

PRINCIPALS' PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN JALINGO EDUCATION ZONE, TARABA STATE, NIGERIA.

Mishelia Helen Jonathan (Ph. D)

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo,
Nigeria. E-mail: jonathanmishelia@gmail.com phone: 08167294393

Nami Bissa Timothy

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo,
Nigeria. E-mail: bissatimothy01@gmail.com Phone: 08164732734

Oliver Philip

Public Administration Department College of Agriculture, Science, and Technology, Jalingo,
Taraba State, Nigeria. E-mail: oliverphilip30@gmail.com.

Abstract

The study examined the Principals' Personal characteristics and Management of students' discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 5,797 teachers in secondary schools in Jalingo Education zone Taraba state. A stratified random sampling was used. The sample size of 380 teachers was obtained using Taro Yamane (1967). The instrument adopted for the collection of data was a questionnaire Title "Principals' Personal Characteristics and students discipline Questionnaire (PPCSDQ)". The instrument was subjected to validation by 3 experts in faculty of Education. Taraba state University, Jalingo. The reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method and the internal consistency was high, as evidenced by this coefficient. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentages were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistical analysis. The results were computed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings of the study revealed that there is significant influence of principals' administrative experience in managing student discipline effectively in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommended that Schools should prioritize candidates with relevant qualifications and extensive administrative experience when selecting principals. This will ensure that the selected individuals have the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively handle disciplinary issues.

Keywords:- *Discipline, Management of Students' Discipline, Principals' Personal Characteristics, Administrative Experience, Educational Qualification.*

Introduction

Discipline is an essential part of any learning institution and is evident when a school becomes a peaceful and safe place for learners and all other stakeholders. Different authors have defined discipline in various ways. Discipline, according to Abubakar (2019), is the ability and willingness to do what one ought to do without external control. As a result, one can say that discipline is internally motivated within the individual and is dependent on the individual's state of mind. It is voluntary, and individual deliberately makes efforts to conform to an established code of conduct. However, Aguba (2019), while emphasizing, Douglas McGregor's theory X, maintained that discipline is externally induced in individuals who do not succumb to established rules and regulations out of personal volition but out of fear of punishment or sanction.

Management of students' discipline refers to the processes and strategies employed by educational authorities, particularly school administrators and teachers, to guide, regulate, and correct student behavior. It encompasses the establishment of rules, regulations, and consequences designed to maintain an orderly and conducive learning environment. According to Okoro (2019), the primary goal of discipline management is not merely to punish misbehavior but to foster self-control, responsibility, and respect for others among students. When implemented effectively, discipline management encourages positive behavior and reduces disruptions, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience. Discipline management in schools involves a variety of approaches, including preventive, corrective, and supportive strategies. Preventive measures focus on creating a school climate that minimizes opportunities for indiscipline by promoting positive relationships and clear expectations. As noted by Adewale and Adebayo (2020), preventive strategies may include teaching students social and emotional skills, setting clear behavioral expectations, and engaging students in the development of school rules. Such proactive approaches are essential in preventing the escalation of minor misbehaviors into serious disciplinary issues.

In Nigeria, Jalingo Education zone is inclusive, for instance, the ills and vices that go on in the society have their effects in schools. Students, teachers and even school managers are involved in one form of indiscipline or the other. Generally speaking, some of the causes of indiscipline among students are attributed to firstly Parental/home factor Most authors regard parents as of the greatest importance in creating a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere. It seems that the lack of parental involvement is the major cause of disciplinary problems in secondary schools. Alidzulwi (2016), points out that many parents are not involved in the education of their children, causing poor results, high dropout rates, and the absence of discipline in schools. Secondly Political, social and economic factor Rossouw (2015) claims that educators have reported that they are uncertain, confused and afraid of infringing upon learners' rights, and of being accused of misconduct. Saying that the over-emphasis placed on learners' rights may cause "I don't-care attitude" and lack of regard for the educators' role in the classroom. This may cause some learners not to strive to excel. Instead, they try to influence their classmates negatively to exhibit the same lack of discipline. Thirdly school environment Bazemore (2017) posits that safe and supportive school environments depend on students, staff and parents demonstrating mutual respect. In other words, all members of the school community students, staff and parents must

know and understand the standards of behaviour which all students are expected to live up to and the consequences if these standards are not met. More also the Curriculum the relevance of the curriculum to learners' needs also influences discipline at school.

The personal characteristics of the school principal, to a large extent, determine if he or she will incorporate followers into leadership. If a principal believes and trusts his followers, he will give power to his Subordinate, and this will promote effectiveness in performing various leadership tasks as well as reduce the work burden of the principal (Stewart, 2016). School principals should ensure the smooth running of the school and maintain high standards of student discipline. It is the role of the school principals to establish a connection with the immediate community for better coexistence. School principals must also strive to integrate well-behaved students into society. The personal characteristics of school principals significantly determine the students' discipline in the school. Schools must come up with strategies to prevent and stop students' indiscipline acts such as drug abuse, use of unacceptable language in school, theft, pornography, and radicalization, among others. Principal personal characteristics are very essential in maintaining students' discipline as well as motivating them to work harder to produce good academic outcomes. A school with good discipline is one whose students adhere to the rules and regulations of the school. In such a school, few or no indiscipline cases are reported, and students are motivated to do what is right even with little or no teacher supervision. In the The administrative experience of principals according to the South African Educational Labour Relations (2017), for one to become a principal, he must have a minimum of ten years' experience in his teaching profession. Administrative experience, according to Olembo (2016), offers superior knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would enable them to discharge their instructional duties effectively. Beach and Judy (2019) referred to the skills needed by the supervisor as a "skill mix" of technical skills, managerial skills, and human relations skills. Okumbe (2019) agrees with Beach and Judy (2019) and identifies three basic supervisory skills that a supervisor should be trained in and develop for their administrative experience. These include technical, interpersonal, and conceptual. Technical skills enable a supervisor to attain good knowledge of every operation or process under control to eliminate faults, wastage, or dangerous practices that may lead to disciplinary cases. This practical and theoretical knowledge helps the principal command respect from his or her subordinates. Human relations skills refer to one's ability to understand teachers and students and to interact effectively with them. This skill helps the school principal act both officially and humanely. Conceptual skills enable the principal to acquire, analyze, and interpret information in a logical manner for effective decision-making to avoid disciplinary issues. It refers to the capability to act in accordance with the laid-down objectives.

Similarly, the principal's educational qualifications are influential in students' discipline. The issue of a principal's educational qualification has been discussed for some time. Scholars argued that qualified principals are required for effective learning. Ngada and Fajonyomi (2017) emphasized that the success or failure of any educational program rests majorly on the adequate availability of qualified (professional), competent, and dedicated principals and teachers. The principal to direct teachers to teach is not derived only from one's academic background but is based upon outstanding pedagogical skill acquired. According to Olutola (2018), aside from students, principals and teachers are the largest most crucial input of an education system. The qualification of principals thus exerts great influence on the quality of educational output. The

quality of the teachers is an essential indicator in the measurement of the efficiency of the school system. Olutola (2018) found out that there is a positive relationship between principal's qualifications and students' academic achievement.

In a study by Adebayo, (2020) - "Impact of Principal's Administrative Experience on Student Discipline in Secondary Schools" This study sought to investigate the relationship between the administrative experience of secondary school principals and the management of student discipline. The research used a descriptive survey design, targeting 50 secondary schools in Lagos, Nigeria. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to principals, teachers, and students, with a sample size of 300 respondents. The study found that principals with more administrative experience were better equipped to manage student discipline. Experienced principals tended to apply preventive disciplinary strategies, such as fostering a positive school culture and setting clear rules, while less experienced principals were more reactive, using punishment as a primary strategy.

More also, in a study by Akinola and Omole, (2018) *The Influence of Principals' Qualifications on Students' Discipline in Nigerian Secondary Schools*. This study aimed to investigate how principals' academic and professional qualifications impact the effectiveness of managing student discipline in secondary schools. The researchers employed a survey design, collecting data from 120 principals across six states in Nigeria. Questionnaires were used to assess principals' qualifications and their effectiveness in managing student discipline. The study found a significant positive relationship between higher educational qualifications of principals and effective student discipline management. Principals with postgraduate degrees in education and leadership demonstrated better conflict resolution and disciplinary strategies.

Over the years, researchers have focused on other factors that contribute to ineffective teacher classroom management, while ignoring the impact of principals' personal characteristics on discipline. It is background of the literature gap that this study intends to cover.

Statement of Problem

It has been realized that students' indiscipline in secondary schools has become a cankerworm that has eaten too deeply into the students' moral upbringing. Students have become uncontrollable and highly disrespectful to themselves, teachers, school administrators, parents, and the society at large. Students portray different types of indiscipline behavior, among which are the following acts: boycotting of lessons, watching and practicing pornography, lying, violence, dishonesty, being disobedient to teachers, prefects, and school administration, rapping, alcohol consumption, confronting and stabbing teachers in schools, vandalism, lateness to school, insulting or assaulting, stealing, and rioting, among others.

The extent to which students' indiscipline behaviors in school are correlated with these influences is unknown, as is whether these influences come from their peer group's perspectives, their parents' socioeconomic achievements, their parent's attitude, their teacher's attitude, school culture, climate, and environment; and the magnitude of disorder it causes in school, as well as what strategies should be implemented to curb this deviant behavior. The achievement of the

goals of secondary school education largely depends on the positive disposition of students in their academic work and the instructional performance of teachers. Student discipline in schools has long been a source of concern for educational stakeholders worldwide. School principal, state Government through post primary Board has played an important role in reducing student indiscipline by formulating policies and strategies to prevent and stop student indiscipline but all these efforts seem not to have yielded fruit. There is therefore an obvious need for this research in the quest of finding a solution to the menace seeks to determine whether a principal's personal characteristics are capable of managing student discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to examine principals' personal characteristics and management of students' discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State. Specifically, the study sought to examine:

- i. Principals' administrative experience and management of students' discipline in secondary schools in the Jalingo education zone;
- ii. Principals' Educational qualification and management of students' discipline in secondary schools in the Jalingo Education Zone;

Hypotheses

- I. Principals' administrative experience does not significantly relate to management of students' discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo education Zone.
- II. Principals' Educational qualification does not significantly relate to management of students' discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design in carrying out the study on impact of principals' personal characteristics and management of students discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba state. The population of the study consisted of 5,797 teachers in secondary schools in Jalingo Education zone. A stratified random sampling was used. The sample size of 380 teachers was obtained using Taro Yamane (1967). The instrument adopted for the collection of data was a questionnaire Title "Principals' Personal Characteristics and students discipline Questionnaire (PPCSDQ)". A 16 items instrument on four (4) point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE) was designed to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was subjected to scrutiny by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundation, Taraba State University, Jalingo. The reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method and the internal consistency was high, as evidenced by this coefficient. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentages were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistical analysis. The results were computed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Data presentation, Result and Discussion.**Table 1: Principals' Administrative Experience and Management of Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools in the Jalingo Education Zone.**

S/No.	Item Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1.	Principals' with years of experience are knowledgeable in handling students' misbehaviour which influence discipline.	370	3.40	0.77	HE
2.	An experienced principal knows how well to organize his/her school to have a discipline students	370	3.09	0.63	HE
3.	Principals' experience comes with good attitude for mentorship which influences students' discipline.	370	3.18	0.72	HE
4.	Administrative experience comes with technical skills to eliminate faults wastage or dangerous practices that may lead to disciplinary cases	370	3.06	0.71	HE
5.	Experience comes with relation skills which gives the principal ability to understand the students and interact effectively with them.	370	3.33	0.69	HE
6.	Conceptual skills enable principal to acquire, analyze and interpret information in a logical manner for effective decision making to avoid disciplinary issues.	370	3.17	0.76	HE
7.	Principals' administrative experience commands him respect which influence students discipline.	370	3.24	0.67	HE
8.	Principals with wide experience impact more discipline in students' than fresher's.	370	3.09	0.83	HE
Grand Mean/Standard Deviation			3.00	0.72	HE

Source: Field 2023

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of the rated items on the Principals' administrative experience and management of students discipline in secondary schools in the Jalingo education zone. All mean ratings are above the cutoff point of 2.50. The cluster has a mean of 3.00 with a standard deviation of 0.72. The analysis of research question 1 on table 1 revealed that the Principals' administrative experience and management of students discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo education zone. This implies an overwhelming agreement by the respondents that all the items in the table 1 above are significant in managing student discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo education zone.

Table 2: Principals' Educational Qualification and Management of Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools in the Jalingo Education Zone

S/N	Item Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
9.	The quality of principal in terms qualification possess positive influence on school effectiveness.	370	3.42	0.72	HE
10.	A qualified principal becomes a role model to students since he/she is competent which in turns influence discipline.	370	3.03	0.61	HE
11.	Qualification of a principal enables him demonstrate high standards in terms of decision making which helps avoid disciplinary issues.	370	3.07	0.73	HE
12.	A principal with reputable qualification impact reasonable disciplinary measures in schools.	370	3.04	0.73	HE
13.	Principals' qualification is major for effective curriculum implementation which helps managing students discipline.	370	3.39	0.78	HE
14.	Principals' that passed through Education courses or teachers training institute have better knowledge in maintaining discipline in students.	370	3.04	0.82	HE
15.	A principal with good qualification is a problem solver, a good planner and a developer, these qualities helps to reduce student discipline since most of their problems are solved.	370	3.08	0.78	HE

16.	A qualified principal always carries his students along take them like friends which can influence their discipline	370	3.01	0.85	HE
Grand Mean/Standard Deviation			3.00	0.75	HE

Source: Field, 2023

Table 3 shows mean scores of the participants that responded on the items which all was above the benchmark of 2.50. The overall mean score shows the cluster has a mean of 3.00, with standard deviation of 0.75; this implies that principals' qualification have significant influence on management of students' discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone.

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests text analysis of the influence of principals' administrative experience and management of students discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	54.355 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	48.413	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.573	1	.032
N of Valid Cases	370		

From table 3, it can be observed that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 54.355 with a significance value of 0.000, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Principals' administrative experience does significantly influence management of students' discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo education Zone at 5% level of significance.

Table: 4 Chi-Square Tests Chi-Square Tests text analysis of the influence of principals' educational qualification and management of students discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo Education Zone, Taraba State.

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	81.575 ^a	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	60.394	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	37.203	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	380		

From table 4, it can be observed that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 81.575 with a significance value of 0.000, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that Principals' educational qualification does significantly influence management of students' discipline in secondary schools in Jalingo education Zone at 5% level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding revealed that principals' administrative experience plays a crucial role in managing student discipline effectively in schools. Principals with more experience are often better equipped to handle disciplinary challenges, leading to improved student outcomes and a more positive school environment. This is supported by findings that show effective leadership directly influences students' behavior, attendance, and overall academic performance. Experienced principals are typically more adept at implementing discipline policies that balance structure with support, which helps in fostering a conducive learning atmosphere. They employ a range of disciplinary strategies, including positive reinforcement, restorative justice, and clear communication of expectations, which have been shown to significantly reduce behavioral issues among students. Furthermore, experienced principals are more likely to retain high-quality teachers, which are associated with better discipline and academic achievement in schools (Wallace Foundation, 2021). In contrast, schools with less experienced principals, particularly in high-poverty areas, often struggle with maintaining discipline. This is partly because novice leaders may lack the confidence or strategies to handle complex behavioral issues, resulting in higher rates of suspension or other exclusionary practices that negatively impact students (Bello, Bukar, & Ibi, 2016). Research also suggests that principals who actively engage with students, teachers, and the wider school community in a collaborative approach to discipline management are more successful in creating a supportive and disciplined environment (Aji, 2015). According to Adebayo, (2020) he found that principals with more administrative experience were better equipped to manage student discipline. Experienced principals tended to apply preventive disciplinary strategies, such as fostering a positive school culture and setting clear rules, while less experienced principals were more reactive, using punishment as a primary strategy.

The second findings revealed that the educational background and training of principals significantly influence how they manage student behavior. The findings indicated that all mean scores were above the cutoff point, suggesting a strong consensus among respondents regarding the positive effect of principals' qualifications on discipline management. Research consistently demonstrates that principals with higher educational qualifications and specialized training in educational leadership are better equipped to handle disciplinary issues effectively. For instance, principals with advanced degrees often possess a deeper understanding of educational policies, student psychology, and conflict resolution strategies, which are critical for managing discipline in diverse school environments (Wallace Foundation, 2021). This knowledge enables them to implement evidence-based practices that foster a positive school climate and reduce behavioral problems among students. Moreover, principals with qualifications in educational leadership are more likely to engage in continuous professional development, keeping them informed about the latest trends and research in discipline management. This commitment to learning allows them to adapt their approaches and employ innovative strategies tailored to their school's specific needs. Studies suggest that effective principals utilize data-driven decision-making to address

disciplinary challenges, ensuring that their interventions are appropriate and effective (Bello, Bukar, & Ibi, 2016). Their academic credentials, qualified principals tend to build stronger relationships with students, teachers, and parents, which is crucial for effective discipline management. Akinola and Omole, (2018), found a significant positive relationship between educational qualifications of principals and effective student discipline management. Principals with postgraduate degrees in education and leadership demonstrated better conflict resolution and disciplinary strategies.

This collaborative approach can mitigate behavioral issues and foster a culture of accountability among students. The evidence supports the notion that principals' educational qualifications play a vital role in shaping their ability to manage student discipline effectively. As educational leaders continue to face evolving challenges in today's schools, investing in their professional development and qualifications will be essential for promoting positive student behavior and academic success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the importance of principals' personal characteristics in effectively managing students' discipline. Administrative experience, and educational qualification all play a significant role in how principals approach disciplinary issues and implement effective strategies. Schools should consider these factors when selecting and training principals to ensure they have the necessary skills and qualities to handle disciplinary matters successfully. Further research is needed to explore these relationships in different educational contexts and to identify additional factors that may influence effective discipline management.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made:

- i. Schools should prioritize candidates with relevant qualifications and extensive administrative experience when selecting principals. This will ensure that the selected individuals have the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively handle disciplinary issues.
- ii. Training programs for principals should include modules specifically focused on developing leadership skills related to disciplinary practices. These programs should equip principals with strategies for addressing misbehavior, implementing effective disciplinary measures, and building positive relationships with students.

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