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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Influence Of Principals' Demographic Variables on Effective Management of Secondary Schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria

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Author's Contributions

All authors contributed equally to this research.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated influence of principals' demographic variables on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study consisted of seven Thousand, one hundred and twenty-one (7,121) teachers in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. The sample size comprised a total of 988 teachers made up of, 590 males and 398 females in fifty- three (53) selected Secondary Schools. The selected Secondary Schools consisted of 24 public and 39 private secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone. Purposive Sampling technique was used to select male and female respondents, from urban and rural, public and private secondary Schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled, "Demographic variables and school effectiveness questionnaire (DVSEQ)" The instrument was validated by two experts in Educational Administration and Planning and one in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through Cronbach alpha method, with a reliability coefficient of 0.793. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation in answering the research questions, while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings of the study revealed that principals' gender and educational qualifications all have significant influence on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone Taraba State, Nigeria. The study therefore, concluded that principals' demographic variables significantly influence effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The study thus recommended that the government should continue to organize regular training for both male and female principals to make them imbibe more managerial skills for optimal performance in administration, among others.

Keywords: Demographic variables; effective management; principals

INTRODUCTION

One of the levels of Nigeria's educational system that has received much attention in recent years because of its importance is secondary education. Secondary education is the education given to children from the

ages of 12-17 years or immediately after primary education. According to National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), the objectives of education at this level include; the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values

and attitudes for the survival of the individuals and the Nigerians society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

The achievements of secondary education objectives rest squarely on competent personnel and effective management of the schools. No secondary school can survive without a competent principal, on whose shoulder is placed the responsibility of administering the school. The success of the secondary school level which prepares an individual for higher education is hinged on the school administrator, who is designated as the principal. Therefore, no educational system can rise above the quality of its administrator. The requirements of the various goals from school managers are centered on good advancement of teaching through the implementation of effective management, which is led by the principal as the overall head. Equally, the school administrator (Principal) occupies a position that demands him/her to integrate roles, personnel and facilities in order to achieve the desired goals of the school. The achievement of secondary school objectives presupposes proper, efficient and effective management of both human and material resources available in the school and this is the responsibility of the school principals.

However, it has been observed that some principals do not adequately perform their administrative responsibilities as expected. For instance, Adeolu (2016) noted that some principals are not judicious in the management of school funds, do not keep proper school records and do not properly maintain school facilities. Similarly, Ani (2017) observed that most principals are careless in the performance of their supervisory roles and disciplinary control in their school and consequently most teachers have become careless in the performance of their teaching responsibilities. The Author further noted that some teachers merely register their presence in the school and thereafter disappear, which according to the author could lead to poor performance of students in both internal and external examinations.

Conversely, principals are directly involved in influencing the activities of teachers and students towards goal setting and goal attainment in schools. The major concern of parents is the experiences and administrative styles that principals' exhibit as it is found

to have direct bearing on the overall performance of students' as well as the teachers since both are to perform under the monitoring and supervision of a principals. The dwindling performance of students of senior secondary schools in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in core subject of the school curriculum has been a source of concern to stakeholders and parents in education industry. Many reasons might have accounted for this. Bello, Ibi and Bukar (2016) affirmed that deficient administrative style used by school principals is a factor in this regard, as it is found to have direct effect on students' academic performance. The poor performance of students according to Oyediji (2018) could be attributed to ineffectiveness of school principals in managing the schools.

However, scholars such as Luga (2016) and Uko (2016) have argued that the ability of the principals to manage schools effectively or ineffectively may be a factor of their demographic characteristics. The authors observed that demographic variables such as gender, experience, educational qualification, marital status, income, family size and age among others are the indices that could influence effective management of schools. The researchers find this very interesting, hence the need to explore the influence some demographic variables of secondary school principals on effective management of secondary schools. Demographic variables refer to the statistical characteristics of the human population (such as age, gender, school location and income) used especially in the distribution of sample use with inferential statistics. Nwosu (2016) stated that demographic variables constitute qualities such as age, sex, income, work experience, among others of a specific group of people. Towing along this line, this study sought to find out if demographic variables of principals can influence effective management of secondary school in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. However, the demographic variables in focus in this study are gender and educational qualification.

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationship between men and women, boys and girls. Gender means the socially and culturally constructed roles for men and women. While some scholars believe that male principals perform better in effective management of secondary school than their female counterparts (Uko, 2016, Ugwu, 2016), others argue that females are better managers than the males

(Akpan & Eno, 2016, Crossman & Crossman, 2018), Yet, some scholars believe that no difference exists in the performance of both male and female principals in management based on gender (Hemphil, Griffiths & Federickson, 2019). Following these arguments over which gender performs better, this study examined the influence of principals' gender on effective management of secondary school in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Onubulueze (2018) carried out research on the relationship between principals' demographic factors, and the performance of principals in the task areas of management of secondary education in Nsukka Education Zone and found significant relationship between principals' gender and performance in management, with female principals performing better than the male principals. Similarly, Matheri, Cheloti and Mulwa (2015) carried out a study on principals' gender and management effectiveness in secondary schools: Case of Mtito-Andei Division, Kenya and discovered a significant relationship between the principals' gender and effectiveness in management. Also, Anho, Okorugbo, Ojabunor and Anho (2022) examined gender variables and human resources management among male and female public secondary school principals in Delta State, Nigeria, and the findings revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female secondary school principals on administrative task areas. Akpan and Eno (2016) conducted a study on comparative analysis of administrative competencies of male and female secondary school principals in supervision in Akwa Ibom State and discovered that male principals were not significantly better in administrative competencies than their female counterparts in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Educational qualification may be another demographic variable that could influence effective school management. Nwosu (2016) defined educational qualification as the degrees obtained by an individual that certify the completion of specific academic programmes. Fabiyi and Ogunnyemi (2015) observed that good qualification is a necessary prerequisite for effective secondary school management. Khan (2016) argued that principals with higher educational qualifications are more efficient than those with lower educational qualifications. On the contrary, Ogbaji and Oti (2016) posit that educational qualification of principals has no impact on their job performance. Based on the disagreement on the impact of

educational qualification on principals' effective school management, this study sought to find out the influence of principals' educational qualification on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Owan, Osim, Ibor and Asuquo (2022) conducted research on principals' demographic qualities and the misuse of school material capital in secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria, and found that principals who possessed Bachelors and Masters of Education degrees were efficient managers. Similarly, Offem and Otun (2021) carried out a study to determine the effect of gender and educational qualification on the administrative effectiveness of librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria and discovered that educational qualification significantly influenced administrative effectiveness. Also, Luga (2016) conducted a study on demographic variables as predictors of effective secondary school supervisory practices in the North-Central states of Nigeria, and revealed that educational qualification, gender, experience, professional qualification and age to a little extent predict supervisors' effective secondary school supervisory practices.

Effective school management entails the ability to empower every important component of the school, both internally and externally, and have a transparent and accountable management system in order to achieve school goals effectively and efficiently. Ogbonnaya (2018) asserted that effective school management is concerned with the smooth functioning of the school as a whole by the principals. Thus, the unsatisfactory performance often experienced in secondary schools in Taraba State (Jalingo Education Zone inclusive) may be attributable to lack of effective management of secondary schools by the principals. Also, since it has been posited by scholars that effective management of schools may be mediated by the demographic characteristics of the secondary school principals, there is need to investigate these claims with a view to establishing the facts. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the influence of principals' demographic variables on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, the role of secondary school principals in the actualization of national and global goals is increasingly becoming significant with much emphasis on educational activities in schools, made up of daily

administrative and academic duties. These managerial duties coupled with academic duties might exact pressure on the adaptive capacities of the principals thereby compounding their job description. Also, the researchers have observed that the environment in which secondary school principals in Jalingo Education Zone operate, is filled with challenging situations which seem stressful to their well-being. There are noticeable conditions of Shortage of Professional academic teachers, inadequate instructional materials, inadequate funding, overcrowded offices and classrooms, poor quality of education, teacher's nonchalant attitude to work among others and the challenges have been linked to poor planning of education.

Grappling with the ugly scenario as painted above, the principals may find it difficult to carry out their managerial roles effectively. Ineffective school management practices often manifest in the area of poor maintenance of school facilities, communication, evaluation of students' performance, poor maintenance of school records, poor performance of supervisory role, involvement of teachers in decision making, poor motivation of staff and students, and poor community relation skill, among others. There is serious public outcry by parents and stakeholders regarding principals' administrative styles and principals are being accused of ineffectiveness in management of secondary schools. The researchers have also observed that one of the major challenges of secondary school education in Taraba State and Jalingo Education Zone in particular is the continues poor academic performance of students which may be associated with principal's ineffectiveness in managing secondary schools.

However, some scholars have posited that male principals are more effective in handling schools than their female counterparts. Others have argued that principals with higher educational qualification manage schools better than those with lower qualifications. Thus, in as much as Education Stakeholders have observed that secondary schools in Taraba State (Jalingo Education Zone inclusive) are not being properly managed, so whichever way this argument tilts, there is the need to beam the searchlight on this issue. The researchers are therefore passionate about finding out if principals' gender and educational qualification actually influence their ability to effectively manage secondary schools. This study therefore sought to investigate influence of principals'

demographic variables gender and educational qualification on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate influence of principals' demographic variables on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- I. Determine the influence of principals' gender on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.
- II. Determine the influence of principals' educational qualification on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- I. What is the influence of principals' gender on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?
- II. What is the influence of principals' educational qualification on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?

Research Hypotheses

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

Ho₁: Principals' gender has no significant influence on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Ho₂: Principals' educational qualification has no significant influence on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The target population of the study consisted of seven Thousand, one hundred and twenty-one (7,121) teachers in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. The sample size comprised a total of 988 teachers made up of, 590 males and 398 females in fifty- three (53) selected Secondary Schools. They were selected using Purposive Sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled, "Demographic variables and school effectiveness

questionnaire (DVSEQ)" The instrument was made on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD). They were scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively for positive items, and 1, 2, 3, and 4 for negative items. Demographic data of the Secondary Schools Principals were used to collect data for gender and educational, qualification. The instrument was validated by two experts in Educational Administration and Planning and one in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through Cronbach alpha method, with a reliability coefficient of 0.793. Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation in answering the research questions. The decision rule for the research questions was 2.50. The hypotheses were analyzed using inferential statistics of independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

The data collected for the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-test was used to test hypothesis 1, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypothesis 2. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Research Question One: What is the influence of principals' gender on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation ratings of responses on influence of principal's gender on effective management of secondary schools

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
Male	590	3.39	0.22	0.009
Female	398	3.42	0.17	0.008

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation ratings of responses on the influence of principals' gender on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. The result shows that female principals are more effective in management of secondary schools with mean of 3.42 and standard deviation of 0.17, while male principals have mean of

3.39 and standard deviation of 0.22. The mean difference of 0.03 shows that female principals are more effective in management of secondary schools than male principals. The result implies that principal's gender has influence on effective management of secondary schools.

Research Question two: What is the influence of principal's educational qualification on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State?

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation ratings of responses on influence of principal's educational qualification on effective management of secondary schools

Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
First Degree	919	3.39	0.31	.007
Masters	61	3.35	0.56	.019
PhD	8	3.68	0.18	.037

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation ratings of responses on the influence of principal's educational qualification on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. The result shows that principals with PhD as highest educational qualification are more effective in management of secondary schools with mean of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.18, while principals with Masters degree have mean of 3.35 and standard deviation of 0.56. The result also shows that principals with first degree as the highest qualification are least effective in the management of secondary schools with a mean of 3.39 and standard deviation of 0.31. The mean differences show that principals with PhD are more effective in management of secondary schools. The result implies that principal's educational qualification has influence on effective management of secondary schools.

Hypothesis One: Principals' gender has no significant influence on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Result of independent-samples t-test in Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on influence of gender on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State ($t(986) = -2.250$, $p = 0.025$). Thus, the null hypothesis which

states that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State is rejected. This implies that Principals' Gender difference has significant influence on effective management of secondary

schools.

Hypothesis two: Principals' educational qualification has no significant influence on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Table 3. Independent samples t-test of significance of difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on effective management of secondary schools

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Equal variances assumed		2.345	.126	-2.250	986	.025	-.02931
Equal variances not assumed				-2.367	970.199	.018	-.02931

Table 4. Analysis of variance (anova) of difference between principals' educational qualification and effective management of secondary schools

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.812	2	.406	3.807	.023
Within Groups	105.093	985	.107		
Total	105.905	987			

Analysis of variance in Table 4 revealed that there is significant difference between the mean ratings of principals with first degree, master's degree and PhD on influence of educational qualification on effective management of secondary schools ($F = 3.807$, $df = 987$, $p = 0.023$). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference among the mean ratings of principals with first degree, masters degree and PhD on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State is rejected. This implies that difference in Principals' Educational Qualification significantly influence effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education zone.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings of the study are discussed in this section based on the research objectives.

The findings of the study with regard to research question one on influence of principals' gender on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo

Education Zone, Taraba State, revealed that principals' gender difference has influence on effective management of secondary schools. Also, the corresponding hypothesis discovered that principals' gender difference significantly influence effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. This finding is in agreement with Onubulueze (2018) whose study revealed a positive relationship between principals' gender and their performance in management service in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State. The study also agrees with Matheri, Cheloti and Mulwa (2015) whose results of the data analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between principals' gender and effectiveness in school management in Mito-Ande Division, Kenya. The finding however is contrary to Anho, Okorugbo, Ojabunor and Anho (2022) whose findings showed that there was no significant difference between male and female secondary school principals on administrative task areas in Delta State. The finding is also in disagreement with Akpa and Eno (2016) whose results showed that male principals were not significantly better in administrative competencies than their female counterparts in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

The findings of the study with regard to research question two on influence of principals' educational qualification on effective management of Secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, indicates that principals' educational qualification has influence on effective management of secondary schools. Also, the corresponding research hypothesis revealed that

principals' educational qualification difference significantly influences effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone. The finding concurs with that of Owan, Osim, Ibor and Asuquo (2022) whose study, revealed that there are significant differences in management by principals of different professional qualifications. The finding further resonates with that of Offem and Otun (2021) who carried out a study to determine the effect of gender and educational qualification on the administrative effectiveness of librarians in federal universities in South-South Nigeria and discovered that graduate qualification had significant influence on administrative effectiveness. The finding however disagrees with the position of Ogbaji and Oti (2016), that educational qualification of principals has no impact on their job performance

CONCLUSION

The study examined the influence of principal's demographic variables on effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that principals' demographic variables significantly influence effective management of secondary school in Jalingo Education, Zone Taraba State. It therefore, follows that differences in principals' gender and educational qualification significantly influence effective management of secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The government should continue to organize regular training for both male and female principals to make them imbibe more managerial skills for optimal performance in administration.
2. The state government through the Post Primary Management Board (PPSMB) should consider to appoint experienced teachers into the position of principals, based on their highest educational qualification, such as Ph.D and Masters degree.

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