
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRINCIPALS CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR IMPROVING TEACHER'S JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

By

Henry Kenechukwu Nwasike; Prof. Patience Ndidi Egboka and Dr. Kingsly Obiekwe

Abstract

This study examined comparative analysis of principals' conflict management practice for improving teachers' job performance in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was guided by one research question, and one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted with a study population that comprised 13,505 secondary school teachers in Anambra State, made up of 8,258 teachers in public secondary schools and 5,247 teachers in private secondary schools. A sample of 1,351 teachers consisting 825 from public secondary schools and 526 from private secondary schools were drawn using stratified proportionate sampling technique. Researchers' developed instrument titled "Principals' Conflict Management Practices for improving Teacher's job performance Questionnaire" (PCMPITJPQ) which was validated by three experts was used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained, using Cronbach's Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficient of 0.78. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test hypothesis. The finding of the study revealed among other things that similar staff conflict management practices when adopted by principals of public and private secondary schools would improve teacher's job performance in Anambra State. The result indicated among others that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the staff conflict management practices adopted by principals for improving their job performance. It is clear that when principals adopt conflict management practices, it reduce chaotic occurrences that would hinder job performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Principals should promote team building activities so as to encourage collaboration among teachers; take disciplinary action against teachers who are involved in unacceptable behaviour, promptly and carefully investigate on matters regarding clash in issues by teachers and also hold regular meetings that allows open communication to discuss and prevent conflicting issues.

Keywords: Conflict Management, Teachers' job performance

Introduction

School is an educational organization designed to provide relaxed atmosphere for learning. It is a distinct environment for impartation of ideas, good behaviour, skills, values knowledge and societal norms to learners. The aim of establishing a school is serenely characterized with wholesomeness so as to be conducive for a productive academic exercise and contribute meaningfully towards the growth of the society. Thus, school is designated for academic activities and at such should be helpful to both the students and the teachers. To the students, the school is to provide an atmosphere for mental, intellectual, social, moral and skill development. On the part of the teachers, the school is to provide atmosphere devoid of distraction for effective discharge of their job performance towards continuous learning and social recognition.

Unfortunately, most secondary schools in Anambra State are not without distractions which by extension have led to various conflict actions. Conflict refers to disagreement between two or more parties. Conflict is a situation which arises as a result of misunderstanding between, or amongst people in the school. According to Ugwu, Emegini, Okeke-James, Igbokwe and Oparaji (2020), conflict is a process in which one party perceives that its interest is opposed or negatively affected by another party. Sometimes conflict can exist between principals and teachers, among teachers themselves, teachers and students, teachers and school management, students and school management among others. Looking at most secondary schools in Anambra State, is a clear indication that conflict is not without consequences, among them include: hatreds, slow down developmental goals, hinder organizational objectives, unproductivity in the areas of teachers' job performance, stagnation of administrative actions, unhealthy interpersonal relationship among teachers.

Moreover, incessant conflicts among staff seems to have led to school environments where the following strives; unethical behaviours, verbal assaults, threats, dishonesty in dealing with colleagues and disobedience to school rules (Okeke-James, Igbokwe, Oguejiofor and Ogbanya, 2023). There is no doubt that the above stances of conflict existing among teachers would be hindrances to the overall effectiveness of teaching in the school. Similarly, Mbonu, Obineme and Azuji, (2023) observed truancy; not finishing the scheme of work before the close of term; not giving and marking of class works, notes and assignment; and not making up-to-date lesson note

among teachers. Moreover, it appears that some of the teachers exhibit unethical behaviours in the schools which seemed to have reflected to the increased misbehaviors among students. Thus, there is no doubt that these identified areas of conflict actions which by extension seems to have resulted to poor teachers' job performance, have some implications for the school principal who is in the helm of school administration of secondary school, and whose role essentially is to cater for the performance, character formation, well-being and intellectual development of the staff.

Principals in every public and private secondary school are the administrator and managers whose duty is to manage the school personnel such as ensuring that teachers discharge their duties so as to accomplish the national secondary educational goals. Accordingly, Obiekwe, Thompson and Ogbo (2023) stated that the principal plays a vital role in quality of teachers and their instructional delivery. As the chief executive of the school, the principal owes it a duty to modify the attitude of staff and students and motivate them to put in their best towards achieving educational goals. In the opinion of Ezenwagu (2023), principal is a professional leader and supervisor in the secondary school who combines the roles of school administration, students' personnel management and staff personnel management. This is to say that the principal is the chief executive who performs necessary leadership and staff personnel management functions for the achievement of school goals. Accordingly, Okafor (2023) stated that a principal is the personnel manager in every secondary school. Thus, in this study, the researcher is more concerned with the principal as it relates to his roles in conflict management.

Conflict management refers to the process that allows authorities to address the fundamental causes of issues in a way that is agreeable to the parties involved. Managing conflict within the school is part of the personnel management roles of the principal. However, Onuorah, Chukwu, Oshia (2023) noted that in Anambra State, most school principals have failed in this role as they affirmed high rate of conflict among school members. Obviously, the presence of conflicts such as defamation of character, verbal attacks and rebukes would impede teachers' job performance in the school. It is important to note that an effective means of handling conflict is to adopt effective conflict management practices. Therefore, conflict management practices are means of reducing effect of dispute on the participants. According to Eke (2023), for conflict to arise, there must be the existence of at least two independent groups who perceive some incompatibility between themselves. Eke went further to say that conflict is inevitable in any society as social interactions and relationships are bound to oscillate from agreement to disagreement.

However, a cursory look at the situations in most schools today shows that conflict is irresistible in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State. But it is surprising that its effect seems more minimal in some schools than others. In fact, observations have shown that a major effect of conflict is more obvious in poor job performance of teachers. This prompted the researcher to think that this could be as a result of the variations in the conflict management practices employ by school principals in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State. Therefore, in the bid to reduce negative consequences of poor teachers' job performance especially in the persistence increase in misbehaviors among secondary school students, spurred this investigation on comparing the principals' conflict management practices for improving teacher's job performance in public and private secondary schools in Anambra State

Research Question

What are the staff conflict management practices of principals for improving teachers' job performance in public and private secondary schools in Anambra state?

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on staff conflict management practices of principals for improving their job performance

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. One research question guided the study and one null hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance to guide the study. Population of the study consisted of 13,505 teachers (8,258 public secondary schools teachers and 5,247 private secondary schools teachers) a sample of 1,351 teachers consisting of 825 from public and 526 from private secondary schools using stratified proportionate sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled "Principals' Conflict Management Practices for improving Teacher's job performance Questionnaire" (PCMPITJPQ). The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from Measurement and Evaluation, all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Data was collected by the researcher with the help of six research assistants, who were teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficient of 0.78. the instrument was considered reliable in line with Nworgu (2015), who stated that if the co-

efficient obtained for an instrument is up to 0.70 and above, the instrument was considered good enough for the study. The direct administration and retrieval method was used for data collection. Mean was used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. For the research question, a mean rating of 2.50 and above was interpreted as agreed while mean rating of less than 2.50 was interpreted as disagree. The null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value was less than 0.05 whereas the null hypothesis was not rejected where p-value was greater than 0.05

Results

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard deviation scores on the staff conflict management practices of principals for improving teachers' job performance

SN	ITEMS	Teachers in public secondary schools (n=825)			Teachers in private secondary schools (n=526)		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Open communication that allows teachers contributions is provided on issues relevant to teachers' job performance	3.16	0.72	Agree	3.34	0.54	Agree
2.	Investigation on matters regarding clash in issues by teachers are handles promptly.	3.16	0.69	Agree	3.29	0.58	Agree
3.	Adequate time is sincerely given to resolve differences amongst teachers for effective job performance	3.14	0.73	Agree	3.36	0.57	Agree
4.	Conflicts are always resolved to the satisfaction of the teachers to improve on their job performance	3.08	0.77	Agree	3.36	0.61	Agree

5.	Experts in counseling are involved in school matters to improve teachers' performance	2.97	0.90	Agree	3.31	0.68	Agree
6.	There is a conflict resolution in the school for effective job performance	3.01	0.78	Agree	3.34	0.63	Agree
7.	Regular meetings are held with teachers to discuss issues and prevent conflict	3.15	0.78	Agree	3.44	0.60	Agree
8.	Disciplinary action is taken against teachers who are involved in unacceptable behaviour	3.17	0.80	Agree	3.45	0.59	Agree
9.	Mediation is used to resolve conflict between teachers	3.11	0.81	Agree	3.43	0.60	Agree
10.	Team building activities are built to promote collaboration and reduce conflict	3.16	0.84	Agree	3.41	0.67	Agree
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation		3.16	0.02	Agree	3.34	0.33	Agree

Data analysis presented on the table revealed that the mean ratings of public and private secondary schools' teachers for all items were above the cut-off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as staff conflict management practices for improving teachers' job performance.

The cluster standard deviation score which stood at 0.02 and 0.33 for public and private secondary schools' teachers respectively are closer to the mean, indicating similarity in their responses. The cluster means of 3.16 and 3.34 for public and private secondary schools' teachers respectively were 2.50 indicated agreement with most of the items and this showed that similar staff conflict management practices are adopted by principals for improving teachers' job performance in public and private secondary schools in Anambra state.

Hypothesis

Ho: There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on staff conflict management practices of principals for improving their job performance.

The summary of t-test analysis on the staff conflict management practices adopted by principals for improving their job performance.

Group	N	Mean	SD	P-value	Df	Alpha	Remark
Public secondary schools	825	3.15	.02	0.000	1349	0.05	Significant
Private secondary schools	526	3.34	.33				

Data presented in the table above revealed that the p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, null hypothesis is not accepted. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the staff conflict management practices adopted by principals for improving their job performance.

Discussion

The results of the findings showed that similar staff conflict management practices were adopted by principals for improving teachers' job performance in public and private secondary schools in Anambra state. This finding is in line with that of Nwankwo and Nwosu (2024) which showed a strong positive relationship between principals' self-awareness, self-management, and conflict resolution approach in Anambra State. The agreement in the finding could be as a result that both studies were conducted using secondary schools in Anambra State. This is also supported by Babaride and Alade (2024) who found that there is a significant positive relationship between conflict management strategies and organizational goal attainment. The staff conflict management practices adopted by principals for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools were allowing teachers to freely express themselves in open communication and contributions during meetings. It was revealed that matters regarding conflicts among teachers should be thoroughly investigated and handled promptly. This agrees with Shehu-Usman, Uzochukwu and Gambo (2024) who found a significant positive relationship between organizational performance and all the examined conflict management strategies; namely avoidance strategy, collaboration strategy,

accommodation strategy and compromising strategy. This is similar with Muthumani and Manojkumar (2023) who revealed that the collaborating strategy and avoiding strategy favourably influence employee productivity.

It was also revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the staff conflict management practices adopted by principals in Anambra State. This finding is supported by Nwankwo and Nwosu (2024) who discovered a weak positive relationship between principals' social-awareness and conflict resolution approach. The similarity of these findings could be as a result that both studies were conducted using the same area of study

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher conclude that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of public and private secondary school teachers on the staff conflict management practices adopted by principals for improving their job performance.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should promote team building activities so as to encourage collaboration among teachers
2. Take disciplinary action against teachers who are involved in unacceptable behaviour
3. Hold regular meetings that allows open communication to discuss conflicting issues and prevent conflict.

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