

**PRINCIPALS' CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE AND TEACHER
JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OBUDU
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF
CROSS RIVER STATE**

By

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Abstract.

The study was carried out to determine the influence of principals' conflict management procedures on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The descriptive survey design of an ex-post facto type was used for this study. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 10 schools out of 30 public secondary schools in the study area. The study sample of 100 teachers and 20 principals. Two sets of researcher's developed and validated questionnaires were used for data collection - Principals' Conflict Management procedure Questionnaire (PCMPQ) and "Teachers Job Performance Questionnaire" (TJPQ). The Cronbach alpha reliability estimates of both instruments were each higher than .78. Data obtained were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical technique at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that principals' use of avoidance, and collaboration conflict management procedures have significant relationship with teachers' job performance. It was therefore recommended among others that school principals should use higher level of participatory approaches in the management of conflicts to bring about higher levels of teachers' job performance.

Keywords: Conflict, management, teachers, job, performance.

In any organizational setup including the secondary school system, conflict cannot be lacking. Mbipom and Okon (2013) point out to this fact when they asserts to view organization as entities in which conflict upsets the equilibrium is to misunderstand reality. They added that conflict is a part of the normal state of an organization. Education in Nigeria has been adopted as instrument for national integration on, socio-economic development and technological growth (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014); and is signatory to the Education. Despite this vision, the secondary school system suffers from serious under funding in the midst of an ever growing students population, decline in resources and facilities. Under these circumstances, teachers' job performance which form the hub of the school system is likely to dwindle as principals' may no longer be able to provide the much needed healthy environment for work. Most conflict management typologies in the field of education have grouped conflict management options of school principals' to include avoidance, force, compromise, accommodation and collaboration (Swinton, 2016). Principals' choice of the use of any of these conflict management options could influence in varying degrees, the extent to which teachers would prepare and present their lessons, use teaching methods, manage their classrooms, use instructional materials and involve themselves in co-curricular activities.

Conflict generally refers to disagreement between parties on issues of importance to them. It could also be as a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect something that the first party cares about. In the school system, conflicts could either be interpersonal role, interdepartmental, line and staff or institutionalized (Anja&Bassey, 2016). identified sources of conflict in school in various studies

as follows: dependence on common scarce resources, overlapping responsibilities, line and staff competitions, personality clashes, disagreement, and communication difficulties among others. According to Ujo (2013) therefore concludes that disagreements not properly handled between individuals and groups the school system could create situations whose outcome may be inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

Furthermore, since conflicts are inevitable in social relationships such as in the school, the principal is therefore constantly placed in a situation to search continually for better ways of managing school conflicts. This could enable him win the confidence of his teachers, successfully motivating them to work creditably as trust could be restored in him. The principal needs an in-depth understanding of conflict resolution techniques as to be able to match the required conflict management strategy and the situation in question. This is capable of creating the needed atmosphere that could support better teachers' job performance in their schools. But most times, it is very much likely that school principals are found to be lacking in these abilities. A likely gap is usually created between effective administrations of the school on the part of the teachers. This likely gap could be filled by the principals' identification and use of appropriate conflict management strategies in the resolution of school conflicts. This study is therefore undertaken to provide empirical findings about the influence of principals' conflict management strategies on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Review of empirical literature

There is consensus among organizational theorists and writers in the field of conflict management in schools such as Anja&Bassey (2016), Owens (2015) and Hoy &Miskel (2016)

that the avoidance conflict management strategy is also known as lose-lose approach, rating low on assertiveness and also low in responsiveness. It is generally regarded as a form of flight suggesting indifference, evasion, withdrawal or isolation on the part of the administrator from the conflict. Research findings about its applicability by school principals in the resolution of conflicts abound. Okon, Inaja & Udo (2015) conducted a study on principals preferred conflict resolution styles in public and private secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. Sixty (60) teachers, thirty from each category were used as sampled research subjects to assess the preference of principals on conflict management styles. The Teachers' Assessment of Principals' Preferred Conflict Resolution Styles Questionnaire (TAPPCRSQ) was used in data collection. Percentage and chi square (χ^2) analysis were used to analyze the data. The results showed that avoidance conflict management style had a preference score of 3.33% below collaboration style (91.60%) and above accommodation (1.66%), competition (1.66%) styles. The chi square (χ^2) analysis using type of school to determine preference of principals' in the use of conflict management styles proved not significant.

In a contrary finding, Umoren (2016) carried out a study to investigate the conflict management strategies of primary and post primary school administrators in Uyo Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A sample of two hundred (200) subjects (principals and head teachers) was randomly drawn from public to analyze data. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of statistical significance. The findings, among others, revealed that school administrators significantly differ in terms of conflict management. However, all school administrators preferred avoidance strategy of conflict

management to any other strategy. This study conflicts with most of the result of investigation conducted in terms of its results.

Okon (2008) conducted a study on the influence of demographic variables on conflict resolution options of secondary school principals in Cross River State, Nigeria. The demographic sub-variation were gender, qualification, and experience and school location. Four hypotheses were posed. The ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. A Principals' Conflict Resolution Option Questionnaire (PCROQ) was developed and used for data collection. Four hypotheses were tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA) at .05 level of significance. The results showed no significant influence of gender, qualification, experience and school location on principals' conflict resolution options. Also revealed was the absolute decline of school principals in the use of avoidance conflict resolution option in their schools in conflict management.

Collaboration as a conflict management technique is generally regarded as a win-win-strategy. It is both assertive and cooperative. Anja&Bassey (2006) viewed this as a process where offers are exchanged and concessions are made with a view to arriving at a mutual agreement using the direct representation approach. Though time consuming and requires skill and effort. Organizational theorists and advocates of participatory decision-making believe that the involvement of those concerned in deciding issues that affect them gives them a sense of belonging, recognition, self-fulfillment and self-actualization. This approach to conflict management has been widely used by school principals and evidence abound.

In a study conducted by Okon, Inaja &Udo (2005) to determine principals' preferred conflict resolution style in both public and private secondary schools in Calabar South Local

Government Area used sixty research subjects (30 each from both) in twelve schools.

Percentages and the chi-square (χ^2) were used to analyze data. The findings reveal that the preference for collaboration conflict management style of school principals, irrespective of the type of school type scored 91.66% of the total figure above, avoidance strategy (3.33%), competition and accommodation and compromise strategies scoring 1.66% each. The chi-square (χ^2) analysis showed no significant influence of school type on principals' preference for any of the conflict management styles.

Also related closely to the above study, Idumange & Major (2015) conducted a study on the conflict management style and selected school principals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The aim of the study was to discover if home variables – sex, years of experience, type of school, school size and qualification of principals influence choice of conflict resolution style. All six hypotheses proved no significant relationship and influence of principals' preference for conflict resolution styles. But data was also converted to percentages to determine the dominant conflict management style of principals. The results showed that dialogue had a score of 34.83% higher than those of bureaucratic style (28.20%) dominance style (27.20%). It was therefore concluded that the preference for collaboration conflict management style by principals' is higher than those of the other strategies in conflict management.

Ukpabio (2015) conducted a study on principal's conflict management techniques and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. A total of four hundred and seventy-five (475) teachers were selected as subjects for the study. Data collected used a teacher developed instrument – Principals' Conflict Management Technique and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (PCMTTJPQ). Three

conflict management techniques – collaboration, accommodation and compromise were subjected to analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine their influence on some aspects of job performance such as teachers' lesson presentation, use of instructional materials, participation in co-curricular activities, involvement in students discipline and teachers' classroom management skills. The results revealed that both teachers lesson presentation, teacher's involvement in curricular activities, teacher's involvement in student discipline, teacher's management of classroom, teachers use of instructional material and teachers job performances significantly influence principal conflict management techniques.

Statement of the problem

It is obvious that there is a high degree of poor job performance by teachers in Obudu Local Government Area and seem to exhibit lukewarm attitude to work. Most times, they come late to school, exhibit unwillingness to write or update their lesson notes, except for the purposes of avoiding inspector's sanctions or attending promotion exercises. Teachers also demonstrate laziness in completing continuous assessment records. They would want to disappear from school before official closing time, probably to gain time to attend to other demands. The consequences of poor teachers' job performance are numerous. Firstly, it makes it difficult for the organization to attain its goals, discourage the students from being serious thus encouraging examination malpractice. In a nutshell, poor teachers job performance deviate the future of students who are seen to be the leaders of tomorrow, etc. The above scenario, necessitate this study to examine principals' conflict management procedures and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the influence of principals' conflict management procedures and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. Specifically, this study seeks to examine:

1. Principals' use of avoidance procedure as perceived conflict management conflict style has no significant relationship with teachers' job performance.
2. Principals' use of collaboration strategy perceived conflict management conflict style has no significant relationship with teachers' job performance.

Research questions

In order to provide a focus for the study, the following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. How does principals' use of avoidance as conflict management procedure relates to teachers' job performance?
2. How does principals' use of collaboration as conflict management procedure relates to teachers' job performance?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study;

1. Principals' use of avoidance as conflict management procedure does not significantly relates to teachers' job performance.
4. Principals' use of collaboration conflict management procedure does not significantly relates to teachers' job performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed ex-post facto research design with the population comprises of all the 364 teachers and 30 principals of the thirty public secondary school in Obudu Local Government of Cross River State. The study sampled 100 teachers and 10 principal from ten selected schools using stratified random sampling technique. Two instrument; Principals' Conflict Management Procedures Questionnaire (PCMPQ) and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) were used to illicit information from the respondents. The first instrument was designed for the teachers, while the second instrument was designed for the principals. Both instruments were directed specifically towards eliciting information from research subjects on the variables that were investigated in the study. The Questionnaire was made up of two sections; Section A contained items on demographic information such as name of school, and name of school and teachers experiences. Section B contained ten items (10) statements measuring avoidance and collaboration. All these variables (items) put together measured principals' conflict management strategies. The Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) contained 5 items statements on teachers job performances in the secondary school system in the areas of subject matter mastery, use of teaching methods, use of instructional materials, classroom management and involvement in extracurricular activities. Four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were used to score the respondents opinion. The instrument was face-validated by experts in Test and Measurement and Educational Administration/planning, Federal College of Education, Obudu an affiliate of University of Calabar. The experts vetted the items and approved the instrument to be used in

collecting data. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-retest method using 20 teachers outside the study sample. The exercise was repeated after one week on the same respondents. The reliability coefficient of the two tests was statistically tested using Spearman Correlational Coefficient and it yielded a coefficient of 0.78 which was considered adequate for the study. The data collected from the instrument were analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Hypothesis one: Principals' use of avoidance procedure does not significantly relates to teachers' job performance

Table 1: Summary of Pearson product moment correlation of the relationship between avoidance procedure in and teachers 'job performance. (N=120)

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Use of collaboration	2841	33043	34996	*0.628*
Teachers job performance	3047	36465		

***significant at .05 level, df=119, r-tab=0.138**

The result of the analysis on table 1, showed that the calculated r-value of the Pearson Co-efficient for the two variables was 0.229 ($p < 0.05$) and the critical r-value was 0.138 ($\alpha = 0.05$, $n = 120$). Since the critical r-value was less than the calculated r-value, the null hypothesis which states that avoidance procedure of conflict resolution has no significant relationship with teachers' job performance in secondary school was therefore rejected. This implies that there exists a significant statistical relationship between avoidance procedure of conflict resolution and

teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River state

Hypothesis Four: Principals' use of collaboration procedure does not significantly relates to teachers' job performance

Table 2:Summary of the Pearson Product moment correlation co-efficient of the relationship between Principals' use of collaboration procedure and teachers' job performance. (N=120)

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Use of collaboration	2458	31376	37476	*0.589*
Teachers job performance	3047	46465		

***significant at .05 level, df=119, r-tab=0.138**

From table above 4, the calculated r-value was 0.589 as against r-critical value of 0.138. Since the calculated r-value of 0.589 ($p < 0.05$) was greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 ($\alpha = 0.05$, $n = 120$), the null hypothesis which states that Principals' use of collaboration procedure in conflict management has no significant relationship with teachers' job performance in secondary schools was rejected. This indicates that significant relationship existing between principals' use of collaboration procedure as conflict management and teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The result from the analysis from the study first variable revealed that principals' use of avoidance conflict management procedure does not significantly influence teachers' job performance. The findings also agreed with the results of Idumage & Major (2005) who found that the preference for the use of compromise strategy in conflict resolution by school principals had low ratings compared to collaboration and accommodation. This finding disagreed with the

results of Okon (2008). He revealed in his results a wide range usage of compromise conflict management option by principals and ranked second after collaboration strategy. The likely reason for this result in the current study may be that it use, only temporary results could be obtained, which may not be the best and may not satisfy completely the conflicting parties.

This result of the last hypothesis established that principals' use of collaboration procedure in conflict management significantly influence teachers' job performance. This finding revealed a strong positive relationship of the use of collaboration conflict management strategy by principals on the teachers' job performance, as they are found to be committed to their jobs. This finding is in agreement with those of Idumange & Major (2005), whose findings agreed that the use of collaboration in managing school conflicts brings about higher levels of teachers' job performance than the other conflict management strategies. And in terms of preference, they found collaboration strategy been preferred by school principals to any other conflict management option. The result was significant probably because principals of schools see it as a very useful approach to conflict management when issues are important to everyone in the conflict and all sides need to be committed to the solution. The study revealed that collaboration is both assertive and co-operative, representing a desire to fully satisfy the interest of the parties to a conflict and is regarded as a mutually beneficial stance based on trust and problem-solving.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made: Principals' use of collaboration and accommodation procedures in managing conflicts significantly influence teachers' job performance with regard to subject matter mastery, use of teaching methods,

classroom management, use of instructional materials and involvement in co-curricular activities.

But principal's use of avoidance and compromise procedure in managing conflicts does not significantly influence teacher's job performance in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Principals should not pay deaf ears or withdraw themselves from conflicts when it occurs, because conflict and its subsequent resolution is part and parcel of administrative processes in any organisation including the secondary school system.
- ii. Principals should always involve other members of the school in focusing on the conflicts for solution. Here, understanding is sought to get to the root causes of the conflict to improve teachers' confidence and sense of belonging in the school system.

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