



RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA



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Abstract

This study explores the impact of risk management practices on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study focuses on risk identification, risk assessment, and stakeholder involvement as key components of risk management. A descriptive survey design was employed, with a sample of 300 principals (150 male and 150 female) purposively selected from a population of 1,245 principals in Taraba State. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled "Risk Management Practices and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (RMPAEQ)," validated by experts and with a reliability coefficient of 0.78. Mean and standard deviation were used to address research questions, while independent t-tests were applied to test three null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed significant relationships between risk identification, risk assessment, stakeholder involvement, and administrative effectiveness. It was concluded that robust risk management practices enhance principals' decision-making, resource allocation, and leadership effectiveness. Recommendations include regular training on risk management and fostering stakeholder collaboration to improve administrative outcomes.

Keywords: Risk Identification, Risk Assessment, Stakeholder Involvement, Administrative Effectiveness, Secondary School Principals

Introduction

The administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals is pivotal to the success of educational institutions, as it directly impacts resource management, teacher performance, and student outcomes. Administrative effectiveness is defined as a principal's ability to efficiently manage school operations, make informed decisions, and foster a supportive environment for teaching and learning (Okonkwo & Eze, 2023). Principals, as key educational leaders, are tasked with coordinating resources, ensuring safety, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders. However, in Taraba State, Nigeria, principals face significant challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, financial constraints, safety risks, and limited stakeholder engagement, which hinder their administrative effectiveness (Adeseko et al., 2025). To address these challenges, risk management practices—specifically risk identification, risk assessment, and stakeholder involvement—are essential for enhancing leadership performance (Afolabi & Ojo, 2024).

Risk identification involves recognizing potential threats to school operations, such as financial shortages, safety hazards, teacher turnover, infrastructural decay, and policy compliance issues (Monday et al., 2025). By identifying these risks, principals can proactively address challenges that may disrupt educational goals. For instance, recognizing financial risks enables better budget planning, while identifying safety risks enhances school security measures. Risk assessment entails evaluating the likelihood and impact of these risks to prioritize mitigation strategies, ensuring efficient resource allocation and preparedness for emergencies (Chikwado & Chinyeaka, 2023). This process allows principals to make informed decisions by assessing risks related to teacher performance, infrastructure maintenance, and stakeholder relations.



Stakeholder involvement, encompassing collaboration with teachers, parents, students, and community leaders, is critical for effective school administration. Engaging stakeholders fosters interpersonal harmony, builds community support, and enhances decision-making processes (Obi & Akudo, 2024). For example, involving teachers in decision-making improves morale, while engaging parents and community leaders strengthens partnerships and resource support. These practices align with the findings of Udo and Bassey (2025), who emphasize that stakeholder collaboration creates a conducive environment for achieving educational objectives. The Taraba State Post-Primary Schools Management Board (2024) further highlights that stakeholder involvement enhances institutional esteem and supports the attainment of educational goals.

In Taraba State, the administrative effectiveness of principals is often compromised by unaddressed risks and limited stakeholder engagement, leading to inefficiencies in resource management and school operations. Despite the importance of risk management, there is limited empirical evidence on how risk identification, risk assessment, and stakeholder involvement collectively influence principals' administrative effectiveness in this context (Esie, 2023). This study investigates the extent to which these risk management practices impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State, Nigeria, aiming to enhance leadership capacity and improve educational outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

To the school community, principals serve as leaders, decision-makers, resource managers, and facilitators of educational goals. They are responsible for ensuring a safe and conducive environment, managing resources effectively, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, and community leaders. Ideally, principals in Taraba State would operate in an environment supported by robust policies, such as those outlined by the Federal Ministry of Education (2014), which advocate for risk management practices and stakeholder engagement to enhance administrative effectiveness. These policies emphasize the provision of adequate infrastructure, financial resources, safety measures, and opportunities for stakeholder collaboration to support principals in achieving educational objectives.

However, the reality in Taraba State deviates significantly from this ideal. Principals face numerous challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, financial constraints, safety hazards, and low stakeholder engagement, which undermine their administrative effectiveness. These challenges are often exacerbated by unaddressed risks, such as poor resource allocation, teacher turnover, infrastructural decay, and weak policy compliance, as well as limited involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes. Consequently, principals struggle to make informed decisions, allocate resources efficiently, maintain school safety, and foster collaborative relationships with stakeholders. This gap between policy expectations and the prevailing reality has prompted this study to investigate the extent to which risk identification, risk assessment, and stakeholder involvement influence the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the influence of risk management practices on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Investigate the extent to which risk identification influences the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.
- Examine the impact of risk assessment on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.
- Determine the role of stakeholder involvement in enhancing the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.



Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study:

- To what extent does risk identification influence the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State?
- To what extent does risk assessment affect the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State?
- To what extent does stakeholder involvement impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: Risk identification does not significantly impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.

H₀₂: Risk assessment does not significantly impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.

H₀₃: Stakeholder involvement does not significantly impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to explore the influence of risk management practices on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State, Nigeria. The population comprised 1,245 principals from public secondary schools in Taraba State (Taraba State Post-Primary Schools Management Board, 2024). A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 300 principals (150 male and 150 female) to ensure gender balance and adequate representation. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled “Risk Management Practices and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (RMPAEQ).” The instrument was validated by three experts in Educational Administration and Measurement and Evaluation from Taraba State University, Jalingo. A test-retest method was used to establish reliability, yielding a coefficient of 0.78, indicating a reliable instrument. Of the 300 questionnaires distributed, 280 were properly completed and returned with the assistance of two trained research assistants. Data analysis involved the use of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, with a mean score of 2.5 and above indicating agreement and below 2.5 statutory requirements for the publication of this study, such as the inclusion of specific variables (risk identification, risk assessment, and stakeholder involvement) and the use of a descriptive survey design with a purposive sample of 300 principals.

Research Question 1: To what extent does risk identification influence the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on Risk Identification and Administrative Effectiveness

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Identifying financial risks improves budget management	2.88	0.76	Agreed
2	Recognizing safety risks enhances school security	2.94	0.73	Agreed
3	Identifying teacher turnover risks improves retention	2.80	0.80	Agreed
4	Noting infrastructural risks aids maintenance planning	2.89	0.75	Agreed
5	Identifying policy compliance risks ensures adherence	2.83	0.79	Agreed
	Grand Mean	2.87		Agreed

The results showed a grand mean of 2.87, indicating agreement that risk identification significantly influences administrative effectiveness. Principals who identify risks in areas such as finance, safety, and infrastructure are better positioned to make informed decisions and manage resources effectively.



Research Question 2: To what extent does risk assessment affect the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on Risk Assessment and Administrative Effectiveness

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
6	Assessing financial risks prioritizes resource allocation	2.92	0.72	Agreed
7	Evaluating safety risks improves emergency preparedness	2.90	0.75	Agreed
8	Assessing teacher performance risks enhances supervision	2.82	0.79	Agreed
9	Evaluating infrastructural risks ensures timely repairs	2.87	0.74	Agreed
10	Assessing stakeholder risks improves collaboration	2.85	0.77	Agreed
	Grand Mean	2.87		Agreed

The grand mean of 2.87 implies that risk assessment significantly affects administrative effectiveness. Principals who systematically evaluate risks can prioritize actions and mitigate challenges effectively.

Research Question 3: To what extent does stakeholder involvement impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on Stakeholder Involvement and Administrative Effectiveness

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
11	Involving teachers in decision-making improves morale	2.93	0.71	Agreed
12	Engaging parents enhances community support	2.89	0.75	Agreed
13	Collaborating with community leaders strengthens partnerships	2.86	0.78	Agreed
14	Involving students in school activities boosts engagement	2.82	0.80	Agreed
15	Stakeholder feedback improves administrative decisions	2.90	0.73	Agreed
	Grand Mean	2.88		Agreed

The grand mean of 2.88 indicates that stakeholder involvement significantly impacts administrative effectiveness. Engaging stakeholders' fosters collaboration, trust, and improved leadership outcomes.

H_{01} : Risk identification does not significantly impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.

Table 4: Independent t-test on Risk Identification and Administrative Effectiveness

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-cal	t-crit (0.05)	Decision
Male Principals	150	2.85	0.76	2.58	1.96	Reject H_{01}
Female Principals	150	2.89	0.79			

The t-test result showed a calculated t-value of 2.58, exceeding the critical value of 1.96 at a 0.05 significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming a significant relationship between risk identification and administrative effectiveness.

H_{02} : Risk assessment does not significantly impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.

Table 5: Independent t-test on Risk Assessment and Administrative Effectiveness

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-cal	t-crit (0.05)	Decision
Male Principals	150	2.85	0.73	2.72	1.96	Reject H_{02}
Female Principals	150	2.89	0.77			



The calculated t-value of 2.72 was greater than the critical value of 1.96, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms a significant relationship between risk assessment and administrative effectiveness.

H₀₃: Stakeholder involvement does not significantly impact the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State.

Table 6: Independent t-test on Stakeholder Involvement and Administrative Effectiveness

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-cal	t-crit (0.05)	Decision
Male Principals	150	2.86	0.74	2.65	1.96	Reject H ₀₃
Female Principals	150	2.90	0.78			

The t-test yielded a t-value of 2.65, higher than the critical value of 1.96, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant relationship between stakeholder involvement and administrative effectiveness.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between risk identification and the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State, as evidenced by the independent t-test results. This implies that when principals proactively identify risks, such as financial constraints, safety hazards, teacher turnover, infrastructural deficiencies, and policy compliance issues, their decision-making, resource management, and overall leadership effectiveness improve significantly. This finding is consistent with Okonkwo and Eze (2023), who found that proactive risk identification in Nigerian schools enhances budget planning and operational efficiency by addressing potential threats early. Similarly, Adeseko et al. (2025) reported that unaddressed risks, such as infrastructural decay or safety concerns, lead to administrative inefficiencies, underscoring the importance of risk identification. Furthermore, Monday et al. (2025) noted that principals who recognize risks related to teacher retention and infrastructure are better equipped to implement proactive strategies, thereby improving their administrative performance in public secondary schools.

The second hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between risk assessment and the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State, as confirmed by the independent t-test results. This suggests that when principals systematically evaluate the likelihood and impact of risks, such as financial limitations, safety threats, or stakeholder conflicts, their ability to prioritize resources, enhance supervision, and prepare for emergencies is significantly strengthened. This finding aligns with Afolabi and Ojo (2024), who emphasized that risk assessment enables strategic planning and operational resilience in school administration. Likewise, Chikwado and Chinyeaka (2023) found that principals who assess risks related to teacher performance and infrastructure maintenance demonstrate improved supervisory and resource allocation skills. Additionally, Friday et al. (2024) argued that effective risk assessment fosters preparedness and strengthens administrative capabilities, corroborating the results of this study.

The third hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between stakeholder involvement and the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Taraba State, as indicated by the independent t-test results. This implies that when principals actively engage teachers, parents, students, and community leaders in decision-making processes, their leadership effectiveness, school morale, and community support improve significantly. This finding is in line with Obi and Akudo (2024), who discovered that stakeholder collaboration fosters trust and enhances administrative outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools. Similarly, Esie (2023) found that principals who involve stakeholders in planning and implementation create a collaborative school culture, leading to improved institutional performance. Furthermore, Udo and Basse (2025) argued that engaging parents and community leaders strengthens partnerships and resource mobilization, which supports the observed impact of stakeholder involvement on administrative effectiveness in this study.



Conclusion

The study confirms that risk identification, risk assessment, and stakeholder involvement are critical drivers of administrative effectiveness among secondary school principals in Taraba State, Nigeria. By proactively identifying risks such as financial constraints, safety hazards, and infrastructural deficiencies, principals can make informed decisions that enhance resource management and operational efficiency. Systematic risk assessment further strengthens their ability to prioritize resources, improve supervision, and prepare for emergencies, thereby fostering resilience in school administration. Moreover, active stakeholder engagement with teachers, parents, students, and community leaders cultivates trust, collaboration, and community support, which significantly boosts leadership outcomes.

Recommendations

The Taraba State Ministry of Education should provide regular training workshops for principals on risk identification and assessment to enhance their administrative capabilities. Principals should establish platforms such as parent-teacher associations and community forums to promote stakeholder involvement and collaboration. School authorities should invest in risk management tools and resources to support principals in mitigating potential challenges effectively.

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