachers (2230) at five teachers (5) per school. The Sampling cut across the six education districts of Lagos State. The instruments were validated and found reliable at  $r = 0.83$  and  $r = 0.78$  respectively. It was however discovered that there is no significant relationship among principals' time management, school personnel task, experience and qualification. While, principals' time management has not significantly affected the instructional supervisory task, school business task, experience and qualification put together. Also, there is no significant differences between principals' who are cyclic in task performance and principals' who linear in time performance. Recommendations were made based on these findings, some of which are that conscious effort should be made to identify where, how, when, and why time is wasted and eliminate them. Principals are also encourage to set deadlines and use a day runner complete with a check list to evaluate at the end of each day the level of task completion and strategize for days ahead in meeting the set deadlines and that principals should use the principles and practices of delegation of responsibility and t

**Index terms**— Chronometric attitudes, Administrative skills, Plant maintenance task, Mechanistic activities, Pickle Jar Theory, Eponymous scale, Insomnia.

## 1 Introduction

secondary school level is the bridge between the primary and tertiary levels. Thus, quality management of secondary schools is already a global phenomenon. The management of Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) and Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) in the hands of qualified and experienced teachers called Principal has generated heated debates over the years. The update of the history of post-primary education in Lagos State revealed that in 1968, there were 42 secondary schools and five teacher grade II colleges. This figure rose to 47 secondary schools in 1972 and 53 secondary schools in 1974. In the wake of the Second Republic in 1979, Secondary schools increased in number to 326 as a result of free education programme at all levels launched by the banned Unity Party of Nigeria by the five "LOBOO" states -Lagos, Ogun, Bendel, Ondo and Oyo, states.

Thus, the various military regimes in Lagos state from 1984 continued the free education programme of the erstwhile civilian government and also embarked on the establishment of schools with an increase in the number of secondary schools from 327 in 1985 to 365 secondary schools in 1998.

In 1999, a new civilian government, headed by Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, embarked on new reforms and face lift of the free education programme in Lagos state. In September 2001, the Lagos state government handed the mission and private schools taken over in 1976 to their former owners and split the schools into junior and senior secondary schools, with different headship (Principals), and teachers redeployed to either Junior Secondary Schools or Senior Secondary Schools. Over the years, education has become the largest social service. It has consistently taken the lion's share of the Lagos State annual budget since secondary education, is tuition-free in the state. The Lagos State education year book of 1997 reveals that government put in place cost sharing measures such as the charging of Education Development Levy (EDL); and provision of guidelines for participation of parents, communities, bodies and many others, in the funding of education. In There was a significant increase in the number of secondary schools from 79 in 1978 to 326 in 1979 and 347 secondary schools in 1984. This indicates that an additional 268 secondary schools were established by the civilian government led by Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande to absorb pupils from primary schools who were on 100% transition to secondary schools due to the free education programme. There was a marginal decrease in the number of Secondary schools from 347 in 1984 to 345 in 1992 and then a marginal increase to 365 in 1998. spite of this, the constant massive influx of people from other Nigerian states into Lagos State has continued to put a large financial burden on the state in respect to funding secondary education.

The general opinion is that 21st century school managers must become agile and flexible to help their schools develop and sustain an advantage in an increasingly competitive globalized world. A number of forces are reshaping the nature of managing within organizations. Organization such as secondary school that has recognized these forces are working to channel their managerial talents to accomplish goals by using their knowledge about each of six major forces at work: (i) Power (ii) Globalism (iii) Cultural diverse (iv) Rapidity of change (v) Psychological contract and (vi) Technology

As a corollary to the above, Ivancevich, Konopaske, and Matteson (2011) note that highly effective and productive organizations in different industries seems to posses and cultivate some similar characteristics. Hence, Principals as secondary school managers can lead the way to higher levels of effectiveness by: 1. Providing opportunities for training and continuous learning 2. Sharing information with employees 3. Encouraging cross-development partnership 4. Linking compensation to performance 5. Avoiding layoffs 6. Being a supportive role model 7. Respecting the differences across employees 8. Being a good listener.

### 2 a) Principal and Administrative Skills

A principal in his leadership position as the school head may be gifted in good leadership attributes. In leading his team, he may be naturally endowed with the charisma to command respect and authority, in which case, compliance to his directives by the followership is without hesitation.

Ngwu (2006) avers that a secondary school, being a formal and social organization is special in that it is charged with specific objectives, general aims and the broad goals itemized above, that must be measured periodically.

However, a principal's possession of administrative skills may not translate positively if the enabling environment for its deployment and application is lacking. This brings one to the issue of contradictions in the Nigerian school system. These contradictions include that: (a (Akinade, 1993).

In order to alleviate these contradictions so that all forms of alienation are re-directed at gaining the cooperation of students, the principal, in conjunction with all stakeholders, and through them should: (i). establish positive relationship with students; (ii). foster learner motivation to learn; (iii). share responsibility with learner; (iv). use reward to encourage and reinforce appropriate behaviour; (v). use punishment to deter and correct misbehaviour.

(Ajayi, 1998) To this end, there are rules, regulations and code of conduct for staff and students. There is a scheduled time-table of activities, an administrative hierarchy and a chain of command in a bureaucratic setting. The expectations itemized above are areas of interest in this study, especially the issue of time; a very scarce commodity which, once lost, may not be easy to regain. Any attempt to regain lost time is to occupy and use the time allotted to other school activities. For instance, there is a time-table for teaching, a time to conduct the school assembly and a break time for recess.

Thus, Abari (2005) opines that the day to day running of a secondary school is a matter of routine. These are essentially mechanistic activities. The principal or his assignee is right there on the spot to implement government policies, applying management theories to real life situations. He has to utilize available resources to achieve optimal results. To that extent, he is the chief executive and accounting officer, a law officer, a bio-mechanic and health officer, an aesthetician, a judicial officer, an agricultural officer and environmentalist, a dietician, et-cetera in his/her school.

He has to carry out curriculum and instructional supervision and undertake routine evaluation of the quality of teaching and the amount of learning that is taking place. Staff welfare and general personnel services are essential to encourage teachers in the commitment that will enhance job performance. Furthermore, the principal has public relations functions of liaising between the school and the immediate community in which the school is located and which the school serves.

On the issue of accountability to student services, the principal is to ensure that all students, in spite of

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their accident of birth, religion, social background and ethnicity, participate fully and take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. There is a need for the principal to give evidence to other stakeholders that certain obligations have been fulfilled. The principal must guarantee that all students, without respect to disparity in parental income or social class, acquire secondary school skills needed upon a successful completion of secondary education, or, the principal will give an explanation for its not being so and why not. The principal takes charge of all financial transactions from school budgeting, through disbursement, self auditing and other financial transactions.

Finally, maintenance and repair of school plant to ensure longevity and optimal performance is an essential administrative function of a principal. Re-order levels of consumable plant, routine maintenance and servicing of non consumable plant and refurbishing of physical plant to ensure a higher state of functionality and the aesthetics of school environment are still the functions of the principal. In the face of all these, and, given the time available to function, how well the principal manage and administer the school to achieve its goals and objectives within limited time and space is cardinal to this study.

Al-khaliva and Thompson (2005) opine that it is being disputed that principals spend considerable time attending more to matters of urgent, non-routine trivialities and incidentals, to the detriment of routine matters that are necessary, important and procreative in schools. These views are in agreement that routine administrative task on personnel matters, instructional supervision and school businesses are best handled by the transactional principal. However, the principal may transfer to a standing committee or an interim committee specially set up to perform such a task. This is in congruence with the submission of Kolo (2006) cited in Ngwu (2007) that school plant maintenance task require a measure of expertise and professionalism. Thus, their performance or execution should be a matter of routine maintenance and refurbishment for physical and motorized plant. Re-order levels are desirable for consumable plant to avoid the 'out of stock' syndrome. Periodic servicing and repairs are recommended for electrical and electronic appliances for premium performance and longevity. These must be carried out periodically and is all about proper timing.

### 3 b) Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on Maslow's (1954) time management theory known as the 'Pickle Jar Theory' of time management. This time management theory is really about prioritization. One should focus on the big stuff and the smaller entities are sorted out in the process of dealing with the big ones.

The above time management theory is corroborated by Likert (1960), using his eponymous scale to identify four time management systems which he calls the 'Linking Pin Theory'. The theory states that when the individual time of all role actors in an organization are pooled together, such that every member knows what every other member is doing at any given time, a group time is formed. That, a participative time management system such as this enhances supervision and higher productivity. Time is saved when information and communication is freeflowing between the leader and the subordinates. When the leader's time is synchronized into the group time and vis-à-vis, a higher sense of loyalties, motivation, trust, belongingness, collegiality, and achievement drive is greatly enhanced. Likert concludes that employee centred time management is more productive than management centred time because time supervision is minimal when it is employee centred and leads to higher commitment on the part of the followership to impress and not to disappoint the leadership.

Finally, task prioritization and categorization is used as a time-saving administrative strategy, which Ovey (1990), Allen (2001), Fiore (2006) and Secunda (1999) who rank -ordered in different studies and which can be summarized as follows: A. Tasks that are perceived as being urgent and important B. Tasks that are perceived as being important but not urgent. C. Tasks that are perceived as being urgent but not important. D. Tasks that are perceived as neither urgent nor important. Therefore, the importance of a school administrative task may take precedence over the urgency of another task with both requiring the wisdom of the principal in his categorization of a task as either being import or urgent or both. Abari (2005) developed a paradigm on the symbiosis of official time management and personnel administrative task performance of principals. He avers that efficient time management translates into ample opportunity in deploying school personnel into various areas of school need. Such school personnel resources according to Abari include learners, teachers, parents, non-teaching staff and other stakeholders that will contribute to the smooth running of an educational enterprise. He recommends ad-hoc or standing committees as time saving devices drawn from the various school personnel itemized above to take decisions and perform personnel task on behalf of the principal. This is expected to fasttrack action which hitherto would have been trapped while pending the principal's attention. Thus, personnel commitment and loyalty is encouraged when school As it would be expected, a lackadaisical attitude to time management by an unassuming principal in dealing with the five basic core routine administrative tasks discussed above will translate to incompetence and inefficiency. Whereas, every task must be performed within its own time, no excuse is acceptable for non-performance of a task within its own time and space.

Private time on the other hand which is expended on child/ward parenting, community /neighbourhood relations, extended family issues, social engagements, domestic chores, private studies/self development and leisure/recreational activities amongst others must not be allowed to be an anathema to the lofty ideals of administrative task performance. Time as an entity is the same for all and sundry in equal measure. The rich does not have more of it than the poor. Time is the same for the urban and rural dweller. The strongest and the weakest among men have equal time at their disposal. The best principal and the not too good principal are

not different in their allocation of time. However, in all of the comparisons made above, it is how each role actor deploys his time that makes a difference. All principals are confronted with the same routine administrative task each day, but, how they execute each task is a function of how best they can manage the time available. Official and private task must be prioritized to avoid a clash of interest. It may be argued that there is no dichotomy between official and private time, but because time, whether official or private is at the mercy of the principal who must attend to the private programmes itemized above, we must of necessity dichotomize official and private task in favour of official activities that may not wait and must be promptly attended to. But, because the school is a formal system which operates like a chain in which all activities are interdependent and may be affected by its weakest and apparently least significant point of activity, prompt timing is of paramount importance.

In Existentialism, time is considered fundamental to the question of being. In particular, the philosophers, Martin and Heidegger cited in Barnett (1998) and cited in Bergreen (2003), believed that time was neither a real homogeneous medium nor a mental construct, but possess what they referred to as duration. Duration, in Bergeson's view, was creativity and memory as an essential component of reality.

#### 4 c) Statement of the Problem

According to Mohammed (2005), it is observed that, in the lamentations of secondary school principals, who make such comments as: 'this principalship position is highly demanding. Official work has to be taken home, sometime working through the night and having to receive and make phone calls at night. Insomnia is taking its toll.

No weekends, no vacation. There is no time for rest, no time to recreate, no time for good diet, just any meal will do. The responsibilities of a principal are not time-friendly. This leadership position is stressful (p.31).

These and other lamentations 'ad infinitum constitute a statement of the problem which this study intends to investigate empirically. Statements such as those above signify a probable suffering from a lack of both private and official time management. Time is almost always too short. What is lacking is self management on the part of principals. Procrastination is the habit of leaving until later what can be done immediately. Too many papers lie about everywhere in the office. Many of the papers are obsolete. But, unknown to the principal, when an office appears too to be busy, it means that too many things are left unattended to. Whereas, time should be a servant to be created and deployed, most principals see time as a master that controls their routine administrative functions.

The problem then arises as to whether time really is a master when in fact it should be a servant, a creation of the principal and to be deployed at his whims and caprices for undertaking the tasks that are necessary for the achievement of secondary school objectives as spelt out in the National Policy on Education. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Time management is affected by school location, school size, transportation, staff strength, mode of recruitment, funding, work specialization/departmentalization and other variables that will be discussed shortly.

The purpose of this study also includes finding out how capricious principals' are between events stipulated on the school time table and events not planned for but must be attended to for the avoidance of chromomeric anarchy. This study will also like to examine whether Lagos State principals begin and complete a task before embarking on another task or whether they take on two or more tasks at a time going back and forth from one task to another until completion is reached on all fronts.

#### 5 d) Research Questions

The following questions are used as a guide to the study: i. Is there any significant relationship among principals time management, personnel task, qualification and experience? ii. Is there any significant effect of principals' time management on a combination of instructional supervisory task, school business task, experience and qualification? iii. Are Lagos State Secondary School Principals more cyclic than linear in administrative task performance?

#### 6 e) Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were derived from the research questions as a guide to the study: i. There is no significant relationship among principals time management, personnel task, qualification and experience. ii. There is no significant effect of principals' time management on a combination of instructional supervisory task, school business task, qualification and experience. iii. There is no significant difference between cyclic and linear principals in their approach to administrative tasks' performance. This study is delimited to junior and senior secondary schools belonging to and financed by the Lagos State Government.

### 7 II.

## 8 Methodology

The research design was ex-post-facto in that the study investigated principals' official time management, separately, and its effect on administrative tasks' performance, both had taken place and cannot be manipulated as variables for the study.

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The study population is all Principals and teachers of both Junior and Senior Secondary schools belonging to the Lagos State Government.

## 9 a) Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sampling cut across the six Education Districts of Lagos State. Four Hundred and Forty Six Principals (446) out of a population of Six Hundred and Twenty (620) principals in Lagos State junior and senior secondary and Two Thousand Three Hundred and thirty teachers (2330) who returned a duly completed questionnaire out of stratified sample.

## 10 b) Instrumentation

For data gathering, there are two questionnaires for the study. The first was for principals': Time Management and School Administrative Tasks' Performance Questionnaire I (TMSATPQ I), this is divided into two sections A and B. Section A of the instrument elicited personal bio-data of respondents, sub-titled A1 -A7. The second section was labelled B1 -B31 as it consists of 31 items and elicited information on principals' school administrative task performance in the area of school personnel, instructional supervision, school business, school plant maintenance and public relations.

The second instrument, Time Management School Administrative Tasks Performance Questionnaire II (TMSATPQ II), for teachers also has sections A and B. Section A contains personal bio-data items labelled A1 -A6. Section B contains twenty-seven statements/items labelled B1-B27 which elicited information on teachers' perception of his/her principal's attitude in routine administrative task performance in the area of school personnel, instructional supervision, school business, school plant maintenance and human/public relations. Before administration, the questionnaire were validated and found reliable at  $r = 0.81$ . The statistical tool applied were inferential statistics, Chi-Square and ANOVA were employed to test the hypotheses, the level of significance used on the study was the 0.05 alpha.

## 11 III.

## 12 Results

H 1 There is no significant relationship among principals' time management, school personnel task performance, experience and qualification. 1 shows that the 2cal value of 8.49 is less than the 2tab value of 9.49. The hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship among principals' time management, school personnel task, experience and qualification. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

H 2 There is no significant effect of principals' time management on a combination of instructional supervisory task, school business task, experience and qualification. Table 2 shows that the f-ratio value of 0.873 was significant. It implies that principals' time management has not significantly affected the instructional supervisory task, school business task, experience and qualification put together.  $Df = (12, 7786)$ ;  $F_{cal} = 0.873 > F_{val} = 0.575$ ;  $P > .05$  The hypothesis is rejected.

H 3 There is no significant difference between cyclic and linear principals in their approach to administrative tasks' performance. Table 3 shows that the 2cal value of 8.54 is less than the 2tab value of 9.49 ( $df=4;=0.05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant differences between principals' who are cyclic in task performance and principals' who linear in time performance is thus accepted.

### IV.

## 13 Discussion And Conclusion

The findings of H 0 1 support Abari (2005) wherein he opines that decision-making processes should spread out among all school personnel with specific areas of attention. This is because the principal cannot take on all personnel task, all by himself, and at once. He must delegate responsibilities to standing and ad-hoc committees. This gives the principal the time to attend to incidentals and emergencies not originally planned for but anticipated and must be attended to in the tradition of the school.

The committee system being the formation of two or more people within the institution to assist the principal in a sector of the school, either by proffering solution to a problem or suggesting ways of performing a task or performing the duty of the principal on a specific task in the school. Member of the committee are usually from within the establishment but may also come from outside provided they have enough knowledge of and interest in the assignment to be carried out. Remember that not much thinking is taking place when everybody on a committee thinks alike. Committees may be interim, ad-hoc or standing. The committee is taking decision on behalf of the institution which is binding on both staff and students and so, committee decisions are far reaching and possibly time saving.

This position of H 0 2 disagree Kolo (2006) Arubayi (2006) and Ugwuzor (2007) in their submission that there is no significant effect of principals' time management on a combination of school personnel task and human/public relations task.

H 0 3 upholds the view that principals in Lagos State take on tasks and irrespective of the challenges faced or time constraints; forge ahead until he overcomes the task. So, he takes on a task, completes it, goes on to the

next task. Often the most frequent source of interruption is the principal himself. If a task becomes difficult, then, one is tempted to turn to something else. Many find it difficult to concentrate for protracted periods of time. It is prudent to remember that more is likely to be achieved in one hour of continuous application than in several hours of interrupted work because a recovery period is necessary task jumping is self-inflicted because the study carried out by Levine found that telephone calls frequency interrupted the flow of activity of principals' (a machine which the principal has a choice to either receive or ignore).

This research finding concludes that, everyday, each principal has twenty-four hours for his use. This comes to each principal in equal measure irrespective of sex, religion, qualification or experience. This priceless gift for school administration, if it is understood, is the carrier of all opportunities for personal and school growth, health, effective and efficient school administration. It comes in disguise. But if the principal does not use it well, it is burnt silently away with its contents never to return.

V.

## 14 Recommendations

1. Principals should make conscious effort to identify where and why time is wasted and eliminate them. This could be done through a periodic time audit by allotting time to each routine administrative task and check at the end of the activity if it was satisfactorily concluded within its schedule. 2. Principals should maximize the use of the principles and practices of delegation of responsibility and the committee system as an administrative tactics and strategy. This does not only save the principal's time but also makes time available for emergencies, trivialities and incidentals that demand clinical attention. There should be dead lines for reports, actions and feed back from the delegate or committee to the principal on all decisions taken and their implementation. 3. Principals should keep a day runner structured in a way that would remind the principal, item by item, programmes, events and activities for each day. A check list would be required at the end of each day in order to know the level of execution and the success or otherwise. 4. Principals should have a quiet time to remain alone in order to reflect on his actions, reactions or inactions each day to know if there are grew areas or over sight for a possible re-visit or review. This is a form of self evaluation and self appraisal. 5. Principals should set special days or time to receive visitors except in an emergency. Otherwise, senior members of staff could be deployed to attend to complaints or inquiries from members of the public and within the school. 6. Principals should be time conscious at all meetings, whether formal or informal. Formal meetings should have an agenda to be strictly followed. The use of guillotine is thus recommended to enhance the quality of discussion as a time-saving device. 7. Principals should be transactional in their approach to school administration. This requires being a situational leader that operates like a pendulum between the monochronic and polychronic patterns.

The situation in which you find yourself and the nature of the transaction to be carried out should assist as to whether to go linear by completing a task before going to the next or whether to be cyclic by taking on two or more tasks at the same time, going back and forth.

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<sup>1</sup>© 2012 Global Journals Inc. (US) personnel see themselves as work with the principal and not working for the principal. Chronometric Attitudes and Administrative Tasks' Performance of Principals in Lagos State Secondary Schools, Nigeria

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Figure 1:

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Figure 2: Table 1 :

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	Sum of squares	Mean square	Df	F	Sig
Time management					
Between groups	3.489	0.291	12	0.873	0.575
Within group	161.881	0.333	486		
Total	165.317	0.626	498		

Figure 3: Table 2 :

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Time management	Personnel task/ instructional supervisory			task/schoolTotal	2	2	Tab	df
	business task/physical plant maintenance task/human/public relations task				Cal			
Cyclic in task performance	54 (62.1)	46 (38.2)	19 (16.4)	119				
Linear in task performance	86 (82.1)	74 (66.5)	22 (19.4)	182	8.54	9.49	4	0.05
No clear approach	142 (121.1)	38 (34.5)	44 (40.2)	224				
Total	282	158	85	525				

Figure 4: Table 3 :

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