Assessment of Principals' Human Relation and Leadership Skills During Ethno-Religious Crises among Secondary Schools in Southern Education Zone of Taraba State

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed principal's human relation and leadership skills during ethno-religious crises among secondary schools in south educational zone of Taraba State, Nigeria. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study. The population of this study consisted of 1,618 school personnel (109 principals and 1509 teachers). The sample was 324 academic personnel (22 principals and 302 teachers) in secondary schools in south educational zone of Taraba state; that was selected using purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire titled "Principals' Human Relation and Leadership Skills and Ethno-Religious Crises Questionnaire (PHRLSERCQ)" was used for data collection. The data obtained were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions; while Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study were that; there was no significant difference between the mean response scores of principals and teachers on principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises ($p = 0.845 > 0.05$). Also, there was no significant difference between the mean response scores of principals and teachers on principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises, with ($p = 0.511 > 0.05$). Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that principal's human relation skill was affected during ethno-religious crises to a moderate level; while principal's leadership skill was affected during ethno-religious crises to a high level. The study recommended among others; school principals should exhibit more human relation skills such as listening more, trusting teachers, encouraging teachers' participation in decision-making, attention to the individual differences and ensuring a safe work environment especially during ethnic religious crises.

Keywords: Human Relation Skill; Leadership Skill; Ethno-Religious Crises; Secondary Schools; South Education Zone of Taraba State

There is no gainsaying the fact today that Africa as a whole has been battling with the issue of democratic dividends. Onyemaechi (2014) posited that some of these democratic dividends may be positive; while others negative. It is the negative aspects of such dividends that have been posing challenges and instability in Africa in general and, specifically, in Nigeria. Nigeria as a nation, has encountered a myriad of complex problems involving different variables and stakeholders, as a result of which it has experienced economic downturn, political upheavals, coups d'état, civil war, and a deluge of ethno-religious conflicts (Williams, 2011). Ethno-religious conflicts and violence in particular has become a common feature in contemporary Nigerian society (Zakka, 2014).

Hence, one can describe ethno-religious crises as situations of heightened disagreement, intolerance and claim of superiority between two groups of people from different races or religions that lead to destruction of lives and properties, and create social unrest.

In Taraba state, there are over 80 ethnic groups, belonging to several religious sects. The state since creation has remained the most highly multi-ethnic above all the states in Nigeria. This has made the state volatile, grappling and trying to cope with the problem of ethnicity on one hand, and the problem of ethno-religious conflicts on the other (Madu & Ibrahim, 2013). This is because over the years, the phenomena of ethnicity and religious intolerance have led to incessant recurrence of ethno-religious conflicts, which polarized the state along that line especially in Wukari and Takum, where the majority of the indigenes are Christians, whose major occupation is farming while the minorities, Muslims are Hausa farmers and cattle rearing Fulani (Lukpata, Dada & Tanko, 2016). A quick review of how some of the crises actually started by Sa'as (2010) showed; one was started over the construction of a mosque at the Wukari Police Divisional Headquarters in 2010, while in 2013, one was started over disagreement among youths over a football match and a funeral rite of a Late Jukun traditional ruler third in command to the Aku Uka of Wukari gave vent to a violent confrontation among the indigenes and Muslims in Wukari. Within a short spell, the misunderstanding between the parties involved culminated in violent clashes that resulted in massive destruction of lives and property.

The combined effects of historical conflict and contention over land, boundary disputes and electoral contest have generated varying levels of violence in Taraba state generally. A number of local governments in the state are faced with one form of communal violence or the other, much of it associated with politics, others arising from land disputes, conflict between nomadic and sedentary farming communities, and chieftaincy disputes (Oruonye, 2016). With education not being at the centre of any ethno-religious crises in any of the region, it has actually suffered more than other institutions in the state. Schools are not spared from the destructive tendencies of those participating in the crises as they are easily burnt down or destroyed, while some unlucky school girls get raped during the crises, with unfortunate ones losing their lives in the process (Sa'as, 2010).

Thereby, further bringing de-stability to the education sector that is already suffering from poor government funding, low teachers' commitment and inadequate infrastructure. Thus, compounding the tasks of the school head. The school head, who is an educational manager, is tasked with the responsibility of running the school to achieve its set goals and objectives either at the beginning of a term or session. The school head, who in this study is the principal, constitute the core of the leadership team in schools.

Horng, Kalogrides and Loeb (2009) opined that effective principal influence a variety of school outcomes, including student achievement, through their recruitment and motivation of quality teachers, their ability to identify and articulate school vision and goals, their effective allocation of resources, and their development of organizational structures to support instruction and learning. The quality of a principal affects a range of school outcomes including teachers' satisfaction and their decisions about where to work, parents' perceptions about the schools their children attend, and, ultimately, the academic performance of the school (Mukherjee, 2013). The school principal's job is complex and multifaceted and for them to achieve the above schedules, they require mastering some management skills; which in this study include human relation and leadership skills for school effectiveness.

According to Katz (1974) the human relation skills require the ability to understand oneself, work with others and to understand how to motivate others. It is also called interpersonal skills. Devito (2004) defined interpersonal relationship as communication that takes place between two persons who have established a relationship, the people are in one way or the other connected. In schools, the principal must bank on building positive relationships with teachers as it is apparent in most schools that a bond of trust, respect, and mutual support must be present between the principal and the teachers, for school goals to be achieved (Van Beck, 2011). According to Adegoke (2011), interpersonal skills is a process of understanding human relationships with emphasis on social skills, listening skill, and problem-solving skill, self-analysis techniques of effective communication and resolving interpersonal conflicts. When ethno-religious crises occur, the principal must be able to have strong interpersonal skill to help his staff and pupils deal with any ethno-religious trauma, which may affect the school's output. More so, the principal with a sound human relation skill can help communicate in earnest with his staff and pupil on how to avoid some of these conflicts using a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills (Adegoke, 2011). The judicious or ineffective use of this skill by the principal can help or mar the safety of his school staff and students during these crises.

The leadership style of the principals is therefore demonstrated in his activities which make him to be recognizing as a leader of a group. Leaders have ability to influence and motivate others to achieve organizational goals, influences minds of subordinates who follow their leaders duly inspired by their personalities (Mohammed, 2013). The key to any effective leadership is the ability to lead effectively, coordinate a complex situation and show concern for human and materials resources available (Shamaki, 2015). Okafor in Shamaki (2015) noted that most of the success and failure in secondary school administration and other institutions depend largely on the influence of leaders on their subordinate. The fact that religious differences produce hatred and intolerance is never in doubt. Over the years, religious crises have been a reoccurring decimal and every effort to promote unity, peace and progress in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria has defied all known solutions (Onuegbu, 2012). The principal with a good leadership skill can thus help to foster unity among its staff and students through introduction of impactful teachings on ethno-religious crises. Hence, a school principal with a solid leadership skill can help guide staff and students through the threat posed by ethno-religious crises.

In addition, it is often obvious during ethno-religious crises that parents and school staff are often forced to relocate to seemingly safe places; moving with their children. The implication of this action is that some schools in the state will be over populated while some will be under populated. In addition to this, some of these people who moved are teachers, thereby moving automatically with their skills and services with its far-reaching consequences on the quality of education in the places they have left behind. As ethno-religious crises are not showing any sign of ending in the near future, the school principal's job has inadvertently been made herculean by this. The extent to which it affects the principals' job has birthed the desire for the researcher to consider the need for critical analysis on this phenomenon. Hence, this study was set up to assess how principals' human relation and leadership skills are affected by ethno-religious crises in south education zone of Taraba state.

1.1 Problem Statement

Education in Taraba state, as in other states in Nigeria, has evolved through a series of phases in attempting to achieve its socio economic and political significance in the country. The government has done a lot in improving the educational attainment of its citizens by building modern classrooms and equipping them since the beginning of the 3rd democratic republic (Madu & Ibrahim, 2013). But unfortunately, with the efforts of the state government and stakeholders in education such as the school principal and teachers, the progress of the school has been hampered by various ethno-religious crises in the state, most especially in the southern educational zone.

In looking at the effect of ethno-religious crises on education, Onwumah, (2014) lamented that it is a period that brings out worst instincts and impulses in man and also that social relationship is at its lowest level. This is so because no man would want to relate happily to a group of people who have or perceived to have either killed or maimed his relations. In fact, this by extension would lead to fear, hatred, acrimony and suspicion among staff and students. Furthermore, Onyemelukwe-Waziri, (2017) stated that many principals and their staff have been forced to flee for their safety to neighbouring states, which has attributed to a small percentage of the teacher shortage Nigeria is currently facing. Threats of more attacks have also forced other schools in proximity to close or parents to keep their children at home leaving principals and teachers with no children to teach. It is therefore important that principals and teachers teaching in crises affected areas feel valued and safe, particularly during times of conflict due to terrorism and ethno-religious differences (Onyemelukwe-Waziri, 2017). But unfortunately, that has not been so.

With this in mind, it is not difficult to understand why some principals and teachers in the Nigerian school system especially Taraba state are poorly motivated. No wonder, Oruonye (2014) discovered that the state has not recorded more than a 16 per cent pass in secondary school terminal examinations (such as the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and National Examination Council, NECO) in the last decade.

It is even a testament to the efforts and managerial skills exhibited by the school principal that some of these schools are still running because teaching in regions where active conflict is occurring can be extremely difficult and discouraging for educators. The fact that, school principals have shown bravery to continue to upheld the school and working towards achieving the schools' goals and objectives in the face of ethno-religious crises, where a lot of people would have deserted makes this paper apt for study.

As a result, the researcher set up this study to assess how principal's human relation and leadership skill are affected during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zone of Taraba State.

Specifically, the study sought to determine how;
1. Principal's human relation skills are affected during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zones of Taraba state.
2. Principal's leadership skills are affected during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zones of Taraba state.

1.2 Research Questions
The following research questions were raised to guide the study;
1. What is the level of principal's human relation skills during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zones of Taraba state?
2. What is the level of principal's leadership skills during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zones of Taraba state?

1.3 Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were formulated and tested on 0.05 level of significance;

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between the mean response of principals and teachers on principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zones of Taraba state.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between the mean response of principals and teachers on principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zones of Taraba state.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework of this study was based on Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership theory, which was propounded in 1972 and Edward Azar (1990)'s theory of Protracted Social Conflict. The choice of these theories was informed by the nature of interaction that exists between principals' managerial skills and ethno-religious crises variables of this study. The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership theory was propounded by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in 1972. The theory states that instead of using just one style, successful leaders/managers should change their leadership styles/managerial skills based on the maturity of the people they're leading and the details of the task. Using this theory, managers are expected to be more observant of their staff and ignore the task to be done but ensuring that the staff is in the right frame of mind, will help to get the work done faster, thus, helping to result in faster achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

Edward Azar (1990)'s theory of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) theorised that the deprivation of basic human needs is the major causes of social conflict which are often prolonged by the following; deterioration of physical security, institutional deformity, psychological ossification and increased dependency and clientcy. However, the struggles for the necessities of life, though visible in Nigeria, are not sufficient to explain the religious conflicts in Taraba state but they are majorly a contributor to why the situation continues to persist. However, one can say that within the contingency theories, there are helpful concepts for understanding the religious conflicts in Nigeria.

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria are definitely identity groups which view each other as out-groups in times of conflict. The reality of politics in modern Nigerian society is that even the police take side with the most powerful group instead of being neutral in carrying out their role of crime prevention and control. Consequent upon this, the police aid and abet well placed individual in the society who commit political violence and go unpunished while punishing others who commit the same crime but are less powerful members of the society, thereby increasing the problem of political and religious violence in the society. Based on the foregoing major assumptions of the theory, the perspective has been adopted as the theoretical guide on the study of ethno-religious crisis. It is this relationship to the independent variable, which has made this theory appropriate for this study because it helps to create a better understanding of the causes of religion crises.

2.1 Principal's Human Relation Skill and Ethno-Religious Crises

Empirical evidence has shown that during civil conflict, the biggest casualties and victims are civilians rather than the actual combatants fighting. Children, teachers, and schools are often legitimate targets in armed conflicts (Onyemelukwe-Waziri, 2017). The principal's human relationship skill is important since it helps people work together and socialize. This skill is sometimes called as people skills. Aja-Okorie (2011) stated that human relations approach in administration is an innovative practice born out of the need to fully attend to the welfare needs of the staff of the organization as a means of ensuring maximum cooperation from the staff for the purposes of realizing organizational goals. Therefore, this skill is highly needed by the principal to help motivate staff and students during ethno-religious crises towards the attainment of educational goals.

According to Katz (1974) the human relation skills require the ability to understand oneself, work with others and to understand how to motivate others. It is also called interpersonal skills. Devito (2004) defines interpersonal relationship as communication that takes place between two persons who have established a relationship, the people are in one way or the other connected. In schools, the principal must bank on building positive relationships with teachers as it is apparent in most schools that a bond of trust, respect, and mutual support must be present between the principal and the teachers, for school goals to be achieved (Van Beck, 2011). According to Adegoke (2011) interpersonal skills is a process of understanding human relationships with emphasis on social skills, listening skill, and problem-solving skill, self-analysis techniques of effective communication and resolving interpersonal conflicts.

When ethno-religious crises occur, the principal must be able to have strong interpersonal skill to help his staff and pupils deal with any ethno-religious trauma, which may affect the school's output. More so, the principal with a sound human relation skill can help communicate in earnest with his staff and pupil on how to avoid some of these conflicts using a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills (Adegoke, 2011). The judicious or ineffective use of this skill by the principal can help or mar the safety of his school staff and students during these crises. While ethno-religious crises may have many physical effects, it has also affected teachers from a psychological standpoint. Onyemelukwe-Waziri (2017) stated that the attacks teachers have experienced from Boko Haram or other conflicts has had psychological effects that are overcome by grief at the loss or maiming of their colleagues and students or are distracted by threats to colleagues.

Teachers have experienced issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, which include symptoms of anxiety, depression, panic attacks, and even avoidant behaviours. The principal's human relation skill can therefore be used to help them overcome these disorder or effects.

Gordon (1999) stated that human relations management skills include seven skills which are; communication, self-awareness, self-ability, motivation, confidence, self-detection and conflict management. However, according to Akumah (2008), the component human relations management involves seven components of communications, self-consciousness, self-acceptance, motivation, trust, self-disclosure and conflict management which is basic for the assessment of the principals' human relations in the current study. Akbar, Reza and Sayed (2015) noted that some theorists in the field of management believe that the success of each principal especially during crises depends on his/her work with others and this entail communication; self-awareness, self-acceptance, motivation, trust, self-disclosure and conflict management.

Rotemberg (1994) puts forth that the human relation skill belongs to those people who tend to have feeling for those who work with them. Human understanding towards receiving the same priority and understanding towards human relations, interaction, and communication is a basic material in educational leadership. This is aimed at maximizing human relations and communication within education domain including persuasive principles, public information management, effective communication strategy and personal effectiveness with staff and community, understanding the basics of human relations, strengthening emotional intelligence, motivating oneself, and using effective communication. In agreement, Marihot (2017) also opined those human relations are inseparable from communication. Good communication happens when there are good feedbacks, instruction and transparency. Mutual respect for one another and customer loyalty will grow a good relationship among human beings. Onchoke Oloko and Obonyo (2015) also asserted that human skills include the ability to delegate and develop subordinates and staff. It is also the ability to appraise effectively and to guide and control the behaviour of subordinates towards better quality performance.

In conclusion, human skills are seen as an expression of a principal's ability to work effectively in cooperation with other people. It requires the principal to understand, motivate and lead other people individually or in a group to achieve the school's goal and objectives especially in the face of adversaries. Therefore, since the principals play significant role in setting the human relations in every organization and human relation skill is more important and sensitive in the education system the application of human relations in the school management is vital since it is surely a kind of liability which determines the school members adjust from personal or social issues into achieving the expected results on the other (Ugwulashi & Archibong, 2012).

2.2 Principal's Leadership Skill and Ethno-Religious Crises
According to Ebukelo (2010), leadership is the ability to counsel, to manage conflicts, to inspire loyalty and to make subordinates remain on their jobs. In the words of Tilley and House (1969), leadership is a process where one person exerts social influence over the members of a group. Northouse in Mohammed (2013) defined leadership as a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

Contributing to the definition of leadership, Fafowora et al as cited by Egbefo (2015) see leadership as implying a purposeful direction of the affairs of the led. Some movement towards definite and defined goals which will be to the benefit of the society and such leadership is characterized by imaginativeness (i.e., possessing ideas which can be translated into reality) courage (to stand on principle) and by its decisions as to be able to provide moral, social and motivational climate for its followership and disciples. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that leadership is a process, leadership involves influence, leadership occurs within a group context and leadership involves goal attainment (Northouse as cited by Mohammed, 2013).

During ethno-religious crises, education is more than service delivery because it is a means of socialization and identity development through the transmission of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes across generations (Smith, 2010). Education may therefore be a driver of conflict (fuelling grievances, stereotypes, xenophobia and other antagonisms), but can also be a way of contributing to 'conflict transformation' and 'peace-building'. The Head of school occupies a position of great importance in the set-up of an educational institution. He/she is an educator with executive authority and ought to have a clear vision for the future of his school (Janeth, 2014). However, it is his/her leadership role that makes different from manager because a manager just plans, organizes and controls the resources available to him. Leaders have ability to influence and motivate others to achieve organizational goals, influences minds of subordinates who follow their leaders duly inspired by their personalities.

Soekarso (2011) stated that leadership is an art of persuading subordinates to complete their tasks with a confidence spirit while Yuki (2010) puts forward that leadership is a process to influence others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how the task can be done effectively and the process of facilitating individuals and groups efforts in achieving a common goal". To Mayiyo and Ashioya (2009), the quality of leadership makes the difference between the success and failure of a school. He further explains that research and inspection clarify the extent to which the quality of leadership is crucial to improvement. In highly effective schools, as well as schools which have reversed a trend of poor performance and declining achievement, it is the school head sets the pace, leading and motivating pupils and staff to perform to their highest potential. Conger and Kanungo (1998) in Onchoke, et. el. (2015) observed five characteristics that differentiate charismatic leaders from a non-charismatic one. They have vision, are able to articulate that vision, are willing to take risks to achieve that vision, are sensitive to both environmental constraints and follower needs and exhibit behaviours that are out of the ordinary.

The leadership style of the principals is therefore demonstrated in his activities which make him to be recognized as a leader of a group. Many people strongly believe that when there are good education plans, good school programme, adequate staff and facilities what is more important is a good administrative leadership to coordinate all these for the progress and achievement of the school (Ibukun, 1997). The key to any effective leadership is the ability to lead effectively, coordinate a complex situation and show concern for human and materials resources available (Shamaki, 2015). Okafor (1991) in Shamaki (2015) noted that most of the success and failure in secondary school administration and other institutions depend largely on the influence of leaders on their subordinate.

The fact that religious differences produce hatred and intolerance is never in doubt. Over the years, religious crises have been a reoccurring decimal and every effort to promote unity, peace and progress in a multi-ethnic and religious society like Nigeria has defied all known solutions (Onuegbu, 2012). The principal with a good leadership skill can thus help to foster unity among its staff and students through introduction of impactful teachings on ethno-religious crises. Although, some of the people who moved, when religious crises occur are teachers, thereby moving automatically with their skills and services. Some may be convinced to stay back, if the principal has an effective leadership skill.

Smith (2010) posited that education can be part of the problem to ethno-religious crises as well as part of the solution as policies and practice at all levels within the education system need to be analysed in terms of their potential to aggravate or ameliorate conflict. Leaders who are in a position to influence others must have the skills that will make them take advantage of that position (Schlechty, 1990). We can therefore conclude that school effectiveness would depend on the competence of a principal. To be competent as school leaders, principals need the requisite leadership skills. Generally, Akinola (2013) stated that many researchers have opined on the falling standard and quality of education in Nigeria but very little research work has been carried out on the leadership skills possessed by the principals and the relationship between possession of leadership skills and school effectiveness especially during crises.

Onyemelukwe-Waziri (2017) stated that attacks on schools by armed groups during an ethno-religious crisis has not only put children and teachers' lives at risk, has also deprived many children of an education. Due to the terrorist attacks against schools, many have resulted in closure and many children have dropped out entirely. Even if classes resume after an attack, it is hard to revert to normal as the quality of education can suffer when students and teachers are afraid to go back. The ability of the principal to get them (i.e. staff and students) back to school as a lot to do with kind of leadership skill exhibited by the school principal. The principal can therefore use his personality and actions as an enthusiastic, self-confident leader to influence his staff and students to behave in certain ways during ethno-religious crises.

3. METHODOLOGY

An ex-post facto research design was used to guide the study. The study area was South Education Zone of Taraba state, which is divided into; Wukari, Ibi, Donga, Ussa and Takum local government areas. The population of the study was 1,618 academic personnel. The sample size was 324 respondents (22 principals and 302 teachers) in secondary schools in south educational zone of Taraba state. The sample represents 20% of the entire population and selected using purposive sampling technique. The study used a questionnaire titled; *"Principals' Human Relation and Leadership Skills and Ethno-Religious Crises Questionnaire (PHRLSERCQ)".* The instrument was validated by three experts (one from the Department of Physical Sciences, Modibbo Adama University, Yola and two from the Department of Educational Foundation of Taraba State University, Jalingo) and trial tested using 4 principals and 20 teachers in four different secondary schools under Jalingo educational zone in Taraba state; with Cronbach Alpha revealing a reliability co-efficient of 0.87.

The instrument was administered and retrieved within two weeks and had a 95.4% valid instrument. The data gotten from the instrument were analysed using mean, standard deviation for answering the research questions while Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

4. RESULTS

The results are presented in the order of research questions 1 – 2 and hypotheses 1 – 2 from table 1 to table 4. For the research questions, the keys represent: n = no of respondents; X_P = Mean response of Principals; $S.D_P$ = Standard deviation of the responses of Principals; X_T = Mean response of Teachers; SD_T = Standard deviation of the responses of Teachers; X_G = Grand Mean response; D = Decision; HL = High Level and ML = Moderate Level.

4.1 Research Question 1: What is the level of principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education zones of Taraba state?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the level of principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education zones of Taraba state

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (n = 22)		Teachers (n = 291)		Total Respondents (n = 313)	
		X_P	$S.D_P$	X_T	$S.D_T$	X_G	D
1.	Understanding staff behaviour	3.64	1.09	3.10	1.40	3.37	ML
2.	Sensitivity to others	3.36	1.32	3.62	1.11	3.49	ML
3.	Treating staff fairly	3.41	1.09	3.24	1.17	3.32	ML
4.	Communicating warmly	3.18	1.25	3.15	1.37	3.17	ML
5.	Comfortably working with staff from different ethnicity	3.23	1.23	3.40	1.22	3.31	ML
6.	Helping to clarify misunderstanding among staff	3.55	0.80	3.56	0.92	3.56	HL
	Grand Mean	3.39	1.00	3.35	1.04	3.37	ML

Source: Field Work (2021)

Table 1 above show the responses of principals and teachers to research question 1. The table further reveals a grand mean response of 3.39 (ML) and standard deviation of 1.00 for principals; while the grand mean response for teachers was at 3.35 (ML) with a standard deviation of 1.04. The overall grand mean of 3.37; meant that the response on principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises in south education zone of Taraba state was at a moderate level.

4.2   Research Question 2: What is the level of principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zones of Taraba state?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the level of principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education Zones of Taraba state

S/N	ITEMS	Principals (n = 22) $\overline{X_P}$	S.D$_P$	Teachers (n = 291) $\overline{X_T}$	S.D$_T$	Total Respondents (n = 313) $\overline{X_G}$	D
7.	Motivating staff towards good work ethic	3.45	1.10	3.60	1.14	3.53	HL
8.	Causing positive ideological change	3.32	1.17	3.48	1.13	3.39	ML
9.	Decisive in crisis situations	3.59	1.18	3.43	1.15	3.51	HL
10.	Sound judgment in emergencies	4.09	0.81	3.36	1.14	3.73	HL
11.	Influencing other's ideas and attitudes	3.86	0.94	3.67	1.13	3.77	HL
12.	Mediating between groups in terms of staff conflict	3.46	1.22	3.31	1.31	3.38	ML
	Grand Mean	**3.63**	**0.83**	**3.48**	**1.07**	**3.55**	**HL**

Source:Field Work (2021)

Table 2 above show the responses of principals and teachers to research question 2. The table further reveals a grand mean response of 3.63 (HL) and standard deviation of 0.83 for principals; while the grand mean response for teachers was at 3.48 (ML) with a standard deviation of 1.07. The overall grand mean of 3.55; meant that the response on principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises in south education zone of Taraba state was at a high level.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

The null hypotheses were tested using Z-test Analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the following acronym stands as; n = number of respondents; X = Mean; S.D = Standard Deviation; df = degree of freedom; sig = level of significance and Z = Z-test.

Ho$_1$:   There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education zones of Taraba state.

Table 3: Z-test Analysis showing Mean Scores of Principals and Teachers on Principal's Human Relation Skill during Ethno-religious Crises

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Z	sig	Remark
Principals' Responses	22	3.39	1.00				
				311	0.195	0.845	Accept
Teachers' Responses	291	3.35	1.04				

Table 3 shows the z-test analysis of hypothesis 1. Since p = 0.845 > 0.05, Z = 0.195 the null hypothesis Ho_2, is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean response scores of principals and teachers on principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises in south educational zone of Taraba state.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of principals and teachers on principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises in Southern Education zones of Taraba state.

Table 4: Z-test Analysis showing Mean Scores of Principals and Teachers on Principal's Leadership Skill during Ethno-religious Crises

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Z	sig	Remark
Principals' Responses	22	3.63	0.83				
				311	0.658	0.901	Accept
Teachers' Responses	291	3.48	1.07				

Table 4 shows the z-test analysis of hypothesis 2. Since p = 0.511 > 0.05, Z = 0.66 the null hypothesis Ho_5, is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean response scores of principals and teachers on principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises in south educational zone of Taraba state.

4.4 Discussions

This study found that principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises in south educational zone of Taraba state was at a moderate level with a grand response mean of 3.37 for both principals and teachers. The finding concurred with Giami and Obiechina (2019); Akbar, Reza and Sayed (2015) and Janet (2014) findings that human relation skills of school principals are often at a moderate level in most secondary schools. Although, the finding disagrees with that of Kobra, Rajab and Sadegh (2013) who found out that most school principals possess an abundant human relation skill; as this is the main key to their successes in motivating staff and students towards achieving school goals and objectives.

Hypothesis 1, which was accepted, as there is no significant difference between the mean response scores of principals and teachers on principal's human relation skill during ethno-religious crises in south educational zone of Taraba state (p = 0.845 > 0.05). The finding was in line with Kobra, Rajab and Sadegh (2013) that there was significant relationship between human skills (listening skill, trusting in teachers, encouraging teachers participate in decision-making, attention to the individual differences, providing a favourable work place) and effectiveness of managers. The finding was also in agreement with Akbar, Reza and Sayed's (2015) finding that principals' human relations (the communication, self-consciousness, self-acceptance, motivation, trust, self-disclosure and conflict management) in the inferential analysis of t-test was larger than the mean (3) at α=0.05 level.

This study also found that principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises in south educational zone of Taraba state was at a high level with a grand response mean of 3.55 for both principals and teachers. This finding concurred with Akinola (2013); Janeth (2014); and Giami and Obiechina (2019) studies that found that leadership skill is present amongst school principals in most secondary schools. Although, the findings disagree with that of Egbefo (2015) whose study reveal that the major causes of ethno-religious crises are absence of quality leadership skills amongst organisational leaders. In the school system, Egbefo study revealed that the inadequacy of some leadership skills has also contributed to school children partaking in various ethno-religious clashes. This implies that some school leaders do not possess good leadership skills to help avert the impact of ethno-religious crises in their schools.

Hypothesis 2, which was accepted, as there was no significant difference between the mean response scores of principals and teachers on principal's leadership skill during ethno-religious crises in south educational zone of Taraba state, with (p = 0.511 > 0.05). This finding concurred with that of Akinola (2013) finding that there is a significant relationship between principals' leadership skill and school effectiveness. The finding also agrees with that of Muraina (2014) findings that revealed that there was significant relationship between principals' managerial skills and administrative effectiveness (Cal. R-value = 0.246 > critical r -value = 0.148). Hence, this finding implies that principal's leadership skill is necessary for all principals to possess because it is essential to their school avoiding calamities during ethno-religious crises.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that principals' human relation skill in secondary schools was affected during ethno-religious crises to a moderate level; while principal's leadership skill was affected during ethno-religious crises to a high level.

Hence, the study recommends the following;

5. School principals should exhibit more human relation skills such as listening skill, trusting in teachers, encouraging teachers' participation in decision-making, attention to the individual differences and ensuring a safe work environment especially during ethnic religious crises.
6. Principals should evolve the leadership of delegating functions to teachers according to their area of expertise as this would result in increased participation for the actualization of school goals and objectives especially during ethno-religious crises.

7. The School Board should ensure that school principals are regularly train in areas relating to human relation and leadership skills especially; so that school principals will be able to integrate and coordinate the school's interests and activities effectively during school and societal crises.

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