

## Assessing the Level of Administrator's Characteristics in Colleges of Education in North West Zone, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The study examined the level of administrators' characteristics in colleges of education in North-West zone, Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives as well as two research questions. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises 506 administrators. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select 260 administrators from seven colleges of education in the North-West zone, of Nigeria. Self-designed Questionnaire was used as means of data collection, tagged; Administrators Characteristic Assessment Questionnaire (ACAQ). Face and content validity was done by expert in the department of educational management, Sokoto State University, Sokoto. The reliability index of the Questionnaire was 0.96. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions posed by the study. The study found that the administrators' level of experience and creativity was high in the Colleges of Education in the North West Zone, Nigeria. The study recommended that policymakers and governing councils should harness this wealth of experience by involving the administrators in decision-making processes, strategic planning and mentoring of upcoming educational leaders. The colleges of education in North West Zone Nigeria should provide enabling environments and resources to further support and channel this creativity into innovative policies, curriculum development and problem-solving strategies.*

**Keywords:** Administrator, Characteristics, Experience, Administrator's Creativity

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## **Introduction**

The quality and effectiveness of higher education institutions largely depend on the competence and leadership characteristics of their administrators. Administrators serve as the strategic link between educational policy and institutional practice, shaping the vision, culture, and operational efficiency of colleges. In Nigeria, colleges of education in North West Zone Nigeria occupy a pivotal position in the national education system as they are responsible for producing professional teachers equipped with the knowledge, skills, and pedagogical competence required to drive educational excellence. Consequently, the performance and effectiveness of these institutions are closely tied to the personal and professional attributes of their administrators. The success or failure of any educational institution depends to a large extent on the administrators' capacity to lead, inspire, and coordinate human and material resources toward achieving institutional goals (Okeke & Oranusi, 2021).

The level of administrator's creativity in colleges of education in North West Zone, Nigeria. Administrators in colleges of education e.g Provost, deputy provost, Registrar, Dean of the Faculties HOD and so forth perform multiple roles that extend beyond routine management. They are responsible for staff supervision, policy implementation, curriculum coordination, financial management, and fostering a conducive teaching and learning environment. To perform these roles effectively, administrators must possess key characteristics such as experience, creativity, integrity, adaptability, and strategic thinking. In the North-West, Nigeria, where colleges of education face several challenges including limited funding, infrastructural inadequacies, and increasing demands for teacher quality the need for effective administrative leadership becomes even more pressing. Administrators who combine professional experience with creativity are better positioned to overcome these constraints and steer their institutions toward innovation, efficiency, and excellence (Okendu, 2018).

Administrator characteristics refer to the personal and professional qualities, skills, and attributes that enable administrators to plan, organize, direct, and evaluate institutional activities effectively. (Afolabi, 2020). These characteristics encompass a wide range of dimensions such as leadership ability, decision-making competence, problem-solving capacity,

communication skills, creativity, accountability, and adaptability. Among these, experience and creativity stand out as critical determinants of administrative effectiveness. Experience provides the administrator with a deep understanding of organizational dynamics, institutional culture, and policy frameworks. It equips them with the ability to make informed decisions, anticipate challenges, and apply lessons learned from past situations to current realities. Experienced administrators often demonstrate confidence, strategic foresight, and resilience, which are vital for managing complex educational systems and driving organizational progress.

Creativity, on the other hand, enables administrators to think innovatively, adapt to changing educational contexts, and design solutions that enhance institutional performance. (Barakatu, 2021). In an era marked by rapid technological advancement, globalization, and shifting pedagogical paradigms, creativity has become an indispensable quality for administrators. Creative administrators are those who can reimagine administrative processes, encourage innovative teaching methods, and introduce new management approaches that improve staff productivity and student learning outcomes. The ability to combine creative thinking with professional experience allows administrators to make balanced decisions that are both innovative and pragmatic. (Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2018).

The effectiveness of administrators in colleges of education in North-West has been questioned in recent years due to persistent challenges such as declining instructional quality, inadequate infrastructure, poor staff morale, and insufficient innovation in teaching and learning processes. While some administrators possess extensive professional experience, they may lack creativity in addressing emerging institutional challenges. Conversely, others may be creative but lack the depth of experience needed to manage complex bureaucratic systems. This imbalance often undermines the overall effectiveness of institutional administration and, by extension, the quality of teacher education (Ezeani, 2019). Therefore, understanding the perceptions of lecturers regarding the experience and creativity of administrators is essential, as lecturers are directly affected by administrative leadership practices and policies.

Administrators' characteristics influence staff motivation, job satisfaction, institutional governance, and academic outcomes. Positive perceptions often reflect effective leadership, while negative perceptions may signal gaps in

administrative practices that require attention. In colleges of education, (Ogunu, 2019) lecturers depend on administrators for guidance, resource allocation, and professional support. Hence, the way administrators exercise their experience and creativity significantly affects lecturers' productivity, morale, and overall institutional performance.

Empirical evidence examining administrators' characteristics, specifically their experience and creativity, in colleges of education within the North-West Zone remains limited. This knowledge gap poses a challenge to policymakers and educational planners seeking to strengthen leadership and administrative capacity in teacher education institutions. Understanding administrators' characteristics can reveal areas of strength and weakness in administrative performance, thereby informing targeted interventions aimed at improving institutional governance and the quality of education delivery. However, the study seeks to examine administrators' characteristics focusing on experience and creativity in colleges of education in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Administrative Characteristics refer to the qualities, skills, and attributes that enable administrators to effectively plan, organize, coordinate, and control institutional resources to achieve set goals. These characteristics include leadership ability, decision-making skills, effective communication, creativity, accountability, problem-solving capacity, and adaptability to changing environments. In educational administration, they ensure smooth supervision, policy implementation, and staff motivation, thereby enhancing organizational productivity and effectiveness. Strong administrative characteristics foster transparency, innovation, and efficiency in institutional management (Afolabi, 2020; Okeke & Oranusi, 2021). Thus, they are essential for sustaining organizational growth and achieving educational objectives.

Administrative characteristics are multidimensional, encompassing leadership, interpersonal, cognitive, technical, ethical, experiential, and creative qualities that collectively determine administrative effectiveness. Leadership characteristics remain central, as administrators must inspire and guide staff toward institutional goals. Effective leaders display vision, sound judgment, and motivational skills that foster teamwork and innovation (Afolabi, 2020).

Interpersonal characteristics, including communication, empathy, negotiation, and conflict resolution, enable administrators to maintain harmonious

relationships and build trust among stakeholders. Administrators who demonstrate these traits create cooperative work environments that improve organizational productivity (Okeke & Oranusi, 2021). Cognitive characteristics highlight intellectual abilities such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving. These traits are essential for addressing the complex challenges administrators face in modern institutions (Ezeani, 2019). Closely related are creative characteristics, which reflect the ability to develop innovative solutions, think beyond conventional approaches, and design new strategies to enhance institutional effectiveness. Administrators with high creativity promote adaptability and continuous improvement, especially in dynamic educational environments.

Technical characteristics, such as knowledge of budgeting, resource allocation, record keeping, and information technology, ensure smooth operations and effective management of institutional resources (Nwankwo, 2020). In addition, administrators' experience plays a vital role. Experience provides practical wisdom, exposure to diverse challenges, and the ability to apply lessons learned in decision-making. Administrators with extensive experience are often better at anticipating problems, managing crises, and mentoring subordinates. Ethical and personal characteristics including integrity, accountability, and resilience strengthen credibility and organizational trust. Administrators who act transparently set a moral tone for their institutions (Ogonu, 2019).

Janice (2016) examined the relationship of the characteristics of colleges of education administrators of Malita, Davao del Sur between instructional management leadership and the characteristics that best predicts instructional management leadership. Results showed that characteristics of colleges of education administrators in terms of visionary, as a person, instructional manager, leader of an organization, manager and school-community facilitator had a descriptive rating of high level. On the level of instructional management leadership of colleges of education administrators, the indicators had an overall descriptive rating of high level. On the test of significant difference between the dependent and independent variable, the independent variable significantly predicted the dependent variable. It was established in the study that there was significant relationship between the characteristics of colleges of education administrators to the instructional management leadership. From the findings of the study, the indicators of characteristics of

colleges of education administrators were the potent factors that could predict the instructional management leadership.

Barakatu(2021) investigated the School administrators' working experience and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states of Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive research designed of the correlation type. Thirty (30) senior secondary schools administrators were selected and used as the respondents to this study, ten school administrators from each state. The instruments used to collect relevant data were school administrators' working experience check list and a self-designed questionnaire developed by the researcher; it was titled School Administrators' Working Experience and Students' Academic Performance (SAWESAP). The questionnaire was validated by two experts, one in the area of educational administration and planning, one in the measurement and evaluation both from Faculty of Education, Federal University, Kashere, Gombe State. Their suggestions and recommendations were incorporated into the final version and the reliability coefficient index of 0.73 was obtained after test-re-test with two weeks interval. Data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). One hypothesis was formulated and tested. Pearson Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ) Coefficient analysis procedure was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant levels. The results of the analysis showed that, there was significant positive correlation between school administrators' working experiences and students' academic performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that, school administrators' experience will be considered when it comes to placement and promotion of school administrators that would enable them perform maximally in managing and handling human and material resources.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Institutional performance in Nigeria's colleges of education is the competence and leadership characteristics of their administrators. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2022), effective educational leadership requires administrators who combine experience with creativity to enhance institutional productivity and ensure quality teacher preparation. However, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2021) reports persistent weaknesses in administrative competence across colleges of education, including inadequate managerial experience, limited innovation, and poor decision-making capacity among administrators.

These deficiencies have contributed to low staff motivation, poor resource utilization, and reduced institutional performance. Empirical findings further indicate that while some administrators possess long years of service, they often lack creativity in problem-solving and innovation required to meet contemporary educational demands (Okeke & Oranusi, 2021). In the North-West Zone, where colleges face challenges such as insufficient funding, infrastructural decay, and staff shortages, the absence of creative and experienced administrative leadership may negatively affect college of education growth and lecturer productivity. Consequently, experience and creativity have become critical indicators of colleges of education effectiveness. This study, therefore, investigates level of administrators' characteristics (experience and creativity) in colleges of education in the North-West Zone, Nigeria.

### **Objective of the Study**

The following are the objectives of this study:

- I. The level of administrator's experience in colleges of education in North West Zone, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions

- I. What is the level of administrator's experience in colleges of education in North West Zone, Nigeria?
- II. What is the level of administrator's creativity in colleges of education in North West Zone, Nigeria?

### **Methodology**

The study employed descriptive survey research design to obtain data relevant to the study. The population consisted of 506 administrators drawn from colleges of education within the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The sample size of 370 participants was determined using the Research Advisors (2006) sample size determination table, and participants were selected through a proportionate sampling technique across the seven colleges of education in the zone. A structured questionnaire titled Administrators' Characteristics

Assessment Questionnaire (ACAQ) served as the instrument for data collection. The instrument underwent validation by experts from the Department of Educational Management, Sokoto State University, Sokoto, to establish its face and content validity. The reliability coefficient of the ACAQ was determined to be 0.96 using the test–retest method, indicating a high level of consistency. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, to answer the research questions guiding the study.

## Result

This section presents the analysis of data collected for the study. The results are organized and presented based on the research questions that guided the study. Each research question is addressed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations to provide a clear understanding of the respondents’

**Decision Rule:** In this analysis the criterion mean is 3.00 by this definition, any descriptor statement for which a mean score of is higher than 3.00 is observed to be at high level, while moderate level is within 3.00 and lower level implies any descriptor statement for which mean score of less than 3.00 is observed.

**Research Question One:** What is the level of administrator’s experience in colleges of education in North West Zone, Nigeria?

This was presented and answered in Table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Level of Administrator’s Experience of Colleges of Education in North West Zone, Nigeria

| S/N | Item  | VHL | HL  | ML | LL | VLL | Mean | SD    | Decision   |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|-----|------|-------|------------|
| 1   | Administrators has served for many years in educational administrative positions within the college system  | 85  | 160 | 53 | 38 | 38  | 3.61 | 1.208 | High Level |
| 2   | Administrators possesses relevant academic and professional qualifications in education and administration. | 111 | 154 | 43 | 33 | 29  | 3.77 | 1.196 | High Level |

|              |  |     |     |    |    |    |             |              |                   |
|--------------|--|-----|-----|----|----|----|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 3            | Regularly administrators attends professional development programmes such as workshops, seminars, and conferences on educational management.                 | 104 | 214 | 30 | 10 | 10 | 4.07        | 0.846        | High Level        |
| 4            | Administrator has held various academic leadership positions (e.g., Head of Department, Dean, Deputy Provost) before attaining the current position.         | 87  | 178 | 43 | 38 | 24 | 3.72        | 1.127        | High Level        |
| 5            | The administrator demonstrates a sound understanding of the policies and operational guidelines of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). | 107 | 200 | 34 | 15 | 14 | 4.00        | 0.941        | High Level        |
| 6            | Administrator exhibits competence in decision-making and problem-solving in managing institutional and staff-related issues.                                 | 91  | 197 | 43 | 24 | 15 | 3.88        | 0.987        | High Level        |
| <b>Total</b> |  |     |     |    |    |    | <b>3.17</b> | <b>1.050</b> | <b>High Level</b> |

Criterion Mean = 3.0

Key: Very Low level =1, Low level = 2, Moderate level =3, High level =4, Very High level = 5.

Table 1 presents data on the level of administrators' experience in colleges of education within the North West Zone, Nigeria. The findings showed that all six items assessing administrators' experience had mean values ranging from 3.61 to 4.07, with an overall mean of 3.17 (SD = 1.05), indicating a generally high level of administrative experience in colleges of education.

Administrators were rated highest on their attendance at professional development programmes such as workshops, seminars, and conferences on educational management (Mean = 4.07, SD = 0.846), and their understanding

of the policies and operational guidelines of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) (Mean = 4.00, SD = 0.941). These suggest strong engagement in continuous professional learning and policy compliance.

Administrators demonstrated high levels in decision-making and problem-solving competence (Mean = 3.88), holding various leadership positions prior to current appointment (Mean = 3.72), and possession of relevant academic and professional qualifications (Mean = 3.77). The lowest mean value (3.61) still reflected a high level, showing that most administrators have served for several years in college administrative roles. In conclusion of the table results, it shows that administrators in colleges of education have high level experience.

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of administrator's creativity of colleges of education in North West zone, Nigeria?

This is presented in Table 2 below:

**Table 2:** Level of Administrator's Creativity of Colleges of Education in North West Zone, Nigeria

| S/N | Item   | VHL | HL  | ML | LL | VLL | Mean | SD    | Decision   |
|-----|--|-----|-----|----|----|-----|------|-------|------------|
| 1   | Administrators generates innovative and effective solutions to institutional challenges in the college.                        | 106 | 144 | 30 | 48 | 42  | 3.61 | 1.326 | High Level |
| 2   | Administrators often initiates new academic and administrative programmes that promote institutional growth and effectiveness. | 99  | 204 | 10 | 28 | 29  | 3.85 | 1.134 | High Level |
| 3   | Administrators readily adapts to changes in educational policies, technologies, and institutional demands.                     | 110 | 211 | 15 | 19 | 15  | 4.03 | 0.954 | High Level |

|              |  |     |     |    |    |    |             |              |                  |
|--------------|--|-----|-----|----|----|----|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| 4            | Administrators encourages staff to develop and implement creative ideas in teaching, research, and administration.     | 93  | 226 | 10 | 14 | 27 | 3.93        | 1.041        | High Level       |
| 5            | Administrators demonstrates resourcefulness in managing limited institutional resources to achieve desired goals.      | 97  | 205 | 20 | 34 | 14 | 3.91        | 1.010        | High Level       |
| 6            | Administrators effectively utilizes modern technologies and management practices to enhance administrative efficiency. | 118 | 198 | 10 | 20 | 24 | 3.99        | 1.070        | High Level       |
| <b>Total</b> |  |     |     |    |    |    | <b>3.80</b> | <b>1.089</b> | <b>HighLevel</b> |

Criterion Mean = 3.00

Key: Very Low level =1, Low level = 2, Moderate level =3, High level =4, Very High level = 5.

Table 2 shows level of administrator's creativity in colleges of education in North West Zone, Nigeria. Looking at the results, item 1 indicates a mean score of 3.61 which is greater than criterion mean of 3.00. Item 2 shows a mean score 3.85 which is greater than the criterion mean of 3.00. Whereas item 3 a mean score 4.03 which is greater than the criterion mean of 3.00. In the table, item 4 shows a mean of 3.93 which is greater than the criterion mean of 3.00. Item 5: was rated at high level that the administrator's support for creative instructional materials enhances student learning with a mean score of 3.91 which is greater than the criterion mean of 3.00. However, item 6: was rated at high level that a culture of creativity fostered by the administrator leads to higher student achievements with mean score 3.99 which is greater than the criterion mean of 3.00. This means that administrative recognition of creative effort, creativity in implementation of programmes, and openness to new ideas was found very high among administrators in colleges of education

### Summary of Major Findings

The following were the findings of the study;

- I. There is high level of administrator's experience in colleges of education in North West zone, Nigeria.

## **Discussion**

This study assessed the level of administrator's characteristics, in colleges of education in North-West, Nigeria. Results were discussed in accordance with the research questions and hypotheses as presented below;

Findings from table one reveals high level of administrator's experience in Colleges of Education in North West zone, Nigeria. This suggests that administrators who possess a wealth of professional experience measured by years of service, institutional exposure, and accumulated leadership responsibilities are better positioned to influence academic success positively. Experienced administrators typically demonstrate superior strategic planning capabilities, crisis management proficiency, interpersonal acumen, and a nuanced understanding of institutional operations. These competencies enable them to implement evidence-based policies, optimize resource utilization, and foster academic cultures that prioritize student learning and staff development. Supporting this view, Jun (2024) argue that sustained leadership experience contributes significantly to school effectiveness, especially in complex educational systems, as it enhances leaders' capacity to anticipate challenges and apply contextually appropriate solutions that improve academic performance. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Abubakar(2021) who contended that experienced educational leaders are crucial change agents who shape institutional direction and create enabling environments for learning. He emphasizes that administrative experience fosters resilience, reflective practice, and innovation key elements necessary for improving student outcomes. In the context of Colleges of Education, experienced administrators are often more adept at mentoring faculty, driving curriculum reforms, and maintaining high standards of academic accountability, all of which contribute to student achievement. The statistical significance of this relationship underscores the importance of experience not just as a temporal factor but as a developmental process that enhances leadership effectiveness.

The finding from table two indicates high level of administrator's creativity in colleges of education in North West zone, Nigeria. Creative administrators are

better able to design and implement policies that promote effective teaching, facilitate staff development, and ensure the availability of essential learning resources. This finding integrate the ideas of Akomolafe, Comfort, Fawziyah (2018) leadership skills, particularly in educational contexts, are foundational to creating structured and goal-oriented academic environments where learners are adequately supported to meet their learning outcomes. The findings, therefore, reinforce the argument that the presence of a skilful administrative team directly translates into better academic outcomes for students. This finding resonates with the empirical assertions of Ibrahim (2018) who emphasized that administrative skills, especially those related to effective supervision, decision-making, and communication, have a significant impact on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that there is high level of administrator's experience and administrator's creativity in colleges of education in North West zone, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- I. The policy makers and governing councils should harness this wealth of experience by involving administrators in decision-making processes, strategic planning, and mentoring of upcoming educational leaders.
- II. Colleges of education should provide enabling environments and resources to further support and channel this creativity into innovative policies, curriculum development, and problem-solving strategies.

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