



INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL-TEACHER CONFLICT ON TEACHERS JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of principal-teacher conflict on teachers job performance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study. They sought to: identify the causes of conflicts between principals and teachers in public secondary schools; determine the positive influence of the conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools; and determine the negative influence of the conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools. The research adopted survey research design. Questionnaire was used to obtain relevant information from 230 respondents in the study area. The Questionnaire had 61 items. The data collected were presented in tables and analysed using mean. The findings revealed that, among others, some of the causes of principal-teacher conflicts are: principal's indifference to teachers' problems, poor communication in the school, role ambiguity or lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities, and principal's high-handedness in school administration; the positive effects of principal-teacher conflicts include: stimulant for increased teacher knowledge and skills, and consequent schools' productivity, checks on principals complacency. It was also found out that some of the negative effects of principal-teacher conflicts, are that it sometimes reduces teachers commitment, and it gives rise to dissatisfaction and frustration among teachers. Ultimately, it was ascertained that principals discussion with teachers before certain decisions are taken; good human relationship between principals and teachers; involvement of school board and PTA members for school administration; and mediation (involving both parties in discussing how best to resolve existing conflict) are some of the strategies for managing conflicts between principals and teachers. Consequently, it was recommended that the appropriate authorities, school principals, and teachers should ensure that there are Teachers representative councils (TRC), established for the management of conflict in the school, this will help reduce and check any form of biased tendency and as well create the spirit of peaceful coexistence and teamwork.





Introduction

Education, over the years, has grown to become an integral part of human existence. It is generally described as the act of or process of acquiring knowledge and the theory of teaching and learning. Kaita (2015) sees it to mean “learning which is training and bringing up”. According to Peters (2010), education is a process of socialization, enculturation and transmission of what is worthwhile to those who are committed to it, be the children or adult. This conception implies that those who go through it want to improve themselves. Education can either be formal or informal. It is on the formal education that this work is of concern.

In Nigeria, formal education is divided into three basic stages – the primary, secondary and tertiary education. The secondary school comprises of a first three years of upper basic school (formerly called Junior Secondary School) and another three years of Senior Secondary School. Fabunmi (2015) further defined secondary school education as the form of education, which children receive after primary education and before the tertiary level. The head of management of the secondary school is the principal, who is assisted by a vice and other members of staff (teachers).

Olowoselu and Aishatu (2015) described a principal as the head of an institution that occupies a pivotal position, requires initiatives and skills for the day to day administration of a secondary school. As a school leader, principal must have foresight for effective, efficient and dynamic principles in handling matters concerning staff (teachers inclusive) and the school in general (Olowoselu and Aishatu (2015). The principal sets the direction of policies, acceptable standards for academic and behavioural achievement of students, establishes a friendly school climate and influences the commitment of every stakeholder in the society for the achievement of the educational goals.

Similarly a principal must be in a position to guide and provide expertise guardian in regards to curriculum development, teaching methods, and evaluation as well as supervision of human and material resources. For the school to function well, the principal must be in a position to exploit all possible means to keep a healthy environment for the students, staff and the general public. Therefore as a principal, who is the chief executive officer of a school, should guide and inspire the teachers’ for job satisfaction. Teachers on the other hand, is the person who provides education for students (Ikediugwu, 2005). He should have undergone an approved professional training in education at an appropriate level capable of imparting knowledge, attitude and skills to the learner.

In the secondary school system, it is not out of place for teachers and principals to disagree. . Broom (2014) views conflict as negative outcome or something to be avoided. This implies that conflict is better prevented because it may normally result to lack of misunderstanding among people in a particular setting. Similarly, Cram and Williams (2020), observe that conflicts are seen as disagreements or



problems at an interpersonal level. To succinctly put it, conflict in every work place is inevitable. Onsarigo (2017) adds that in schools where conflict is the order of the day, teachers hardly accept their delegated responsibilities and take their time to monitor students' behaviour, mark registers, prepare their lesson plans, record financial report accurately, and mark assessments and examination scripts.

The school as an organization operates with an appointed leadership, who defines and assigns roles to individual teachers, based on their areas of competence, all working towards the achievement of school goals and objectives. However, when one refuses to carry out his or her duties, or perform the roles assigned to him, conflict is bound to occur. Also, since in the school, people from different backgrounds and experiences are brought together, it becomes inevitable, that conflict may occur.

Conflict between the principal and teachers may occur because of varied reasons. Issues ranging from teaching methods, continuous assessment method, income generation and management matters, principals' leadership style and a host of others may cause conflict between a principal and the teachers. According to Ugwuanyi (2015), in the school system, possible areas of conflict between the principals and teachers include leadership style, communication, school policy, decision making, and delegation of duties as well as role definitions/assignments. Authur (2022), identifies leadership style, communication, school policy and role definition as possible areas of conflict to the school principal.

Conflict between principal and teachers no doubt will affect academic activities, which is the primary objective of the school in the first place. In line with this, Onsarigo (2017) posited that schools where conflict is the order of the day, teachers hardly accept their delegated responsibilities like monitoring students' behave, mark registers, prepare lesson plans, record financial report, and marking of assessment and examinations. This result in utter decline in teachers' performance, which invariably affects students' academic performance.

Teachers' job performance could be described as the duties performed by a teacher at a particular period in the school system in achieving organizational goals (Adeyemi, 2018). It could also be described as the ability of teachers to combine relevant inputs for the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. Some of the common criteria for measuring teachers' job performance, as mentioned earlier, are their attitude to work, their punctuality and regularity, monitoring students' behave, marking registers, preparing lesson plans, marking of assessment and examinations, among others. Similarly, Chamundeswari (2013) posit that performance of teachers mainly depends on the teacher characteristics such as knowledge base, sense of responsibility, and inquisitiveness; the student characteristics such as opportunity to learn, and academic work; the teaching factors such as lesson structure, and communication; the learning aspects such as involvement and success; and the classroom phenomena such as environment and climate, and organization and management. No doubt, the principal has great



influence over many of these teachers' job performance determinants. Therefore the principal-teacher relationship is a necessity if any meaningful objective is to be achieved in the secondary school system.

Against this background it becomes necessary to identify the causes of conflicts, the positive and negative effects on teachers job performance, and explore ways through conflict resolution strategies could be improved in the school system. Based on the above, the researcher is interested in investigating the influence of principal-teacher conflict on teacher job performance in Anambra state.

Statement of the Problem

There is a general outcry of the falling standard of education in Nigeria and many reasons have been identified to be responsible, some of which are incompetence on the part of teachers, inefficient school management, government's failure on its responsibility amongst other capacity- and value-based reasons. One aspect contributing to the falling standard of education, though less talked about, is the perceived inharmonious relationship among stakeholders in the education sector, and this is very evident in the principal-teacher relationship in secondary schools in Anambra State.

In Anambra State, there are observed problem areas involving role definition by the principals and the teachers. Such role conflicting areas include school attendance, giving of assignment to students, completing of the scheme of work, extra lessons for students and disciplining of students. There is also the issue of overbearing imposition of principals on teachers which give rise to conflict. Cases abound where principals with autocratic tendencies are appalled and resisted by teachers leading to outright conflict. Conversely, there are incidences where teachers disregard simple directives of principals and refuse to subject themselves to the supervision of the principal. Such pomposity of teachers results to conflict between them and the principal.

All these are areas of conflict between the principals and teachers in secondary schools, no doubt, affect teachers' job performance. Teachers output will definitely drop in times of such conflict with principals – both in quality and in the amount. The researcher observed that this situation has not been well investigated by major educational stakeholders in the study area to proffer solution and bring development in education in the area. There is, therefore, a felt need by the researcher to further investigate into the possible influence of conflict between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in the study area. The problem of this study stated in a question form is therefore: In what ways does conflict between principals and teachers influence teachers job performance in Anambra State, Nigeria?





Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of principal-teacher conflict on teachers job performance in secondary schools of Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- (1) Identify the causes of conflicts between principals and teachers in public secondary schools of Anambra State;
- (2) Determine the positive effect of conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools of Anambra State;
- (3) Determine the negative effects of conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools of Anambra State;

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study

- (1) What are the causes of conflicts between principals and teachers in public secondary schools of Anambra State?
- (2) What are the positive effects of conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools of Anambra State?
- (3) What are the negative effects of conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools of Anambra State?

Method

This study adopted descriptive survey design. The area of this study is Anambra State. The population of this study consisted of all the teachers in the 23 public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area. Based on the 2023/2014 school year, there are 1100 teachers (Source: ASUBEB, PPSSC, Awka Zone). Simple random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) teachers each in secondary schools in Awka Local Government Area. The sample was 230. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument was face-validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. One from Educational Management and Policy; one from Measurement and Evaluation and another from Science and Computer Education. To ensure the reliability of the instrument both the principals and the teachers then the result collected was subjected to the test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha procedure to determine the internal consistency. The result yielded reliability coefficients of 0.89 indicating the instrument is





reliable. The researcher with the help of three research assistants administered the instrument directly to the respondents. Mean was used to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the causes of conflicts between principals and teachers in public secondary schools of Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on the causes of conflicts between principals and teachers in public secondary schools of Anambra State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	N	Σfx	\bar{x}	Decision
1	Principal's indifference to teachers' problems	94	77	28	31	230	694	3.02	Agree
2	Poor communication in the school	86	81	35	28	230	685	2.98	Agree
3	Role ambiguity or lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities	59	97	47	27	230	648	2.82	Agree
4	Teachers' laissez-faire attitude to school work	66	78	63	27	230	651	2.83	Agree
5	Poor teaching environment	98	101	15	16	230	741	3.22	Agree
6	Issuing of queries to teachers by the principal	63	92	29	46	230	632	2.75	Agree
7	Uncooperative attitude of teachers	23	44	101	62	230	488	2.12	Disagree
8	Favouritism on the part of principals	35	51	77	67	230	514	2.23	Disagree





9	Exclusion of teachers in decision-making	98	101	15	16	230	741	3.22	Agree
10	Lack of recognition of teachers' efforts by principal	61	88	61	20	230	650	2.83	Agree
11	Principal's high-handedness in school administration	62	59	58	51	230	592	2.57	Agree
12	Principals asking for punitive transfer of teachers through the PPSMB	22	49	76	83	230	470	2.04	Disagree
GRAND MEAN								2.72	Agree

From the above table, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11 have mean score above the cut off point of 2.50. This implies that these items are factors that cause principal-teacher conflicts in public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area and in Anambra State generally. Conversely, items 7, 8 and 12 have mean scores below cut of point of 2.50. This implies that those items are not factors that cause principal-teacher conflicts in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The grand mean is also above cut off point which goes further to affirm the fact that most items listed above are causes of principal-teacher conflicts in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question 2

What are the positive effects of conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools of Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on the positive effects of conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools of Anambra State.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	Σfx	\bar{x}	Decision
		4	3	2	1				
13	Conflict between teachers and principals stimulates teacher to increase their knowledge and skills, and	61	88	61	20	230	650	2.83	Agree





	contributes to the schools' productivity									
14	Principal-teacher conflicts sometimes serves as checks on principals against complacency		78	109	13	30	230	695	3.02	Agree
15	Principal-teacher conflict helps check corrupt practices on the side of teachers		98	101	15	16	230	741	3.22	Agree
16	Principal-teacher conflict helps check corrupt practices on the side of principals		35	51	77	67	230	514	2.23	Disagree
GRAND MEAN									2.83	Agree

Table 2 showed that items 13, 14 and 15 have mean scores above cut off point of 2.50. Precisely, they have mean scores of 2.83, 3.02 and 3.22. This implies that those items are the positive effects of principal-teacher conflict in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

On the other item 16 has a mean score below the cut off point, precisely 2.23. This means that it is not a positive effect of principal-teacher conflict in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The grand mean has a cut off point of 2.83, which indicate generally that these items are the positive effect of principal-teacher conflict in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question 3

What are the negative effects of conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools of Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean responses of respondents on the negative effects of conflicts between principals and teachers on teachers job performance in public secondary schools of Anambra State.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	Σfx	\bar{x}	Decision
		4	3	2	1				





17	Conflict in schools do not encourage creativity on the part of teachers as they are been forced to work at limited pace.	78	109	13	30	230	695	3.02	Agree
18	Conflicts in school administration reduces staff commitment	98	101	15	16	230	741	3.22	Agree
19	Conflicts in schools do give rise to dissatisfaction and frustration among teachers	98	101	15	16	230	741	3.22	Agree
20	Conflicts between principals and teachers in school, leads to low level of competence and effectiveness of teachers	61	88	61	20	230	650	2.83	Agree
21	Conflicts in school do not encourage good rapport among teachers.	62	59	58	51	230	592	2.57	Agree
Grand Mean								3.01	Agree

Table 3 revealed that all items have mean scores above the cut off point of 2.50 hence they are the negative effects of principal-teacher conflicts in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Summary of the Findings

Based on the data analysed, it was found that;

- (1) The causes of principal-teacher conflicts include, among others: principal's indifference to teachers' problems; poor communication in the school; role ambiguity or lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities; issuing of queries to teachers by the principal; lack of recognition of teachers' efforts by principal; poor condition of service; and principal's high-handedness in school administration.





- (2) The positive effects of principal-teacher conflicts include: it stimulates teacher to increase their knowledge and skills, and contributes to the schools' productivity; it sometimes serves as checks on principals against complacency; and it helps check corrupt practices on the side of teachers
- (3) The negative effects of principal-teacher conflicts include: it sometimes does not encourage creativity on the part of teachers as they are been forced to work at limited pace; it reduces staff commitment; it gives rise to dissatisfaction and frustration among teachers; it leads to low level of competence and effectiveness of teachers; and does not encourage good rapport among teachers

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1 sought the causes of conflicts between principals and teachers. It revealed that the causes of principal-teacher conflicts include, among others: principal's indifference to teachers' problems; poor communication in the school; role ambiguity or lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities; issuing of queries to teachers by the principal; lack of recognition of teachers' efforts by principal; poor condition of service; and principal's high-handedness in school administration. This findings are in line with those of Nwangwu and Chidiobi (2014).

Research question two inquired on the positive effects of principal-teacher conflicts. Similar to the submissions of Ogbonnaya (2022), some of the positive effects revealed include: increase in teachers' knowledge and skills, and ultimately improved schools' productivity; checks on principals against complacency; and check on corrupt practices by teachers. Other works which identified some positive effect of principal-teacher conflicts include Adeyemi (2019).

Research question 3 sought the negative effect of principal-teacher conflicts. It was found out that the negative effects include among other things that principal-teachers conflict does not encourage creativity on the part of teachers as they are been forced to work at limited pace; it reduces staff commitment; it gives rise to dissatisfaction and frustration among teachers; it leads to low level of competence and effectiveness of teachers; and does not encourage good rapport among teachers. Furthermore, Adeyemi (2019) in his own findings, other negative effects include: possible loss of lives and properties, closing down of schools. Oluwole, Oklo and Ivagher (2016) in their study found out that principal-teacher conflict has negative effect on student overall performance.

Conclusion

Conflicts and crisis in school management have diverse causes which vary with places and times; the effects can be negative and/or positive depending on how they are managed. Notably, the explanatory relevance of the different theories that offer explanations on the causes of conflicts and crisis in the area





of school management largely depend on the contexts and circumstances. In other words, as schools and the management authorities are different, so are the causes of the associated conflicts and crisis. Accordingly, the strategies for avoiding or resolving the conflicts and crisis also vary with places and times. But the findings of this research has led the researcher that conclude that conflict is inevitable in any organisational setup and the public secondary school system, especially in Anambra State, is not an exception.

Recommendations

Upon the findings of this research work, the following recommendations were made:

- (1) The appropriate authorities, school principals, and teachers should ensure that there are Teachers representative councils (TRC), established for the management of conflict in the school. This will help reduce and check any form of biased tendency and as well create the spirit of peaceful coexistence and teamwork.
- (2) The state secondary education board, ministries of education and the government at all levels should employ a strategic style in reducing and averting conflicts that have to do with non-satisfaction of human needs and un-conducive teaching and learning atmosphere by making sure that the teachers' needs are adequately and timely met. This will help the school management to determine suitable ways of dealing with conflicts in the educational sector and government ministries especially the ministry of education in order to improve the education standard of our nation.
- (3) Principals has to ensure that the programme and activities of the school are planned, designed, coordinated and integrated in such a way that the school is able to satisfy the needs of the staff in the school, the needs and the expectations of the society and meet the educational objectives of the school.

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