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SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN ANAMBRA STATE PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the school administrators' conflict resolution strategies as predictors of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 6,185 public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. A sample of 729 teachers was selected for the study through a multistage sampling procedure. Two sets of instruments titled "School Administrators' Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (SACRSQ)" and Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ)" were used for data collection. The instruments underwent both face and content validity by three experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State. The reliability of the instruments was determined using Cronbach alpha which yielded overall coefficients of 0.84 and 0.81 for SACRSQ and TJSQ respectively. Data analysis was done using simple regression. The findings of the study revealed among others that school administrators' use of accommodative and compromising strategies are strong predictors of teachers' job satisfaction. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the principals should make use of accommodative and compromising strategies in resolving school conflicts in Anambra State public secondary schools.

KEYWORDS

School Administrators, Conflict Resolution, Strategies, Teachers' Job Satisfaction



INTRODUCTION

Education establishments are complex social organizations engaged in the delivery of utilitarian service which is geared toward satisfying governmental and societal needs. The complex nature of the educational establishment brings people with different backgrounds in terms of needs, goals, skills, talents, status, competencies, knowledge, behavioural styles, interests, values, prejudices, aggressiveness, perception to serve as members of the organization. One thing that is obvious about this, is that these people (school administrators, teachers, students and non-teaching staff) are from diverse backgrounds and have different needs and dispositions which are sometimes at variance with the goals of the school. Under such state of diversity, operation of the school system cannot be devoid of conflicts that are bound to arise from the daily interactions of the occupants of the system as individuals or groups.

Conflict is the state of discontentment or agreement between two or more parties. They is inevitable in an organization, education institutions inclusive. They involve human beings with varied interests, goals and aspirations. Okoye and Okeke-Onkonkwo (2021) described conflict as the act of coming into collision, clash and opposition with one another. Conflict is therefore a social problem. Ughamadu (2012) defined conflict as disagreements over an issue, sometimes such disagreement may be positive or negative, whichever way, whether in the family, industrial, national or international setting. Conflict is a normal occurrence in human relations because society or mankind needs to disagree to agree. According to Ezegebe as cited in Ughamadu (2012), conflict is a natural hostility in an inter-human relationship, which takes the form of insults, name-calling, defamation of character or blackmailing, false accusation, withdrawal of love, support and services. Obi (2012) viewed conflict as inevitable and inherent in all inter-department relationships. Conflict usually reflects the diversity and complaints of human societies. It is an unavoidable social phenomenon that is an integral part of human existence. Contextually, conflict is defined as a disagreement between the management and workers in schools which majorly can be among government, principals, teachers and students. At the school, it is the responsibility of school administrators to resolve conflict.

School administrators are the chief executive officers of their schools. Ogbodo (2012) stated that the school administrator does several things at once in his or her school. He or she is the instructional leader, custodian of facilities, chief accounting officer and personnel manager in-charge of conflict resolution. Olaboye (2004) opined that the school administrators are seen as the ones who should ensure that educational goals are achieved. This includes the ability to resolve conflict which is an important skill for the school administrator to develop. The essential conflict management skills include negotiation, arbitration, conciliation, mediation and collaboration.

Human beings generally have a natural desire to do good jobs but on entering the organization, are faced with complexities of the job due to conflicts and they may not function properly. An individual goes into the organization with needs and problems expecting the organization to at least satisfy part of these needs and ability for the organization to do this creates satisfaction. Alasin, (2022) defined job satisfaction as psychological state of how an individual feels towards work. Job satisfaction is viewed as the extent to which people like or dislike their job (Spector, 2007). To the researchers, job satisfaction is how a person feels and enjoys what he or she does for a living. In the school environment, the school administrators are faced with clashes of interests between individuals who are expecting to have fulfillment in their jobs. Resolving a clash of interests requires the school administrators to spend a major part of their time on conflict resolution. The appropriate solution strategy in a given conflict situation requires accurate identification of conflict origin, participants and their relationships to apply the most effective technique. It is expedient to devise appropriate strategies for effective conflict resolution which will enhance teachers' job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction induces the dedication and connectedness of members of staff with their work. D'souza (2009) stated that it is generally accepted by the employers of labour that if the worker is not satisfied with the job, the worker is unlikely to perform. When a worker is unsatisfied with job conditions, he or she displays some negative tendencies such as climate suspicion, distrust and reduction in contact between people which pose a barrier to communication. This kind of environment becomes a breeding ground for conflict to thrive. Ekaette (2008) observed that many school administrators are not well versed in conflict resolution inadvertently, making

them escalate conflicts in the school environment instead of resolving or avoiding them. Since conflict is inevitable in schools; the administrators must be prepared to deal with it, not necessarily from the point of view of elimination but rather, to derive the greatest possible benefit from the conflict resolution process. In a school environment, the actions or inactions of the school administrator could trigger off reactions from the staff or students, leading perhaps to resistance or conformance. School administrators should therefore be mindful of their reactions or responses to emerging or developed conflict situations.

Conversely, the actions of the subordinates and students could trigger reactions from the school administrator. These reactions can make or mar the institution. Interestingly, the world is decorated with individuals with peculiarities, expectedly wherever human being exists be it in a domestic or institutional setting, there is a likelihood of different reactions to circumstances and situations because no two human beings are the same. The ability of the administrator to harness the differences is very vital in the school environment because if these differences are not properly handled; properties, lives and academic hours of unimaginable are lost. Ejiogu (2009) stated that there are two broad categories of causes of conflict between teachers and their school administrators, these causes are financial and administrative. The financial problems were mentioned as follows: when teachers desire to use examination fees for personal purposes when teachers indulge in illegal admission when teachers collect sports fees from students without remitting same to appropriate quarters. Furthermore, Ejiogu averred that the second cause of conflict is administrative problems which come to the lime light when teachers are habitual latecomers, chronic absentees, fail to write lesson notes, misuse government properties, batter students and sexual abuse of the female students by the male teachers.

The poor working condition of teachers could trigger conflict in secondary schools. To buttress this, Obanya (2012) opined that another source of conflict is the poor condition of service of teachers. Okeke (2009) maintained that teachers' salaries are the lowest in Nigeria. Akande (2004) noted that for over two decades, the teachers of Nigeria under the aegis of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) have been consistent in their request for improved conditions of service and salary structure for teachers which have led to a series of strike actions. Among the issues is the observation of David-Chyddy (2016) on the shabby treatment of teachers by the Anambra State Government. Teachers were claimed to be discriminated against in the area of promotion, training and other incentives accruing to other workers which is a cause of conflict and job dissatisfaction among teachers. This position is imperative because it is so pronounced on the teachers that they are not ready to put extra effort into any school activity. An attempt to make the teachers take a step further by the school administrator is strongly resisted by teachers, these teachers turn down any extra assignment given to them. This has created conflict in the school environment because the job satisfaction of these teachers is questionable.

Esien (2008) noted that delays in the resolution of conflicts have resulted in disruption of academic calendars leading to economic as well as psychological exertion. Oyesola cited in Ahiuma-Young (2017) explained that the continuous closure of the schools as a result of the strike is detrimental to the students, who will lose a substantial part of the academic calendar. From the aforementioned, the cases of conflict in schools have not been properly dealt with in Anambra State in particular and Nigeria at large.

To resolve conflicting issues, conflict resolution is of great importance especially in recent times, where industrial disputes have affected the academic peace in the Nigerian educational sector. To this end, conflict resolution is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict, while increasing the positive aspects of the conflict. Conflict resolution aims to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organizational setting (Rahim, 2012). Blake and Moutom cited in CIOS (2015) identified five basic conflict resolution strategies which include accommodation, compromise, coercion, avoidance and confrontation.

The accommodative approach to conflict resolution emphasizes cooperation instead of assertiveness. Alasin, (2022) noted that the accommodative strategy is unassertive and cooperative and is normally used when one party is willing to give up for the other. A person places his or her interests last and allows the other party to further his or her interests. The accommodating approach often occurs when a party is not significantly interested in securing a victory because he or she does not perceive the alternative option as a significant threat (Vanessa, 2016). Accommodating involves giving in to the other party's wishes or smoothing the choppy waves

of conflict. While using accommodation strategies, one party sacrifices one's goals for the sake of the other person. Accommodation is something that occurs when goals are compatible, but the interactions are not considered important to overall goal attainment. School administrators who engage in accommodative strategy may appear to be polite but what happens as result is that they go through their administrative duties without meeting their set targets and the teachers can only be partially satisfied. The strategy is being used to ensure that teachers are satisfied with their job through principal's tolerance.

Compromise approach to conflict resolution sees bargaining as the hallmark of the resolution. According to Hareesol, Maisarah, Omar-Fauzee, Kasa, Husin and Singha (2019), compromising strategy is associated with give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. Furthermore, Hareesol et al asserted that parties involved in the conflict will find a way to get a solution that can be partially satisfied for both parties by reaching a middle ground. The conflicting parties can identify some interests that they are willing to compromise on to bring about a resolution. While the emotional level might still be high, the compromise style sometimes results in an interim solution when a full resolution is not immediately possible. Parties might reach a settlement to prevent further escalation of the conflict (Vanessa, 2016). Compromise is a give and takes of resources. Merry (2008) posited that compromise sends a message of tolerance, understanding and sympathy for both parties, leaving integrity and dignity intact. For teachers to be satisfied with their jobs, principals' toleration ability can enhance conflict resolution in secondary schools. Okoye and Okeke-Onkonkwo (2020) observed that most public secondary school in Anambra State has been noted to be having high levels of conflicts. The authors added that all these conflicts in public secondary schools often emanate into strikes, demonstrations, lockouts, destructions and burning of properties such as laboratories, classes, libraries, instructional materials, poor communication and personal differences which contribute to job dissatisfaction among teachers in the state. It is against this background that the researchers investigated school administrators' conflict resolution strategies as predictors of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is inevitable in schools because of the interaction with people of diverse backgrounds. There exist misunderstandings between principal and teacher, teacher and teacher, teacher and student as well as student and student which induce conflict. Anambra State is among the state that has taken education as a matter of priority in its; yearly budgetary statement. Despite the said government priority measures, researchers and teaching service board have identified among other problems bedeviling education and teachers in the state which include fluctuation in gross net pay of staff salaries, teachers were not promptly promoted and salaries were not adjusted even after acquiring additional qualification which makes teachers' conditions of service go from bad to worse. The poor conditions of service of teachers have led to various conflicts which has made teachers manifest poor class attendance in the sense that most of them look for other means of getting their daily bread instead of relying only on teaching; most qualified teachers are quitting the teaching profession and this gives room to the unqualified ones; most of the teachers on ground are not given the opportunity for training/retraining to gain more knowledge.

It is necessary to note that the achievement of the school's objectives is dependent on the teachers and the school administrators. The extent to which these school administrators are involved in the administration especially in areas of conflict resolution, has eaten deep into the educational system as the researchers observed that there is a high rate of favourism in the area of conflict resolution. Hence, the study, therefore, was initiated to school administrators' conflict resolution strategies as predictors of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine school administrators' conflict resolution strategies as predictors of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. School administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution as a predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

2. School administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution as a predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does school administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution predicts teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.
2. To what extent does school administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution predicts teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

3. School administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution is not a significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.
4. School administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution is not a significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Method

The study adopted a correlational research design. Correlational research design is a type of research that tries to establish whether there is relationship between two or more variables and the nature and extent of the relationship (Elendu, 2010). The research design is appropriate for the study since it sought to determine the extent of relationship between independent variables (Accommodative and compromising strategies) and teachers' job satisfaction. The study was carried out in Anambra State which is located in the South-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

The population of the study comprised all the 6,185 teachers in the public secondary schools in Anambra State. A sample size of 720 teachers was drawn for the study using a multistage sampling procedure involving stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Two sets of instruments titled "School Administrators' Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (SACRSQ)" and Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ)" were used for data collection. SACRSQ contained 17 items divided into two clusters A and B. Cluster A had 8 items on accommodative strategy and Cluster B which focused on compromising strategy had 9 items. TJSQ had 15 items. The instruments were structured on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The face and content validity of the instruments were established by giving draft copies of the instruments, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses to three experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, two in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaram, Anambra State, Nigeria. The suggestions of the experts were used for the modification of the instruments. The internal consistencies of the instruments were determined using Cronbach alpha which yielded coefficients of 0.82 and 0.85 for the two clusters of SACRSQ with an overall coefficient of 0.84 and 0.81 obtained for TJSQ.

The researchers visited the selected schools with the aid of two research assistants who were briefed on how to administer and retrieve the instruments from the sampled respondents. Data collected were analyzed using simple regression to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. For the decision on the research questions, the coefficient r and the size of the relationship were interpreted using the interpretation of a correlation coefficient by Downie and Heath cited in Nworgu (2015) as shown: 0.80 and above for high, above 0.30-below 0.80 for moderate and 0.30 and below for low respectively. For the decision on the hypotheses, if the p -value is equal to or less than the significant value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, but if the p -value is greater than the significant value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Result

Research Question 1: To what extent does school administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution predicts teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Table 1: Summary of Regression Analysis of School Administrators' use of Accommodative Strategy in Conflict Resolution as a Predictor of Teachers' Job satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
1	.772	.617	.633	4.112	Strong

The result in Table 1 above showed that the R-value of .772 with a coefficient of determination of .617. This shows that the school administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution contributes to a 61.7% variation in teachers' job satisfaction. The regression Coefficient r of .772 indicated that school administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution is a strong predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Research Question 2: To what extent does school administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution predicts teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis of School Administrators' use of Compromising Strategy in Conflict Resolution as a Predictor of Teachers' Job satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
1	.723	.647	.612	3.094	Strong

The result in Table 2 above showed that the R-value of .722 with a coefficient of determination of .612. This shows that the school administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution contributes to a 61.2% variation in teachers' job satisfaction. The regression Coefficient r of .722 indicated that school administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution is a strong predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Hypothesis One: School administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution is not a significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Table 3: Summary of Simple Regression Analysis of School Administrators' use of Accommodative Strategy in Conflict Resolution as Insignificant Predictor of Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Predictor	R	R ²	F	P-value	Remark
Accommodative Strategy	.772	.671	224.266	.018	*S

*Significant

As shown in Table 3, the simple regression coefficient (R) is .772 while the R² is .671 showing that School administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution makes a 67.1% contribution to the variance in teachers' job satisfaction. The $F(1/720) = 224.266$ and the p -value of .018 is less than .05. Therefore, since the p -value is less than the stipulated .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, school administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution is a significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Hypothesis Two: School administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution is not a significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Table 4: Summary of Simple Regression Analysis of School Administrators' use of Compromising Strategy in Conflict Resolution as Insignificant Predictor of Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Predictor	R	R ²	F	P-value	Remark
Accommodative Strategy	.723	.647	287.133	.012	*S

*Significant

As shown in Table 4, the simple regression coefficient (R) is .723 while the R² is .647 showing that School administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution makes a 64.7% contribution to the variance in teachers' job satisfaction. The $F(1/720) = 287.133$ and the p -value of .012 is less than .05. Therefore, since the p -value is less than the stipulated .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, school administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution is a significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that school administrators' use of accommodative strategy in conflict resolution is a strong predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools. This is in agreement with the finding of Alasin (2022) who reported that there was strong relationship between accommodating conflict management strategies and employee job satisfaction. The accommodating strategy is associated with the school principals putting aside personal interests to please the conflicting parties. The accommodative strategy in conflict resolution is usually adopted by school administrators who forgone some of their privileges to give in to the demands of the opposing parties which induces the job satisfaction of teachers. It was also reported that school administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution is a significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools. This supported the finding of Alasin (2022) who reported that there was a significant relationship between accommodating conflict management strategies and employee job satisfaction.

The result of the study showed that school administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution is a strong predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools. This agreed with the finding of Muhammad, Arman, Muhammad, Abdullah and Shahrul (2018) who reported that compromising strategy was a strong correlation to job satisfaction. The compromising strategies encourage the conflicting parties to willingly give in on some demands to reach a concession that is satisfying to both of them. The demands to give in, which are fairly shared by the school administrators, create harmonious relationships which induce job satisfaction among teachers. It was also found that school administrators' use of compromising strategy in conflict resolution is a significant predictor of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools. This is in line with the finding of Muhammad, Arman, Muhammad, Abdullah and Shahrul (2018) who reported that compromising strategy was significantly correlated to job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that school administrators' conflict resolution strategies are strong and significant predictors of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools. The school administrators' use of accommodative and compromising strategies in conflict resolution can contribute to the improvement of teachers' job satisfaction in Anambra State public secondary schools. The use of accommodative and compromising strategies in conflict resolution creates an orderly and harmonious work environment which leads to teachers' job satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Administrators of secondary schools in Anambra State should ensure that they make use of accommodative strategy in resolving conflict to enhance teachers' job satisfaction.
2. Secondary school administrators should make use of compromising strategy where deemed fit in resolving conflict so as to enhance teachers' job satisfaction.

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