

## Employees' Characteristics and Job Performance of Staff of the Bayelsa State Ministry of Education in Nigeria

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**Abstract** *The study investigated the relationship between employee characteristics and job performance in Bayelsa State Ministry of Education. The characteristics under investigation were gender, age, educational level and experience. A descriptive design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 50 employees out of 221 members of staff representing 22.7% was randomly selected for the study. A 14 item questionnaire titled "Employee Characteristics and Job Performance (ECJP) was developed to collect data. The instrument was validated and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained using test-retest method. Four hypotheses were used to guide the study and the null hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square statistical tool. The results of the study revealed that there existed a relationship between all the characteristics examined and job performance. It was thus, concluded that the poor performance of the staff of Ministry of Education could be attributed to employee characteristics. This has ultimately and adversely affected the teaching and learning in the state schools. The study thus, recommended among other things the recruitment of qualified personnel, and treating each individual distinctly to ensure high performance for the educational development of the state.*

**Keywords:** *Teaching, Learning, Job Performance, Employee Characteristics, and Educational Management*

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### Introduction

Quality in teaching and learning results from an inter-play among a broad range of success factors that have important consequences for effective teacher performance and student learning ( Nnabuo, Okorie, Agabi and Igwe ( 2004:46). Such factors include:

1. Basic facilities such as classrooms, standard libraries, well equipped laboratories, staff offices, teaching facilities and so on
2. Financing such as provision of funds to schools, staff remunerations, school budget and its implementation.
3. Personnel including quality and quantity, mind set and orientation among personnel usually resulting from organizational motivational efforts, staff satisfaction, commitment and morale and so on.
4. The school organizational environment including climate and leadership.

The Ministry of Education being responsible for educational management in the state should make sure that these factors are properly taken care of to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning. The National Policy on Education made it clear that the success of any educational system is hinged on proper planning, efficient administration and adequate financing. Administration is a function of organization and structure, proprietorship and control, inspection and supervision. The Ministry of Education as an organization can only carry out its responsibilities through the performance of its employees. In the pursuit of achieving the organizational goals, the employees of the ministry have to do their respective jobs according to their job description. The expectation therefore is that successful performance of an allocated job by an organizational member cumulatively leads to the achievement of the organizational goals. Hence one of the keys to an effective and successful organization is the management of the human resource (employee) in the system for effective performance. This is more so because people make up the fundamental part of an organization. These people bring into the organization different needs and aspirations and they belong to different groups/ classes in terms of age, gender, educational level and experience. Gede(2001), referred to Mitchel (1975) that the major consequence of such difference in people within the organization is that people need to be

treated as individuals and treating them accordingly is a pre-requisite per excellence and most expedient way to organizational success. This is important because the successful performance of specific tasks gear the activities towards the achievement of organizational goals. It is therefore, imperative to ensure that the employees of the Ministry of Education perform their specific duties for the successful management of education in the state.

### Overview of Ministry of Education

The Federal Republic of Nigeria has a 36 state structure and Abuja the Federal Capital Territory. All these states have their respective Ministries of Education. Bayelsa State Ministry of Education is responsible for the management of schools owned by the state. As the second tier of government, the power of the state in the management of education is second to that of the Federal Government. The State Ministry of Education is headed by the Commissioner who is normally appointed by the Governor and approved by the State House of Assembly. The next in line of hierarchy is the Permanent Secretary, followed by Directors and other civil servants who manage the affairs of the various departments, sections and units of the ministry.

The state Ministry of Education has some statutory management agencies under them. These include the Post Primary Schools Board ( PPSB ) now Senior Secondary Schools Board (SSSB ), the State Universal Basic Education Board ( SUBEB ), the State Scholarship Board, the Adult and Non-formal Education Centre. State Ministry of Education is expected to plan and develop educational programmes and policies that are not contrary to those developed by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME). The specific responsibilities of the State Ministry of Education as provided by The National Policy on Education (2004) under section 12, subsection 109 include the following:

- Policy and control over primary, secondary and tertiary institutions owned by the state in accordance with the requirements of the National Policy on Education;
- Planning, research and development of education;
- Inspectorate services for monitoring and improving standards;
- The provision of broad educational services;
- Co-ordination of the activities of schools boards and/or local education authorities as prescribed by law;
- Examinations, testing and evaluation at primary and Junior Secondary levels; and
- Providing appropriate education laws and ensuring their enforcement.

### Statement of the Problem

The national policy on education spelt out the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education for effective management of education in the state. It is mandatory for the Ministry of Education to carry out their responsibilities effectively in order to equip the teacher to perform his duties effectively. The primary duty of the teacher is to impart knowledge, skills and attitude to the students through the process of teaching and learning. Most often than not, the poor performance of students is attributed to the poor work attitude of teachers. However, it should be noted that the teachers can only perform effectively if well equipped. The non-performance of teachers may not be unconnected with the poor performance of the employee of the Ministry of Education. This is because it has a carry-over effect on the actual teaching and learning in the educational institutions in the state.

Just as every other organization, the Ministry of Education sets out to achieve certain goals and objectives. In every organization the human being is considered the focal point because no work will be performed effectively without his/her performance. Two of the prime task of any manager must always be first, obtaining the highest performance from all those reporting to him and; secondly, developing his subordinates either for improved performance in their jobs or for greater responsibility through promotion.

However, these people bring to the organization different needs and aspirations and they belong to different groups/classes in terms of age, gender, educational level and experience. It has been observed in this ministry that despite seminars, workshops, training and administrative programmes and other incentives provided by the ministry there is still a negative attitude to work leading to low job performance. It therefore, becomes necessary to look at other factors that may be responsible for their actions. The study is therefore intended to find out if there is any relationship between employee characteristics such as age, gender, educational qualification, experience and job performance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between employee characteristics and their job performance in Bayelsa State Ministry of Education. The specific objectives to guide the study are as follows:

1. To determine the nature of relationship that exists between employee characteristics and job performance.
2. To proffer solutions for improved performance.
3. To make recommendations to management as they seek to formulate policies geared towards ensuring educational development in the state.

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between gender and job performance of employees.
2. There is no significant relationship between age and job performance of employees.
3. There is no significant relationship between educational qualification and job performance of employees.
4. There is no significant relationship between experience (length of years of service) and job performance of employees.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in the following areas:

1. Since the human resource utilization is the core and most vital task in every organization, it is necessary for the management to understand the workers in the organization. Thus, helping them to perform effectively, efficiently and economically. The findings in this study will no doubt address this problem.
2. The suggestions emerging from the findings of this study will help education managers, planners, policy makers and administrators in solving related problems.
3. This will provide managerial inputs necessary for decision making on issues related to staff performance, which will in turn enhance teaching and learning.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The scope of this study is focused on effective teaching and learning through the job performance of employees of the state Ministry of Education. The study is delimited to only staff of the head office which constitutes more than half of the total workforce in the ministry. Also, the employee characteristics are delimited to gender, age, educational level and experience.

## Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey. The population of this study comprises of 221 employees of Bayelsa State Ministry of Education. Representative samples of 50 employees were randomly selected from the office. A stratified random sampling was used to randomly select respondents from all the departments. The data for analysis were gathered using a 14 item questionnaire titled "Employee Characteristics and Job Performance ( ECJP ).The instrument was constructed using the five point Likert type scale. The response system included Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with corresponding weight of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. It was validated and a test re-test reliability co-efficient of 0.79 was obtained. The research hypotheses were tested and analyzed using frequencies, and Chi-square statistical tools. The null hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance and appropriate degree of freedom

## Research Hypothesis 1

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between gender and job performance of employees

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between gender and job performance of employees.

Table1: Chi-square test on employee's gender and job performance

Responses	O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Strongly Agree	12	9.4	2.6	6.74	0.72
Agree	24	9.4	14.6	213.16	22.68
Undecided	2	9.4	-7.4	54.76	5.83
Disagree	4	9.4	-5.4	29.16	3.10
Strongly Disagree	5	9.4	-4.4	19.36	2.06
Total					34.39

Table1 indicated that at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 4, the calculated Chi-square of 32.91 is greater than critical value of 9.488. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( H<sub>1</sub> ) is accepted. Therefore, we conclude that "there is significant relationship between gender and job performance of employees". This result indicates that the gender of an employee affects his/her performance.

## Research Hypothesis 2

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significance relationship between age and job performance of employees.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between age and job performance of employees.

Table2: chi-square test on age and job performance of employees.

Responses	O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Strongly Agree	12	9.4	2.6	6.76	0.72
Agree	24	9.4	14.6	213.16	22.68
Undecided	2	9.4	-7.4	54.76	5.83
Disagree	4	9.4	-5.4	29.16	3.10
Strongly Disagree	5	9.4	-4.4	19.36	2.06
Total					34.39

Table 2 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 4, the calculated chi-square value of 34.39 is greater than critical value of 9.488. We therefore, reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which says "there is significant relationship between age and job performance of employees". The result indicates that age of employees affect their job performance.

### Research Hypothesis 3

$H_0$ : There is no significance relationship between educational qualification and job performance of employees.

$H_1$ : There is significant relationship between educational qualification and job performance of employees

Table 3:Chi-square test on Educational level and Job Performance of Employees

Responses	O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Strongly Agree	23	9.4	13.6	184.96	19.68
Agree	20	9.4	10.6	112.36	11.95
Undecided	1	9.4	-8.4	70.56	7.51
Disagree	2	9.4	-7.4	54.76	5.83
Strongly Disagree	1	9.4	-8.4	70.56	7.51
Total					52.48

Table 3 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 4, the calculated chi-square value of 52.48 is greater than critical value of 9.488. We therefore reject the first hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which says there is a significant relationship between educational level and job performance of employees. The result thus reveals that the educational qualification of an employee affects his/her job performance.

## Research Hypothesis 4

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significance between experience and job performance of employees.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between experience and job performance of employees.

**Table 4: Chi square test on experience and job performance of employees**

Responses	O	E	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Strongly Agree	19	9.4	9.6	92.16	9.80
Agree	23	9.4	13.6	184.96	19.68
Undecided	2	9.4	-7.4	54.76	5.83
Disagree	2	9.4	-7.4	54.76	5.83
Strongly Disagree	1	9.4	-8.4	70.56	7.51
Total					48.65

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 4, the calculated chi-square value of 48.65 is greater than critical value of 9.488. We therefore reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) which says that "there is a significant relationship between experience and job performance of employees". The result reveals that length of years of service or experience affects job performance of employees

## Summary of Findings

1. There is significant relationship between gender and job performance of employees
2. There is a significant relationship between age and job performance of employees
3. There is a significant relationship between educational level and job performance of employees.
4. There is a significant relationship between experience and job performance of employees.

## Discussion of Findings

The results of this study reveal that on a general note, there is a significant relationship between employee characteristics and their job performance in the Bayelsa State Ministry of Education. The analysis of data to the first hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between gender and job performance of employees. This is in support of Dean (1977) who found that a relationship exists between men and women in job performance. Gede(2001), also found that female teachers were more satisfied with their jobs than their male counterparts and thus performed better. Inyang (2008) also found in his study that female principals are caring, compassionate and concerned about the welfare of both staff and students, and thus perform highly in educational management.

The analysis of data to the second research hypothesis in table 2 shows that age affects the job

performance of the employees. This may not be unconnected with the fact that experience expands, changes in educational level exists over the years and cultural values change at different age levels. Hence, the evaluation of a satisfying work which is a pre-requisite for high performance is affected by the chronological age of the workers. This finding is in support of the previous findings of Hullin and Smith (1965), Saleh and Otis (1964), and Gede (2001) who arrived at the conclusion that overall job satisfaction is a function of chronological age.

The analysis of data to hypothesis 3 in table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification and job performance of employees. This is so because professionalisation has long been established for efficiency and effectiveness. This finding lend support to Rugai and Agih (2008), who found a significant relationship between the educational qualification and job performance of teachers in Bayelsa State. According to them, a plausible explanation for this is that a more knowledgeable and widely trained teacher performs better than less knowledgeable and less trained teachers.

The study also found that analysis of hypothesis 4 in table 4 shows a significant relationship between experience and job performance of employees. This is probably due to the fact that the more experience the employee gathers as a result of long years of service, the higher the performance of the employee. This is more so because he/she has to put into practice all the experience he/she has acquired over the years. This is in support of the findings of Rugai and Agih (2008) who found a high relationship between teachers experience and their job performance. They explained that the longer a teacher works in a school, the greater probability that his productivity will be higher.

Various research findings have shown that there is a significant relationship between employee characteristics and their performance. The findings of this study also revealed that age, gender, educational level and experience have influence on the performance of employees.

## Conclusion

The result of this study shows that there is a link between employee characteristics such as age, gender, educational level and the performance of the staff of Bayelsa State Ministry of Education. It is therefore pertinent that administrators take into consideration employee characteristics in every stage of planning and implementation to ensure high performance. In fact, every employee should be understood by his immediate boss so as to ensure high performance. The performance of the staff of the Ministry of Education is very important because it has a multiplier effect. Their high performance will certainly result in the effective management of education in the state with the ultimate aim of achieving effective teaching and learning in the classroom for high academic performance of students.

## Recommendations

1. The personnel department, through the civil service commission should strive to recruit qualified staff. Employment of staff should as much as possible be on merit. Sentiments or favoritism should not be attached to employment of staff in the ministry. Even when political considerations are made, merit should be insisted upon. The ministry should keep an up to date educational chart to check over-staffing.
2. Management should keep an up to date man-power inventory in the ministry. The record of available employee is necessary for planning, forecasting, and man-power update.
3. Each and every individual should be treated distinctly. Specific job descriptions should be clearly outlined to employees to enable them know what is expected of them and how this contributes to the overall goals and objectives of the ministry. This is necessary because clarity has the likelihood of improving the task performance generally. Involve individuals in making targets since this will make them have a sense of commitment and work towards achieving targets.



4. Management should carry out performance appraisal from time to time for two basic reasons. Firstly, to find out areas of employee weakness and ineffectiveness, and take necessary steps to help employee overcome such problems to improve performance. Secondly, it can be used to award outstanding performance of employees as a motivational tool.
5. In order to maintain low turnover, employees should be properly motivated. Besides, it is an established fact that a motivated staff has more job satisfaction and will ultimately work better. Employees should be promoted as and when due. Employees should be provided with conducive working environment to ensure high performance. Other motivational constructs should be according to the felt needs of the individual employee.

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