

**Influence of teachers' Diversity on Job Performance of Teachers in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.**

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**Abstract**

This study examined the influence of teachers' diversity on job performance of teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study was guided by three research objectives from which three research questions were posed and three hypotheses were tested. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 6,665 teachers and principals in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample of this study was 424 respondents selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure, comprising 376 teachers and 48 principals of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The instrument for data collection was a structured validated questionnaire tagged "Influence of Teachers' Diversity on Effective Employee Performance in Secondary Schools Questionnaire". The internal consistency of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha methods. Reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.82 and 0.87 were obtained for the various clusters in the instrument respectively. The research questions were answered using mean statistics and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analyzed data revealed that teachers' age, gender and marital status among others influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the government and other relevant bodies recruiting teachers in public schools should have age limit to ensure younger people are recruited in teaching as they will perform better.

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**Introduction**

One of the most important management issues that emerged in recent years has been the increasing diversity of the workforce. The employee of an organization is the determinant of its success. The school as an organization is manned by both academic and non-academic staff and the success and quality of the students is determined by the quality performance of the teachers. The increasing trend of employee diversity along racial, ethnic and gender lines have several implications for human resource development, and the organization in general (Koban, 2016).

In recent years, the Nigerian workforce has been increasingly diversified by language background, social background, and subject content knowledge. Teachers in most secondary schools

have diverse characteristics which may be social, cultural, economic, educational or biological (Akpan 2018). Diversity is dissimilarities, differences among people due to age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical appearance, socio-economic background, educational experience, capabilities/disabilities and many other characteristics that are used to distinguish among people.

It is important to recognize and embrace the diversity that teachers bring to school organization. Teachers are to be valued and encouraged to maximize their potential in the workplace. A successful organization should be able to serve people from various walks of life (Patrick & Kumar, 2012). This can be achieved by the positive creative power that comes from diversity. The key to organization success lies in the ability to attract, develop and retain a quality from diverse employee, promoting an environment that values individual respect, dignity and professional growth.

Diversity raises important ethical and social responsibility issues. It is also a critical issue for organizations, such that if not properly handled can bring an organization to its knees, especially in this increasingly global environment. The effectiveness of teachers' diversity means much more than just bringing diverse employees. It means learning to appreciate and respond appropriately to the needs, attitudes, beliefs and values that diverse people bring to an organization. It also means correcting misconceptions about what, how and why different kinds of teachers are different from one another and finding the most effective ways to utilize the skills and talents of diversities in teachers (Anderson, 2014).

According to Malik-Mustapha, (2016) organizations just like school with diverse employee have the capacity to see problems from different perspectives which ideally leads to a sophisticated understanding of the problem and development of high quality solutions and more creative responses. The broad range of experiences and perspectives brought to schools by diverse teachers and students culturally and linguistically offers a powerful resource for everyone to learn more in different ways, in new environment and with different types of people. Every person in its enormously diverse and ever changing system has the power to serve as invaluable resource for others, teachers, students and the community as a whole (Anderson, 2014)

This boundless diversity most times results in discovery of greater ideas which will in turn move the organization to a higher level of goal attainment. A school with diverse teachers has the potential of enriching the students and other staff as well. Immigrant teachers bring with them opportunities to be explored and treasures to be appreciated and they help to challenge the status-quo.

Adopting a truly global perspective will allow us to view culturally and linguistically diverse teachers as resources who provide unparalleled opportunities for enrichment (Bhalia, 2013). However, there is need for a greater repertoire of approaches to teaching and learning. For instance, when a school employs a francophone staff for the teaching of French language, a lot is expected from the teacher; the style or methodology of teaching adopted by the teacher will make the acquisition of the language easier. It is important therefore, that teachers and students and other employees cultivate interpersonal skills and respect for other cultures (Patrick & Kumar, 2012). Surely, a school accommodating diverse classes and level of teachers is the ideal laboratory in which to learn the multiple perspectives required by a global society to put to use information concerning diverse cultural pattern. Employees who learn to work collaboratively with other employees from

various cultures are better prepared and have more to deliver to the students to prepare them for the world they live in now and the world they will face in future.

Teachers promote critical thinking when they make the rules of the classroom culture explicit and enable students to compare and contrast them with other cultures. A school with diverse employees has the potential to outperform homogenous schools as they are drawn from a greater pool and their interaction will produce better solutions. High diversity is central to the achievement of high performance. Diverse teacher will ensure that their varied talents and experiences contribute and support the operations of the school towards goal achievement. It is imperative that there is need for effective management of diversity in an environment that is become increasingly diverse in all respects (Anderson, 2014). Not only is the diversity of global workforce increasing in the school environment, teachers, students, parents and other employees are also becoming increasingly diverse in response to the changes in world affairs. School Administrators need to proactively manage diversity to be able to attract, harness and retain the best teachers and effectively compete in a diverse global environment. Successful teachers' diversity initiatives will enhance both the employee performance and the cohesiveness of secondary schools for quality output. Teacher diversity for quality education would be an added advantage and technique to better education at the secondary level. Therefore the study seeks to investigate the influence of teachers' diversity for effective employee performance in secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Secondary education holds a strategic position in the Nigerian education system. It stands as a transition zone as it receives primary school leavers and turns out students for post-secondary education. In some cases, people can get gainful employment after secondary education. This underscores the importance of this level of education. Performance of students in secondary education in Nigeria is usually measured by their overall pass levels in West African Examination Council's examinations (WAEC) for senior secondary three level students and the National Examination Council's (NECO) similar examination.

Sadly, records of students' performance in these examinations have been on a steady decline as evident in the findings of Awolusi (2010) who noted only 24% of the candidates who sat for May/June 2010 West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) made five credits including English Language and Mathematics. This represents 337,071 of the 1,278,843 candidates. Similarly, in 2010 and 2020, 35.10 and 33.2 percent obtained credit and above in a minimum of five credits including English Language and Mathematics while 5,548 results out of the 61,509 candidates who took the exam were withheld for various cases of examination malpractice. Even though there seems to be a bit of improvement from 2010, the failure and examination malpractice rate is still high. This thus suggest a failure in terms of output (quality) of secondary education in Nigeria.

This brings to question factors such as the quality of teachers, instructional materials, students' readiness to learn and other related factors. It has been observed, however, that the teacher as one of the key variables in determining the quality of education provided has not been given much attention by relevant bodies. Such factors as their age, gender, years of experience, economic status *et cetera* have not been considered to see how much these affect their performance in their job which

in turn influences students' performance. This study, therefore, sought to examine how much influence teachers' diversity exerts on their performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of teachers' diversity on job performance of teachers as perceived by principals in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Find out the extent to which teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Ascertain the extent to which teachers' gender influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Determine the extent to which teachers' marital status influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent does teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does teachers' gender influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does teachers' marital status influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' gender influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' marital status influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Methods**

This study adopted the descriptive survey design with a population of 6,665 teachers and principals in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Presently, there are 286 government senior secondary schools with a total of 6,397 teachers and 268 principals. The sample of this study was 424 respondents comprising 376 teachers and 48 principals of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Taro Yamane's statistical formula was used in determining the sample size of the teachers and principals separately while the multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample of the study. Firstly,

the 23 LGAs were clustered into three senatorial districts. These include Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South East senatorial districts. Secondly, the simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 12 LGAs, four (4) from each senatorial district. Port Harcourt, Ikwerre, Okrika, and Obio-Akpor LGAs were selected from Rivers East senatorial districts, Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni, Ahoada West, Ahoada East, and Degema LGAs were selected in Rivers West and Oyigbo, Tai, Eleme, and Gokana LGAs for Rivers South East senatorial district. Thirdly, the simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting teachers of four public senior secondary schools in each of the selected LGA to arrive at the sample size of 376 teachers and 48 principals were studied for the 48 selected schools. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged "Influence of Teachers' Diversity on Teachers Job Performance in Secondary Schools Questionnaire". Responses to the questionnaire items were structured four-point summated rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) rated 4 points, High Extent (HE) rated 3 – points, Low Extent (LE) rated 2 – points and Very Low Extent (VLE) rated 1-point. The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor, one expert in Educational Management, and one other expert in Measurement and Evaluation. The internal consistency of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method. Reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.82, and 0.87 were obtained for the various clusters in the instrument respectively. This showed the instrument was reliable. The research questions were answered using mean statistics and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule for the research questions were based on the classification of level of extent as shown below:

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Value Range</b>
Very High Extent (VHE)= 4	3.50 – 4.00
High Extent (HE) = 3	2.50 – 3.49
Low Extent = 2	1.50 – 2.49
Very Low Extent = 1	1.00 – 1.49

Similarly, decision for the hypotheses were taken based on the rule that the null hypotheses were rejected and the alternative hypotheses not rejected if the computed value is greater than the critical table value at the significance level of 0.05. On the contrary, the null hypotheses were not rejected and the alternative hypotheses rejected if the computed value is less than the critical table value.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 1: Opinion Scores of Principals and Teachers on Extent Teachers' Age Influence Job Performance**

S/N	Statement	Principals N=48			Teachers N=370		
		Mean	S.D	Remarks	Mean	S.D	Remarks
1	Older teachers have gathered enough experience which makes them manage their classrooms better.	3.10	0.61	High Extent	2.90	0.60	High Extent
2	Older teachers perform better as they are more conversant with various teaching methods.	2.81	0.71	High Extent	2.78	0.66	High Extent
3	Ability of younger teachers to stand longer time while teaching reflects on their job performance	3.01	0.67	High Extent	2.88	0.65	High Extent
4	Older teachers are less likely to adapt to the use of innovative teaching methods.	2.98	0.71	High Extent	2.77	0.69	High Extent
5	Older teachers have deteriorating physical sights which affect their reading and performance in teaching.	3.11	0.68	High Extent	3.09	0.67	High Extent
6	Older teachers do not like staying in school for extra classes and this affects their ability to cover their scheme of work for a term.	3.23	0.77	High Extent	3.13	0.78	High Extent
7	Young teachers often look for better paid jobs while teaching and this affects their performance on the job	3.21	0.72	High Extent	3.18	0.69	High Extent
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.06</b>		<b>High Extent</b>	<b>2.96</b>		<b>High Extent</b>

Table 1 revealed that the mean scores of items 1-7 for principals and teachers fall within the mean range that reflects high extent. This indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that the age of teachers influence the way they perform in their jobs. With grand mean scores of 3.06 and 2.96 for principals and teachers respectively, the answer to research question one is that teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does teachers' gender influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 2: Opinion Scores Principals and Teachers on the Extent Teachers' Gender Influence Job Performance**

S/N	Statement	Principals N=48			Teachers N=370		
		Mean	S.D	Remarks	Mean	S.D	Remarks
8	Women's motherly nature makes them more patient with students in learning which improves their teaching.	3.28	0.95	High Extent	3.20	0.77	High Extent
9	Hostel mistresses are usually given to women which increases their workload and make them perform less.	3.16	0.86	High Extent	3.27	0.85	High Extent
10	Men are more likely to adopt more stringent measures in disciplining students and this enhances their classroom management efforts.	3.12	0.89	High Extent	2.99	1.01	High Extent
11	Male teachers often do better in teaching subjects like Physical and Health Education than females.	3.13	0.92	High Extent	3.25	0.90	High Extent
12	Most female teachers have less time to prepare for their classes since they have domestic chores to take care of at home.	3.16	0.67	High Extent	3.10	0.63	High Extent
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.17</b>		<b>High Extent</b>	<b>3.16</b>		<b>High Extent</b>

Data in Table 2 showed that the mean responses for questionnaire items 8 – 12 on the influence of teachers' gender on their job performance fell within the range of high extent. Implying that majority of the respondents agreed that the items in the table indicate influence on a high extent. With grand mean scores of 3.17 and 3.16 for principals and teachers respectively, the answer to research question two is that teachers' gender influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does teachers' marital status influence their performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 3: Opinion Scores of Principals and Teachers on the Extent Teachers' Marital Status Influences Job Performance.**

S/N	Statement	Principals N=48			Teachers N=370		
		Mean	S. D	Remarks	Mean	S.D	Remarks
13	Married teachers stay off work for domestic reasons more often than unmarried couples and this affects their regularity to work.	3.19	0.71	High Extent	3.02	0.60	High Extent
14	Married teachers often go late to work and classes which makes them unable to cover their scheme of work for the term.	2.89	0.66	High Extent	2.78	0.61	High Extent
15	The demands of family life affect married teachers time to prepare for classes so they are not able to give out their best.	3.00	0.69	High Extent	2.97	0.68	High Extent
16	Single teachers stay longer in school for extra classes which makes them cover their scheme of work for the term.	3.12	1.00	High Extent	3.01	0.80	High Extent
17	Single teachers have more time for research and self-development which improves their teaching.	2.76	0.65	High Extent	2.70	0.60	High Extent
18	Maternity leaves taken by teachers who are married often affect their ability to complete the scheme of work for a term	3.02	0.77	High Extent	2.90	0.62	High Extent
19	Single teachers are usually appointed hostel mistress or masters and they barely have time to prepare for their classes which affects their teaching.	2.91	0.87	High Extent	2.94	0.80	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.98</b>		<b>High Extent</b>	<b>2.90</b>		<b>High Extent</b>

Data in Table 3 revealed that mean responses for questionnaire items 13 – 19 on the influence of marital status on teachers' job performance fell within the range of high extent. With grand mean scores of 2.98 and 2.90 for principals and teachers respectively, the answer to research question three is that teachers' marital status influences their performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent.

### Test of Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4: Z-test Analysis on Principals and Teachers on the Extent Teacher's Age Influence their Job Performance**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	LS	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Principals	48	3.06	0.70	416	0.05	0.15	1.96	Not Rejected
Teachers	370	2.96	0.68					Significant Difference Does not Exist

Note: LS Level of significance; z- cal = z calculated; z-crit = z critical

Table 4 above shows that the calculated z-value of 0.15 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 significance level and 416 degree of freedom. Since the calculated value is less than the critical z-value, the null hypotheses was accepted indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' gender influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 5: Z-test Analysis on Teachers and Principals on the Extent Teacher's Gender Influence their Job Performance.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	LS	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Principals	48	3.17	0.86	416	0.05	0.12	1.96	Not Rejected
Teachers	370	3.16	0.83					Significant Difference Does not Exist

Note: LS Level of significance; z- cal = z calculated; z-crit = z critical

Table 5 above shows that the calculated z-value of 0.12 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 significance level and 416 degree of freedom. Since the calculated value is less than the critical z-value, the null hypotheses was accepted indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' gender influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' marital status influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 6: Z-test Analysis on Teachers and Principals Responses on the Extent Teachers' Marital Status Influence Job Performance**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	LS	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Principals	48	2.98	0.76	416	0.05	1.16	1.96	Not Rejected
Teachers	370	2.90	0.67					Significant Difference Does not Exist

Note: LS Level of significance; z-cal = z calculated; z-crit = z critical

Table 6 above shows that the calculated z-value of 1.16 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 significance level and 416 degree of freedom. Since the calculated value is less than the critical z-value, the null hypotheses was accepted indicating that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' marital status influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

## Discussion

The result of the findings on research question one revealed that teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent with grand mean value of 3.06 and 2.96 for principal and teachers respectively. From the analysis in Table 1, it was revealed that older teachers have experience that makes them more conversant with the use of teaching methods and materials. It was revealed, however, that these older teachers have deteriorating health condition that affects their ability to stand longer in the classroom unlike their younger counterparts. This implies that the older teachers teach better as a result of their longer years of experience on the job. The corresponding hypothesis one revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' age influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This implies that both principals and teachers are of the opinion that teachers' age influence their performance to a high extent. This finding was corroborated by the findings of Wandera, Imonje, and Akala (2019) which observed that there was a gradual fall in learners' performance at 51.6 percentage mark which corresponded with a teaching experience of twenty-one years (teachers who were above forty-five years old). Similarly, the findings of a study by Alufohai and Ibhafidon (2015) revealed that students taught by teacher between the ages of 21 and 34 years achieved a higher score than those of 49 years and above, while students taught by teachers between the ages of 36-48 years achieved a higher score than those of 21-34 years and 49 years and above. According to Martin and Smith (1990), the middle-

aged teachers were found to be more effective than the young and old teacher. The difference between these studies and the present study is that whereas the current study examines the influence of age on teachers' job performance, these studies looked at the influence of teachers' age on students' academic achievement.

The result of the findings for research question two revealed that teachers' gender influences their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent with grand mean value of 3.17 and 3.16 for principals and teachers respectively. From the results, respondents believed that men are more likely to adopt stringent disciplinary measures in their classrooms which make their classes quiet and have less disruptive behaviour than their female counterparts. Respondents further believed that some subjects especially science-based subjects seem to be male dominated. However, women because of their motherly nature are more patient with students and students confide more in them when they have issues than the males. Similarly, the analyses of the corresponding hypothesis two revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' gender influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding disagrees with the findings of a study conducted by Owolabi and Adebayo (2012) which revealed that teacher's gender had no effect on their ability to impact knowledge on the students, as long as he/she is a skilled teacher in that field of study. However, the findings is in agreement with the research of Akiri and Ugborugbo (2008) which revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' academic achievement. As well, Okoro, Ekanem, and Udoh (2012) study showed that teacher-pupil gender interactions do significantly affect pupil's academic performance. The difference between these studies and the present study is that whereas the current study examines the influence of gender on teachers' job performance, these studies looked at the influence of teachers' gender on students' academic achievement.

The result of the findings for research question three revealed that teachers' marital status influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent with the grand mean values of 2.98 and 2.90 for principals and teachers respectively. The analyses revealed that married teachers often take excuses to stay off work to attend to domestic issues and this affects their performance on the job. They sometimes come late to work for the same domestic issues and are unwilling to stay longer for extra classes. On the other hand, single teachers are more willing to stay longer for extra classes and have more time for research to improve their teaching. The corresponding hypotheses three also revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers and principals on the extent to which teachers' marital status influence their job performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding is supported by Kong (2008), who observed that unmarried teachers are more committed and dedicated to their job. However, Ayeop (2003) posited that married teachers have higher satisfaction in their job. This observation was made in this present study, where the students of the married teachers achieved higher scores than the students of the single teachers. The difference between these studies and the present study is that whereas the current study examines the influence of marital status on teachers' job performance, these studies looked at the influence of marital status on teachers' job satisfaction.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that teachers' diversity in terms of age, gender, marital status influence their effectiveness in carrying out their jobs as teachers.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Administrators of secondary school should encourage mentorship system that will enable older teachers mentor the younger ones so they learn from them and become better at their jobs.
2. School administrators should take discourage the idea of assigning subjects based on gender of teachers. Subjects should be assigned based on competence and interest of the teachers.
3. School administrators should take measures to ensure married teachers do not abuse the concessions given to them periodically such as not assigning them as hostel mistresses, excusing them from work on some days due to family challenges, this will affect their efficiency on the job.

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