



## **Management Principles as Correlate of Personnel Administration in Public Universities in North Central, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated management principles as correlate of personnel administration in public universities in North Central, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted 8,364 academic staff from 14 public universities in North Central Nigeria. A sample of 836 academic staff members representing 10% of the population from 14 public universities in North Central Nigeria was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for the study. The instruments used for data collection were two set of questionnaire, titled “Management Principles Questionnaire (MPQ)” and “Personnel Administration Questionnaire (PAQ)” with a reliability coefficient of 0.88 and 0.89 respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and also to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that management principles have significant positive correlation with placement of academic staff, academic staff training and delegation of responsibility in public universities in North Central Nigeria. It was concluded that management principles have significant strong positive correlation with personnel administration in public universities in North Central Nigeria. It was therefore, recommended among others that heads of department should apply functional definition principle to make placement. This could guarantee placement strictly on the basis of skills and capabilities required to perform a job.

**Keywords:** Personnel administration, placement, training, delegation, responsibility

## **Introduction**

Personnel administration vary globally due to cultural, economic and legal differences. In advanced countries such as United States, Canada, Germany and Switzerland among others, personnel administration focuses on technology integration, employee well-being and diversity. Emerging economies such as Nigeria may prioritize cost-efficiency, compliance and workforce flexibility. Personnel administration must navigate diverse regulations, labour markets and cultural expectations (Bua, 2020). Effective personnel administration may require adapting practices to local contexts while maintaining alignment with organizational goals and fostering cross-cultural collaboration and inclusion. This points to the fact that organisations such as the universities in Nigeria adapt personnel administration practices to achieve objectives. The role of university personnel is crucial for ensuring a country's development and progress by producing high-quality human capital.

Recently, there has been growing concern among employers, policymakers, educational planners and parents about the effectiveness of personnel administration in achieving university objectives. The researchers have observed that public universities in North Central Nigeria face issues such as inadequate staffing, non-transparent recruitment processes, loss of talents and improper selection of staff which seem to be linked to university personnel administration. Ogunode and Abubakar (2020) identify several problems hindering the smooth personnel administration in Nigerian public universities. These include inadequate qualified staff, delayed promotions, brain drain, frequent strike actions by university unions, institutional corruption, security issues, weak administrators, poor capacity development of academic staff, political interference in university administration, challenges with university autonomy and poor internally generated revenue (IGR).

Personnel administration involves planning people-oriented activities aimed at fulfilling an organization's goals (Yawe & Ivagher, 2019). It encompasses various strategies and processes designed to manage people effectively within an organization (Bua, 2022). These practices are crucial for fostering a productive workforce, enhancing university performance and achieving strategic goals. Universities are social systems established to produce graduates in various fields. Thus, personnel administration is essential for coordinating human resource functions in achieving university objectives. Ijov (2017) identified key personnel administration functions, including recruitment, training, performance management, compensation, appraisal, orientation, promotion, transfer, and employee relations. Personnel administration defines tasks, assigns them to trained personnel, and ensures efficiency through structured administrative units (Bua & Ada, 2018). It mobilizes group efforts towards achieving university goals, guided by administrative principles.

Administrative principles provide guidelines for organizational management (Bua, 2020). They are fundamental truths describing relationships and prescribing actions for efficiency (Abah, 2017). These principles guide administrators in decision-making to ensure accountability, transparency and responsiveness in public administration, including universities (Adamu, 2018). Without such principles, development would rely on trial and error.

Administrative principles originated from military, economic, and religious organizations, which relied on structured operations for efficiency (Denhardt, Denhardt, & Blanc, 2019). Their adoption into administrative organizations, including universities, established guidelines for effective management. Key contributors to administrative principles include Henri Fayol, Fredrick Winslow Taylor, Luther Gulick, Lyndal Urwick, and others. Bua (2020) highlights common administrative principles such as division of work, authority and responsibility, unity of command, order, hierarchy, remuneration, discipline, and esprit de corps.

These principles support efficient human resource practices, including job analysis, recruitment, placement, training, delegation, supervision, and motivation.

Placement involves assigning selected candidates to appropriate job roles. Aminchi, Sanda, and Midala (2022) define placement as positioning individuals in roles matching their skills and abilities. Administrative principles like delegation, decentralization, division of labor, and authority guide university administrators in assigning employees effectively, minimizing weaknesses in human resource practices. Placement matches individual competencies with job requirements (Yawe & Ivagher, 2019). University administrators rely on departmental structures to assign new employees appropriately, ensuring role alignment with qualifications. Proper placement arranges rank and responsibility for individuals, emphasizing skill-job alignment. Placement is a structured process requiring careful steps for effective administration. Shreyas (2016) suggests using management principles to guide placement, including collecting employee details, constructing profiles, matching profiles to job roles, and assessing suitability through counseling. Personnel administration extends beyond placement to training, ensuring employees remain updated on workplace trends.

Training is an administrative strategy for enhancing staff knowledge and performance. Yimam (2022) defines training as teaching organizational members job-specific skills for effectiveness. It equips educational staff with necessary competencies to perform efficiently. Training develops employee skills for new responsibilities and career growth (Kuruppu, Kavirathne & Karunarathna, 2021). It provides specific knowledge and skills for present and future roles, ensuring continuous improvement. Effective training programs align with identified staff needs. Administrators use management principles to determine training requirements, supported by principles of continuity and stability of tenure (Nassary, 2020). Employees benefit from relevant and applicable training (Luo, Ma, & Li, 2021). Universities must invest in training to retain key employees. Kashif and Tahir (2020) note that training enhances job satisfaction and institutional loyalty. Career development programs should be integral to university policies, encouraging staff participation. Educational institutions increasingly prioritize career training, recognizing its role in employee development (Garavan, McCarthy & Carbery, 2020). Training fosters commitment and competence, enabling employees to fulfill delegated responsibilities.

Delegation of responsibility is essential for university administration. No organization functions effectively without proper delegation. Syed and Anjum (2020) illustrate delegation in hierarchical systems like churches, families, and universities. In universities, management delegates responsibilities to subordinates. Management principles guide administrators in assigning specific responsibilities. Delegation is crucial for institutional survival. It enhances efficiency by distributing responsibilities appropriately. Morphet, John, and Reller (2015) argue that delegation improves university effectiveness, supports staff training, and fosters teamwork. Delegation integrates employees into institutional success, ensuring cooperation (Kelly, 2018). Akhtar and Iqbal (2017) emphasize that universities, regardless of size, require delegation for efficiency. Without it, administrators risk chaos and inefficiency. Effective delegation prepares staff for higher responsibilities, strengthening institutional performance.

Personnel administration in universities if not properly carried out may not contribute to achievement of established objectives. There is likelihood that the use of management principles in university administration may result to effective achievement of university objectives. It is against this background that the researchers investigated the correlation between management principles and personnel administration in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Personnel are essential for the functionality of any university system worldwide. Effective personnel administration is crucial for achieving universities objectives. However, personnel administration in the university seems to be faced with challenges of ineffective

practices. Concern has been raised by relevant stakeholders such as students, parents, government and non-governmental organisations about the inability of some lecturers to perform specific tasks such as developing instructional materials for courses, delivering lectures and supervision of students' research projects assigned to them effectively which makes one to wonder if job analysis as well as proper recruitment and selection are being carried out in the universities.

In the North Central Nigeria, the researchers noticed situations where exam officers encounter difficulties in processing and uploading student results. This raises concerns about how responsibilities are assigned and managed by the university administration. Providing continuous professional development opportunities for staff seems to be difficult and ensuring a diverse and inclusive workforce seems to be a challenge, as biases in hiring practices or cultural barriers can hinder progress. Also, lecturers often face high workloads due to a combination of teaching, research and administrative responsibilities, leading to manifestation of weaknesses of personnel administration in public universities (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020). Such issues may suggest lack of effective oversight and application of administrative principles within the university's management structure. It is likely that the administration is not regularly applying administrative principles, which could provide essential framework for improving personnel administration in the university. Public universities management staff in North Central, Nigeria seem to sacrifice management principles on the altar of unprofessional practices such as favouritism, nepotism and familiarity in carrying out personnel administration. Over the years, there have been efforts made by relevant stakeholders such as the National Universities Commission (NUC) and Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and planning to ensure effective personnel administration in the university through briefings, circulars, conferences, seminars and workshops.

Despite attempts to maintain effective personnel administration, the researchers noted an uneven distribution of experienced staff within the university, with some departments having more seasoned professionals than others. Additionally, there appears to be inadequate support for academic research, inconsistent promotion processes, insufficient supervision of teaching, and low levels of motivation in public universities. These challenges likely contribute to the deteriorating state of personnel administration in the university. It is against this background that the study sought to determine the correlation between management principles and personnel administration in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the correlation between management principles and personnel administration in public universities in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Determine the correlation between management principles and placement of academic staff in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.
2. Find out the correlation between management principles and academic staff training in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.
3. Ascertain the correlation between management principles and delegation of responsibility in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the correlation between management principles and placement of academic staff in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria?
2. What is the correlation between management principles and academic staff training in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria?
3. What is the correlation between management principles and delegation of responsibility in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria?

### **Methodology**

Correlational research design was adopted for the study and the area of the study was North Central Nigeria. The population consisted 8,364 academic staff from 14 public universities in North Central Nigeria while a sample of 836 academic staff members representing 10% of the population from 14 public universities in North Central Nigeria was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample for the study. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires titled “Management Principles Questionnaire (MPQ)” and Personnel Administration Questionnaire (PAQ) which were validated by three experts. A trial test was conducted and the reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.88 and 0.89 respectively. A total number of 836 copies of the questionnaire were taken to the field and administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of research assistance. However, only 824 questionnaires were returned. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and also to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the correlation between management principles and placement of academic staff in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1: *Correlation between Management Principles and Placement of Academic Staff in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria*

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	Decision
Management Principles	824	2.74	1.05		
Placement of Academic Staff in Public Universities	824	2.55	0.92	0.90	Strong Positive Correlation

\* Correlation coefficient is strong at 0.5 to 1.0 (or -0.5 to -1.0)

**Source:** *Researchers’ Field Survey Results 2024*

The result in Table 1 shows correlation between management principles and placement of academic staff in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria. The result revealed that the correlation coefficient of 0.90 falls within 0.5 to 1.0 which indicate a strong correlation. This implies that there is a positive correlation between management principles and placement of academic staff in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.

**Research Question 2:** What is the correlation between management principles and academic staff training in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria?

Table 2: *Correlation between Management Principles and Academic Staff Training in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria*

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	Decision
Management Principles	824	2.74	1.05		
Academic Staff Training in Public Universities	824	2.75	0.86	0.88	Positive Relationship

\* Correlation coefficient is strong at 0.5 to 1.0 (or -0.5 to -1.0)

**Source:** *Researchers’ Field Survey Results 2024*

The result in Table 2 shows correlation between management principles and job analysis in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria. The result revealed that the correlation coefficient of 0.88 falls within 0.5 to 1.0 which indicate a strong correlation. This implies that there was a **positive** correlation between management principles and academic staff training in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.

**Research Question 3:** What is the correlation between management principles and delegation of responsibility in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria?

Table 3: *Correlation between Management Principles and Delegation of Responsibility in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria*

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	Decision
<b>Management Principles</b>	824	2.74	1.05		
				0.89	Strong Positive Correlation
Delegation of Responsibility in Public Universities	824	2.98	0.76		

\* Correlation coefficient is strong at 0.5 to 1.0 (or -0.5 to -1.0)

**Source:** *Researcher's Field Survey Results 2024*

The result in Table 3 shows correlation between management principles and delegation of responsibility in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria. The result revealed that the correlation coefficient of 0.89 falls within 0.5 to 1.0 which indicate a strong correlation. This implies that there was a strong positive correlation between management principles and delegation of responsibility in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria.

### Discussion of Findings

The first findings of the study showed that management principles have significant positive correlation with placement of academic staff in public universities in North Central Nigeria. This finding agreed with the finding of Bonnici and Centigo (2019) which revealed that management principles have been critical to personnel placement and that the degree to which personnel perceive the effectiveness of subordination of individual interest encourage staff commitment in the university. The findings also aligned with the finding of Gable, Lee, Kwahk and Green (2022) which showed that administrative principles play a significant role in placement of personnel by administrative staff in township Basic Junior High school. The researchers also opined management principles have significant strong positive correlation with placement of academic staff in public universities. This is because functional definitions assist university administrators in identifying staff with the required skills to match specific job roles effectively. The applicative principle ensures that candidates are assigned appropriate ranks, enhancing alignment with qualifications and expertise. The division of work guides heads of departments in positioning staff where their contributions are most valuable. Hierarchical authority streamlines the allocation of employees to roles, ensuring organizational coherence and accountability. Additionally, the principle of stability of tenure encourages Vice Chancellors to carefully match staff abilities to job requirements, fostering efficiency and long-term institutional stability. These principles collectively ensure a strategic and effective academic staff placement process in public universities in North Central Nigeria.

The second finding showed that management principles have significant positive correlation with academic staff training in public universities in North Central Nigeria. This finding agreed with the finding of Oni, Nwajiuba and Nwosu (2017) which revealed that there is significant relationship between the equity as a principle and training of teachers. This finding is also in agreement with the finding of Ukpong and Uchendu, (2016) which showed that there is significant influence of administrators' initiative on training of teachers in secondary schools. The researchers also observed that management principles have significant strong positive correlation with academic staff training in public universities in North Central Nigeria because the principle of unity of direction supports the strategic granting of scholarships to staff, focusing on upgrading knowledge in critical areas of institutional need. Equity principle ensures a fair and indiscriminate approach to releasing staff for further studies, fostering inclusivity and

motivation. Initiatives principle within the university system encourage management to prioritize staff development by facilitating training opportunities in essential fields. Decentralization principle promotes the provision of competence-building programs, empowering departments to address specific training needs effectively. Additionally, the principle of span of control enhances targeted skill acquisition, enabling staff to perform optimally and contribute meaningfully to the university's academic objectives. These principles collectively create a robust framework for academic staff training and capacity building in public universities in North Central Nigeria.

The third finding showed that management principles have significant positive correlation with delegation of responsibility in public universities in North Central Nigeria. This finding agreed with the finding of Olowookere and Fagbohum (2023) which showed that revealed significant relationship between decentralization and delegation of responsibilities. It was also found out that decentralization enables the assigning of responsibilities to personnel based on special skills. The finding also aligned with the finding of Onyema and Dike (2021) which revealed administrative tenure significantly impacts on delegation of responsibilities. It was also found that high delegation of responsibilities to teachers with a stable tenure of office guarantee effective and efficient execution of tasks. The researchers in his opinion also agreed with this finding that management principles have significant strong positive correlation with delegation of responsibility in public universities in North Central Nigeria. This is because hierarchical authority principle serves as a framework for assigning responsibilities, ensuring clarity and adherence to the universities structure. The principle of division of labour aids in determining which staff members are best suited to handle specific responsibilities based on their expertise. Span of control principle defines the scope and nature of duties entrusted to staff, ensuring manageability and effectiveness. The scalar chain principle enables deans of faculties to identify and entrust responsibilities to the most appropriate staff, fostering accountability. Additionally, stability of tenure principle supports continuity and facilitates informed decisions about assigning tasks, promoting trust and long-term commitment. Together, these principles enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of delegating responsibilities in the university system.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that administrative principles have significant strong positive correlation with human resource management practices in Public Universities in North Central Nigeria. This implies that administrative principles have significant strong positive correlation with job analysis, recruitment of academic staff and selection of academic staff in public universities in North Central Nigeria.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Heads of department should apply functional definition principle to make placement. This could guarantee placement strictly on the basis of skills and capabilities required to perform a job. This will ensure elimination of background influence which could lead to effective and efficient performance of staff responsibilities in the university.
2. Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP) should organize training to educate university administrators on the importance of applying administrative principles in governance and staff management. This could be achieved by collaborating with universities to develop frameworks for effective workshops and seminars.
3. Vice-Chancellors should apply principles like division of labour, span of control and hierarchical authority to ensure effective delegation of responsibilities to align academic staff competencies with job requirements.

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