# Staff Personnel and School-Community Relations Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined the staff personnel and school-community relations management practices of educational administrators for secondary schools environmental safety in Rivers State Nigeria. Two (2) research questions and 2 hypotheses were answered and tested in the study, respectively. The design of the study was the analytic descriptive survey, with the population as the 258 public secondary schools in Rivers State of Nigeria. These schools have a corresponding number of 258 principals, from which 181, were selected as sample to participate in the study, using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument of the study was a 9-item scale titled 'Staff Personnel and School-Community Relations Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety Scale'(SPSCRMPEASSESS), designed by the researchers, in the modified 4-point Likert scale model, with a reliability index of 0.71, using the Cronbach Alpha statistical model. Mean and Standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while z-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study show that the personnel and school-community relations management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety include, ensuring that efficient welfare services are put in place to keep school members motivated and the use of social networks for encouraging interpersonal relationship among stakeholders to ensure environmental safety in schools. The study also established no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals and principals in schools in urban and rural areas, on the staff-personnel and school-community relations management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. Consequently, it was concluded that the staff personnel and school-community relations management practices of educational administrators are strong variables that enhance safety environment, for teaching and learning in schools. It was therefore recommended that school administrators should continuously use appropriate management strategies for managing the staff personnel while also using appropriate school community relations strategies to build effective relationship with stakeholders in school administration.

**Keywords:** Staff Personnel, School-Community, Relation, Management, Practices, Educational Administration, Environmental Safety.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The school is an institution of the society that is saddled with the task of introducing members of the society into the knowledge, skills and values of the society from one generation to another. This preposition, which enjoys scholarly confirmations by Schofield (1990) and Afangideh (2010), suggests that, schools are vehicles, used by societies to keep its past and present alive while also ensuring that, the future is positively predicted, through the works done today. They are therefore agents of socialization for individual and societal development. Schools cannot achieve the foregoing feats all alone. As a result, combinations of human involvements and other administrative engagements of the school administrators, assist schools to achieve societal goals through education.

A conscious administration or management of staff personnel in educational institutions is seen to be one of the major activities of school leaders, if a good and conducive atmosphere must be created for effective teaching and learning (Afangideh & Ipalibo-Wokoma, 2016). Also, Abraham (2002) succinctly opines that, sound interactions between schools and communities, create conducive environments, for teaching and learning to thrive. Little wonder, Afangideh (2013) supports Edem (2011) position, apart from listing the ways for managing schools and communities interactions, especially, in an era of digital revolution.

Based on the foregoing, further presentations on the issues for study are based on the staff personnel and school community relations management practices of school administrators, as they can enhance environmental safety in schools.

**Staff Personnel Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Environmental Safety**

Personnel management in public schools can be described as the process of getting qualified personnel to provide instructional services necessary for the attainment of the goals of the system. Arikewuyo and Adegbesan (2009) opine that, it is the responsibility of the Personnel Department to recruit, develop, induct and motivate workers. Personnel Department also has the responsibility to select and recruit professionally qualified teachers and support staff. It also sees to the elimination of incompetent staff, in order to maintain the integrity of organization. To achieve the objectives of the educational system, certain personnel policies are required, to provide the needed framework for appropriate management decisions and actions. In the educational institutions such, Personnel Departments are responsible for such activities as recruitment, selecting, training, wage and salary administration. It is their responsibility to develop and recommend policies and procedures that will contribute to the advancement of the goals of the organization. In discharging staff personnel management duties effectively, Arikewuyo (2006) opines that, each staff within the school system is entitled to a file, which is opened for him or her on assumption of duty. Some of the documents that go into the personnel file include acceptance form, letter of acceptance, assumption form, record of service, personnel form and oath form. It is the contention of Adesina (1990) that management should, take into consideration the recruitment, selection, induction, appraisal, motivation and general satisfaction of all employees in the school system.

Typically, some of these functions are not carried out by Personnel managers in secondary schools in Nigeria. Ejiogu (1990) points out that, one of the foremost function of personnel management is the development and maintenance of an efficient and effective school

staff. In essence, the staff personnel are the most important factor or resource, in the school system, which constitutes the teachers and the support staff, whose major task, is to bring about desirable changes in the students. In other words, the quality of education provided at this level, depends on the number and quality of the staff personnel.

The task of enhancing the welfare of the staff personnel falls within the preview of the principal who is the educational administrator in charge of the secondary school. The principal is expected to get qualified personnel, who will provide instructional services, necessary for the achievement of the goals of the system. The welfare of staff is very important, in personnel management. Various studies show that staff that are taken proper care of, or motivated, could be highly productive and innovative (Ejiogu, 1990; O'Neil,1994). Staff welfare services include promotion, capacity building, development opportunities, and appropriate health and safety incentives. Arikewuyo (2006) adds that some of the welfare services, that could be provided by an organization to safeguard its workers, to include adequate retirement benefit, pension scheme, medical services for workers and their dependants, staff school for workers children, official cars, and end of year bonus, among others. Another major function of personnel management is to ensure that staff are paid their entitlements as and when due. These include salaries, promotion arrears, retirement benefits and other personal emoluments that are due from time to time.

Personnel management, being one of the crucial departments, within the education industry, is concerned with, the development and application of polices, governing manpower planning, placement, training, working conditions and employment services (0' Neil, 1994). The quality of personnel largely depends on the retention and development of professional teachers, who would promote optimum level of performance towards the provision of quality education. However, staff personnel are seen as the most important educational resource that need to be adequately harnessed, to enhance efficiency, in services delivery.

Personnel management is one of the most important and challenging functions of any organization, because, it serves as, the ultimate basis for the creation and utilization of the wealth of a nation. Personnel management is therefore the acquisition of human resource and co-ordination of their performance, within the organization (Francis, 2002). In other words, personnel management is the effective utilization of people at work, to achieve the aims and objectives of the organization. It is in line with the above assertion that Peretomode (2004) asserts that, personnel management acts as the wheel of progress for the realization of educational goals and objectives. It means that, without an effective personnel management, an organization may find it difficult, to achieve its set goals and objectives. Therefore, every progressive organization, must seek to obtain the co-operation of the personnel, working under it. The management of educational institutions such as secondary schools, should look for ways of managing the complex characters and behaviour, of staff, because, the way and manner, they are managed affects the success of educational institutions, which are the personnel functions of educational administrators.

Personnel functions of educational administrators cover relevant areas such as recruitment, selection, placement, staff projection and staff organization. Due to the level of centralization of functions in the civil service, educational administrators (principal are not involved in the recruitment and selection of teaching staff and even non-teaching staff who work in the principal's office. It is only in placement and projection of staff, that the consideration of principals' personnel function is necessary.

In carrying out the tasks of staff placement, the principal is guided by the principle of identifying the specific job requirements, for the particular position, to which the teacher is going

to be deployed, either as a class teacher, subject teacher or duty post officer, as the case may be. The principal should be abreast with job analysis, so as to be able to find out, the actual responsibility attached to a position, the ways the responsibilities can be discharged and the background knowledge, needed to discharge the job. Another important aspect of staff placement is job description, by this approach, the teachers role to the goals of the school are properly spelt out from the onset. The principal is expected to design and develop strategies to enhance interrelationship among groups, staff projection and the projection of various departments in the school.

One area of staff personnel administration, that is equally very important, is staff projection. It is a good guide for future growth and developments in the school. The principal cannot wait until there is a short fall in staff supply. As a result, planning for staff requirement, is the first and most important task, that the principal embarks on, before ever embarking on job analysis and placement. Through experience in the utilization and placement of staff in enrolment, principals should be able to identify simple needs for the future, to attain organizational goals.

It is necessary that the educational administrator (principal) organizes his staff to attain organizational goals of the school. In doing this, the principal adopts the departmental structure of organization, in mobilizing the staff to work. It is a common practice for principals to appoint the most senior member of staff as the head of department of his or her area of specialization. The departmental structure, provides opportunity for leadership and a healthy departmental organization. Another important function of the personnel department, in the school, is orientation of new staff. Orientation involves the provision of new employees with information about the job, the organization and co-workers (Emechebe, 2009). Emechebe stresses further that, the aim of orientation is to help new staff to understand the educational policies, procedures and structures. Getting new staff oriented ensures that, they will perform their duties, effectively.

## School-Community Relations Practices of Educational Administration for School Environmental Safety

No school operates in a vacuum. They exist in environments, consisting of many groups of individuals, such as students, teachers, parents, community leaders, among others. These groups, can as well, be called stakeholders and collectively, they make up the school environment. Such stakeholders must be involved in taking decisions affecting the school, because they have invested their money in the school. They can also give supports or oppose ideas or goals of the school that are detrimental to the ideals of the community. Most schools have become effective, because they achieved goals that are important to their self-interest, as well as the interest of the stakeholders in the community. Abali and Asodike (2013) assert that, school/community relation practices of administrators, help schools become more effective, by building relationship with stakeholders that affect the schools or affected by the school activities. The researcher further observes that school administrators, who use sound school / community relations practices, run schools where morale of parents, students and teachers are high.

The World Assembly of Public Relations Association in Wikipedia (2010) defines public relations as the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders and implementing planned programmes of actions, which will serve both the organization and the public interest. It serves as a management function, that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationship, between an organization and the

public, on whom its success or failure depends. It therefore, encompasses all interactions and communications with the public by everyone in the school, from the school administrator to the teaching and non-teaching staff and students. Holden-Quinn (2010) conceives school / community relations, as a management function, that is systematic and planned, to help improve the programmes and services of a school organization. It relies more on a comprehensive two-way communication process involving both employees and the community, with the goal of stimulating a better understanding of the roles, objectives, accomplishments and needs of the school.

School/community relations, is less about conveying information, than it is about, establishing and promoting partnership between the school and the public. For Ojedapo (2011), school community relations, has to do with the nature of co-existence between the school and its host community, where the school dwells. School community relations describe the complex networks, to maintain and promote mutual coexistence between the school and community. Such a relationship and interdependence is intended to maintain and promote mutual co-existence, between the school and the community, where the school is situated. Building strong school community relations will promote effectiveness in school administration. Igwe in Ojedapo (2011) infers that, the objectives of school community relations are to enhance students' and administrators interest in the promotion of good relationship between school and community, deepen students' and administrators' skills, with regard to structure, organizations and responsibilities of school/community mutual co-existence, highlight the variables that promote and strengthen cordial school/community relationship and examine social, economic, political and legal implications of school/community relations.

The establishment of an effective school/community relation, is crucial in building a conducive social environment for the school. As a good management practice, an effective school/community relationship provides value, by giving the public, information that the school needs, to convey its activities. The reasons some schools have great reputation, is as a result of their commitment to communication. According to Crossing in Education World (2009), communication is the key to fostering transparency and building relationships, trust and honesty. It creates the time for the public to talk and ask questions. Communication as an aspect of public relations, needs to flow to all directions, from school administrators to their staff, from staff to students and between stakeholders of the school. The advent of technology, has made communication process, much easier in recent times. The creation of social networks, blogs and internet, are direct media, school administrators can use in communicating with the public. Other widely used communication media include newsletters, radios, televisions, brochures, town criers and PTA meetings.

Communication with the schools stakeholders is necessary, before crucial decisions are taken by the administrators. This is with the view to avoiding crisis and resolving issues, amicably. However, communicating with the public, gives room for effective interactions, between the school and its stakeholders. Agabi and Oluwuo cited in Asodike (2013) identify the use of physical facilities, economic contributions, general services, curriculum and teaching research as the areas of interaction in school/community relationships. The school administrator, should establish a healthy relationship with its stakeholders, by involving them in the decision making process is the school. The administrator can achieve this, by moving the school to the community and making the community come to the school. When the school administrator establishes a healthy relationship with community, it adds value to the school system. The task of managing the school/community relationship rest squarely with the school administrator, hence

the administrator should develop and implement a school/community relations master plan, that will usher in an accelerated development in the school.

The knowledge of how a community functions, is very vital in establishing and managing a healthy school climate. It therefore behooves the school administrator, to understand how the community, in which the school is situated, functions, by developing a community relation plan and make the commitment to execute the plan. Abali and Asodike (2012) identify the ways the school administrator should consider in developing the plan: These include the identification of community leaders. These suggest that, in every community, there are leaders, who pilot the affairs of the community. These leaders may not necessarily be those who have titles or who hold positions, but those who have features similar to the norms or goals of the community and are easily accessible and have competence, in dealing with special situations. Identification of individuals who are friendly with education. This suggests that people that recognize the importance of education should be identified by the school administrator and be given due recognition.

Similarly, school administrators, should consider channels, through which public opinion is built, in the community. The school administrator should identify available channels, through which they could effectively communicate to the stakeholders. The school administrator should know, if the indigenes or community residents expect equality in education or if they expect students to remain in the community after secondary education. The school administrator should identify the power brokers and decision makers, including ways and manners, decisions are made in the community.

To function effectively and efficiently, the school administrator should constantly obtain technical, legal, financial, national and international information, through reading of dailies, weekly and monthly journals and publications to keep himself abreast of happenings, in the knowledge world. However, to succeed in the school system requires an interpersonal relationship among the various stakeholders; such will enthrone a cohesive team, which will produce quicken and better results in the school and the community at large, improve environmental safety without disruption of teaching and learning activities.

A healthy, safe and supportive learning environment, promotes innovation, inquiring and risk taking. It also enables students to learn, in powerful ways, without any form of distraction. Stephens (2004) asserts that, such environment, reinforces and enhances the leadership capacity in the school, because competent, excellent and dedicated educators want to work, under such conditions. To learn, students need to feel safe and supported. The school principals, have the responsibility of, creating ways of achieving conduciveness, of the school environment, that will promote quality learning outcomes. They need to seek for innovative approaches geared towards managing the resources entrusted to them, in order to maintain, a safe school environment. Meyer (2012) posits that, such innovative approaches include: enhancement of communication flow and processes, improvement of policy provisions and implementation processes, enhancement of teacher quality and morale, introduction of preventive measures.

A good school health programme should be organized into health services, health instruction and healthy living. While, the health services, provide essential information, needed by the teacher and school administrator, to enable them adapt the school programme, to the individual capacities and needs of the students, the health instruction, assists the students acquire, desirable health attitudes, practice and a sound scientific background for personal and community health.

Uche (2009) states that, this responsibility extends from the identification and elimination of job hazards to providing health and safety education. Since, the principal is the agent of government, the teachers and students, with safety materials, will prevent the outbreak of any accident, in the school. As a result of the vulnerable condition of the students, the school authority should ensure that, appropriate measures are put in place, to avoid the outbreak of communicable diseases in the school.

A good school health programme should be provided to ensure adherence to acceptable health habits. Moreover, the school administrator must ensure that appropriate health and safety education are provided against hazards or dangers in the school. Arikewuyo and Adegbesan (2009) reported that this can be effectively achieved, through periodic and systematic inspection of school buildings and facilities, to identify areas that need repairs. It is the responsibility of the school administrator, to generally supervise and ensure the safety of students, as they board the school bus, for any educational purposes. Safe operating procedures are important considerations in every programme, for transporting students for excursions and other school activities Arikewuyo (2006) posits that, it is the responsibility of the personnel or school administrator to clearly establish rules and regulations, guiding the operation of the school bus. The school management can provide welfare services that can take care of students' vital needs, such as stationery items and snacks for refreshment, during break time. Where the school is not able to open a canteen, the school administrator must make arrangement for an individual, within or outside the school, to operate a small kiosk. The items to be sold there, must be those approved by the school health personnel and the Ministry of Education.

Educators in high performing schools, have long recognized the critical importance of providing a healthy, safe and supportive classrooms and school environment (Educational Development Centre, 2006). Educators should provide a healthy and safe environment at the secondary school level, this means that all forms of safety and security, clean clothes. medical attention when necessary, counselling and other family services, are required to create an atmosphere of sincere support for the students well being and academic success. The school administrator is therefore, saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that these students' needs are adequately provided in the school.

## Statement of the Problem

The utilization of sound staff personnel and school-community relations management practices in handling school personnel matters and relationships with schools' external stakeholders by school administrators, are widely accepted as strong measures, for creating a safe environment, for teaching and learning in schools. Following from this proposition, school administrators are reported to be making conscious and unconscious and deliberate and in-deliberate efforts to ensure effective management of the staff, under their span of control and also relate well with members of the community. Surprisingly, the researchers were bothered that despite these efforts, there appears to be complaints from schools staff members and administrators alike on the lack of cohesion, dampened morale, in schools on one hand and frosty relationships between school and communities, which makes school environments unsafe for teaching and learning. Consequently, the researchers were quick to ponder, thus: could it be that the use of sound personnel management practices and school community relations management strategies cannot create a safe environment for teaching and learning in schools? It was the quest, to provide empirical explanations to this question that made the researchers, to contemplate of a study, on

the staff personnel and school-community management practices of educational administrators as they have implications for environmental safety in secondary schools.

**Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The study examined the staff personnel and school-community management practices of educational administrators for environmental safety in secondary schools in Rivers State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Examine the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.
- Determine the school-community relations management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in the study:

- What are the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers state of Nigeria?
- What are the school-community relations management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers state of Nigeria?

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.
- Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals in urban and rural schools on the school-community relations practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

**METHODOLOGY**

The design of the study was the analytic descriptive survey, with the population as the 258 public secondary schools in Rivers State of Nigeria. These schools have a corresponding number of 258 principals, from which 181 were selected, as sample to participate in the study, using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The subjects of the study, responded to a 9-item scale, titled 'Staff Personnel and School-Community Relations Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety Scale' (SPSCRMPEASSESS), designed by the researchers, in the modified 4-point Likert scale model, with a reliability index of 0.71, using the Cronbach Alpha Statistical Model. Mean and standard deviation, were used in answering the research questions while z-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS**

The results of the study came from the answers to the research questions and test of hypotheses.

**Research Question 1:** What are the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Score of Male and Female Principals on the Staff Personnel Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State

| S/N | Items | Male N=138 | | Female N=35 | | | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | $\bar{x}_1$ | $SD_1$ | $\bar{x}_2$ | $SD_2$ | $\bar{x}\,\bar{x}$ | |
| 1 | Efficient staff welfare services are put in place to enable school members stay motivated for school environmental safety | 2.95 | 1.02 | 2.94 | 1.06 | 2.95 | Agreed |
| 2 | Development of policies for manpower planning helps school members to abide by safety environmental policies | 2.93 | 1.03 | 2.86 | 1.17 | 2.89 | Agreed |
| 3 | Induction of newly employed staff ensures that school members get acquainted with school environmental safety | 3.02 | 1.04 | 3.00 | 0.94 | 3.01 | Agreed |
| 4 | Keeping accurate records of service of staff ensures that policies put in place are religiously followed to ensure safety of the environment | 2.94 | 0.94 | 3.11 | 1.05 | 3.03 | Agreed |
| | **Criterion Mean 2.50** | **2.96** | **1.01** | **2.98** | **1.06** | **2.97** | **Agreed** |

Data in table 1, show that, all the items 1, 2, 3 and 4, had mean scores, above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were accepted as the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. In summary, with an aggregate mean of 2.97, above the criterion mean of 2.50, male and female principals accepted that, the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators are ensuring that efficient welfare services are put in place to keep school members motivated, developing policies for manpower planning, inducting newly employed staff and keeping accurate records of service of staff to ensure the safety of the school environment.

**Research Question 2:** What are the school-community relations management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Mean Scores of Principals in Urban and Rural Areas on the School-Community Relations Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria

| S/N | Items | Urban N=59 | | Rural N=114 | | | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | $\bar{x}_1$ | $SD_1$ | $\bar{x}_2$ | $SD_2$ | $\bar{x}\,\bar{x}$ | |
| 5 | School administrators involve stakeholders in decision making on matters patterning to school environmental safety. | 2.93 | 1.05 | 3.21 | 0.98 | 3.07 | Agreed |
| 6 | Effective school community master plan is implemented in the school to create a safe environment. | 2.34 | 0.96 | 2.97 | 1.09 | 2.57 | Agreed |
| 7 | Consistent Parents Teachers Association | 2.46 | 1.04 | 2.40 | 1.01 | 2.43 | Disagreed |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | meetings ensure good media of communication for stakeholders in school affairs | | | | | | |
| 8 | Effective use of social networks enhances safety school environment. | 2.53 | 1.01 | 2.83 | 1.05 | 2.68 | Agreed |
| 9 | Encouraging interpersonal relationships among stakeholders ensures school safety environment | 2.19 | 0.97 | 2.62 | 1.09 | 2.41 | Disagreed |
| | **Criterion Mean 2.50** | **2.49** | **1.01** | **2.63** | **1.04** | **2.63** | **Agreed** |

Data in Table 2 revealed that items 5, 6 and 8, had mean scores, above the criterion mean of 2.50 and were agreed on as the school-community relations management practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. Quite differently, items 7 and 9, had mean scores, below the criterion mean of 2.50 and were disagreed on, as the school-community relations management practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. In summary, with an aggregate mean of 2.63, above the criterion mean of 2.50, male and female principals agreed that the school-community relations management practices of educational administrators are involving stakeholders in decision making, implementing the school community master plan, consistent Parents Teachers Association meeting to ensure good media of communication among stakeholders, effective use of social networks and encouraging interpersonal relationship among stakeholders to ensure school safety environment.

$Ho_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria of Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Mean Scores of Male and Female Principals on the Staff Personnel Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers of Nigeria

| Subject | N | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Df | z-cal | z-crit | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male Principals | 138 | 2.96 | 1.01 | 171 | 0.10 | 1.960 | Not significant |
| Female Principals | 35 | 2.98 | 1.06 | | | | (Failed to reject) |

Data in Table 3, show summaries of mean scores, standard deviation and z-test of difference between the mean scores of male and female principals, on the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. The z-test value calculated and used in testing hypothesis stood at 0.10 while the z-critical value stood at 1.960, using 171 degrees of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance.

At 0.05 level of significance and 171 degrees of freedom, the calculated z-value of 0.10 is less than the z-critical value of 1.960. This suggests that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the respondents. Based on these observations, the researchers failed to reject the null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

H0$_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals in urban and rural schools on the school-community relation practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of z-test Analysis on the Mean Scores of Principals in Urban and Rural Schools on the School-Community Relations Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety in Rivers State of Nigeria

| Subject | N | $\bar{x}_1$ | SD | Df | z-cal | z-crit | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Urban School principals | 59 | 2.94 | 1.01 | 171 | 0.87 | 1.960 | Not significant |
| Rural School Principals | 114 | 2.63 | 1.04 | | | | (Failed to reject) |

Data in Table 4, show summaries of mean scores, standard deviation and z-test of differences, between the mean scores of principals from urban and rural schools, on the school-community relations practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. The z-test value calculated and used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.87 while the z-critical value stood at 1.960 using 171 degrees of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance.

At 0.05 level of significance and 171 degrees of freedom, the calculated z-value of 0.87 is less than the critical value of 1.960. Hence, the difference between the respondents is not significant. Consequently, the researchers failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference, between the mean scores of principals from urban and rural schools on the school community relations practices of educational administrators, for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

### The Staff Personnel Management Practices of Educational Administrators for Environmental Safety

The first finding of the study is that the staff personnel management practices for secondary school environmental safety are providing efficient staff welfare services to motivate school members, developing policies for manpower planning, inducting newly employed staff to be acquainted with school environmental safety and keeping accurate records of staff service. This finding is in harmony with the views of Arikewuyo (2006), Arikewuyo and Adegbesan (2009), Adesina (1990), Ejiogu (1990), Onuma (2015), Olubunmi (2014) Mutiso and Kilika (2017), Uvas (2012) and Nabi, Ahmed and Rahman (2017). These scholars and researchers have in their perceptions and opinions agree that the research variables are the management practices for environmental safety in educational institutions.

Differently, the test of hypotheses, found no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the staff personnel management practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. Hence, not in accordance with the scholars and researchers earlier referred. However, it is important to note that it will sound untrue if it is concluded that staff personnel management practices do not propel progress in the realization of educational goals and objectives. This observation may be

linked to the rigorous statistical tool used in hypotheses testing, the gender and the disposition of the respondents at the time the instrument was administered to them.

On the whole, the findings imply that, staff personnel management practices should be strengthened to adequately motivate both teaching and non teaching staff for quality educational delivery and environmental safety in the schools.

**The School-Community Relations Practices of Educational Administrators for Secondary School Environmental Safety**

The second finding of the study is that the school-community relations practices for secondary school environmental safety are involving stakeholders in decision making on matters pertaining to school environmental safety, implementing school-community master plan, ensuring a good medium of communication to stakeholders, providing effective social network as well as encouraging interpersonal relationships amongst stakeholders. This is in consonance with the positions taken by Abali and Asodike (2013), Crossing in Education World (2009), Agabi and Oluwuo (as cited in Asodike, 2013), Tata and Abdullahi (2014), Nnebedum (2017), Anthony, Yaro and Peu (2017) and Arnadi (2013). These scholars and researchers, in their scholarly and empirical studies, give credence to school-community relations practices as means to sustain healthy ties between host communities and the schools. This is suggestive or the fact that the schools and their hosts are inseparable elements that cannot be divisible from each other because of the symbiotic relationships that exists between them for the safety of the school environment.

Furthermore, the study found no significant difference between the mean scores of principals in urban and rural schools on the school-community relation practices of educational administrators for secondary school environmental safety in Rivers State of Nigeria. Hence, a negation of the views of the authors, scholars and researchers cited earlier. In the light of the foregoing circumstance, it will amount to an understatement, if it is reported that school-community relation practices do not support beneficial affinities between those involved.

This latter trend, may be the result of gender differences of the respondents, disposition of the respondents towards the research instrument as well as some extraneous variables in the process of conducting the study. Irrespective of these, school-community relation practices encourage all stakeholders outside the schools to provide necessary educational facilities to ensure a safe school environment.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, the discussions on them and their attendant educational implications, it is concluded that staff personnel and school-community relations management practices of educational administrators are strong variables for creating safe environments for teaching and learning in schools.

**Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of the study, it is recommended as follows:

- Educational administrators should continuously utilize appropriate staff personnel management practices to motivate staff as they are the most important resource in the school system.
- Educational administrators should always employ school-community relations management practices to build effective relationships with stakeholders as no school operates in a vacuum or in isolation.

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