

## PRINCIPALS' CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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### Abstract

*The study examined principals' conflict management styles as predictors of teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study was a correlational research design. The population of the study was 267 principals in the 267 public secondary schools from the six Education Zones in Anambra State. Census sampling technique was employed in the study to select the entire population of 267 principals for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection: Principals' Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (PCMSQ) and Teachers' Organisational Behaviour Questionnaire (TOBQ). The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. Face validation was done by three experts while construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help of SPSS v.26 and the results showed that construct validity was met. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha technique and the average coefficients were established at 0.76 for PCMSQ and 0.82 for TOBQ. Simple linear regression analysis was used for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that accommodating and collaborating conflict management styles exhibit a positive and significant predictive value on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded that principals mix applications of conflict management styles jointly are positive and significant predictors of teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that secondary school principals should not rely totally on one conflict management strategy as the best for all situations, instead they should learn how to use various conflict management strategies and apply any one based on the type of conflict and the people involved in it.*

**Keywords:** Conflict Management Styles, Teachers' Organisational Behaviour

### Introduction

Secondary schools are saddled with the onerous responsibility of preparing the youth for useful living in the society through appropriate arrangement and implementation of the school curriculum. The business of managing such a curriculum has never been a one man affair. It rather takes the collaborative efforts of the head of the school and the staff to achieve school goals and objectives. Secondary school is a dynamic social system driven by organizational behaviour of teachers.

Organizational behaviour is concerned with how an individual or groups of people act in the workplace. Jami and Agha (2022) defined organizational behaviour as the unique attitude and conduct manifested by personnel within an organization which is central to performance and corporate effectiveness. It is the attitude of people working in an organization. Edgar (2023) described teachers' organizational behaviour as the character and work habits exhibited by teaching staff of educational institution. It is the manner in which teachers act or behave towards colleagues and learners in the work environment. Obiakor *et al.* (2024) defined organizational behaviour as the operations, actions, functions and attitudes of individuals who make up the organization. Teachers' organizational behaviour is the attitudes and conducts of teachers in carrying out their work. Ughamadu *et al.* (2024) noted that teachers demonstrate citizenship behaviour through punctuality, assisting other teachers, offering to undertake any urgent work, making innovative suggestions to improve the institution and not complaining about trivial matters, responding promptly to correspondence and not wasting time. It also entails monitoring the workplace for opportunities or threats and making an extra effort to adopt innovative approaches to instructional delivery in the classroom.

In educational setting, teachers' organizational behaviour is distinctive and type of work behaviours that teachers exhibit to the benefit of the school which are discretionary, not directly or explicitly acknowledged by the official compensation system. Edezaro (2024) maintained that teachers' organizational behaviours are teachers' behaviours that is discretionary, not directly and explicitly recognized by the formal

reward system and that in the aggregate promotes effective functioning of the school. By discretionary, it means that the behaviour is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description (that is, the clearly specifiable term) of the teachers' employment contract with the school. The behaviour is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable. Efanga and Akpan (2022) averred that the concept of teachers' organizational behaviour include extra-role behaviour, pro-social organizational behaviour, contextual performance and organizational spontaneity.

Teachers' organizational behaviour is all the positive and constructive teachers' actions and behaviours that are not part of their formal job description. It is anything that teachers choose to do, spontaneously and of their own accord, which often lies outside of their specified contractual obligations. Teachers' organizational behaviour may not always be directly and formally recognized or rewarded by school, nor through salary increments or promotions for example, though of course it may be reflected in favourable supervisor and co-worker ratings, or better performance appraisals. In this way it can facilitate future reward gain indirectly. Thus, teachers could exhibit outstanding behaviour in work environment in which they observe good application of principals' conflict management styles in the school.

Conflict management can be considered as the process of removing barriers to something for agreement. It is a process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing its positive aspects. The aim of conflict management in school is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organizational setting (Udeogu & Onyeizugbe, 2024). Udeogu and Onyeizugbe further argued that different management strategies such as competing style, collaborative style, compromising style, accommodating style and avoiding style, may lead to either desirable or undesirable outcomes depending on their effectiveness or ineffectiveness, respectively. Effective management style may result in desirable outcome such as smooth management, enhanced discipline, and effective management of time, team spirit, and effective use of resources, achievement of goals, good relationships and great value by stakeholders. However, when ineffective management style is used, undesirable outcomes such as strikes, demonstrations, destruction of property, poor performance, emotional stress, and misallocation of resources, absence and frustration may occur.

Conflict management styles refer to those techniques or approaches that can be used to prevent, control or resolve conflicts in schools. School principals' knowledge in conflict management styles may bring a harmonious academic environment in the school. However, resolution of conflicts in school management and leadership is not given much attention as school principals in Anambra state are not provided with pre-service training in conflict resolution, thus a majority of them lack knowledge in this field. This was also attested by Ughamadu *et al.* (2022) that school principals in Anambra State use their common sense or trial and error to deal with conflicts because they are not trained. This is a challenge school principals face because they have to deal with teachers who are professionals by virtue of their job, so one cannot rely on past experience to resolve conflicts; hence the need to apply scientific methods on how to resolve conflicts in an effective way.

Principals' conflict management styles are internal mechanisms that enable principals to get to the root of problems in order to resolve conflict in a manner that is acceptable to the conflicting parties. If conflict is resolved well, it brings about harmonious working relationship. Otherwise it leads to disunity among teachers and other staff in schools. Therefore, the relationship between conflict and teachers' organisational behaviour depends on conflict management styles employed by school principals. Thus, the school principals can manage school conflicts with either of these styles as accommodating and collaborating management styles which is the focus of this study as there are other various styles that is abound as practicable in modern day organisations.

Principals use accommodating style to resolve conflicts in the schools. In this strategy, the principals always accommodate and put teachers and staff's needs first. Abdul *et al.* (2023) opined that principals admit mistakes and takes responsibility towards their actions in the school. Accommodating is used by principals who take their relationship with staff members more important. Therefore, principals in schools must be people who enjoy learning from others, in that way they would be able to handle school conflicts in a more effective manner. Onyali and Nnebedum (2023) maintained that accommodating as a conflict resolution style enables each party in the conflict situation to surrender certain interests and values in order to make peace. However, the demerit of this style is that the problem may reoccur in another form or situation. Onyali and Nnebedum further noted that mediation often involves elements of accommodating and collaboration. Thus, both accommodating and collaboration are usually necessary in a functional partnership. Often elements of each are required in the same solution.

In collaborating style, the principals try to work together with each teacher in school. Amajuoyi (2022) maintained that collaborating style is a style of conflict resolution where leaders try to work together

with their staff members and maximize efficiency through cooperation. Nwogwugwu (2024) argued that collaborative style of conflict management is sometimes called problem-solving or integrating, involves working through conflict differences and solving problems so that everyone wins. It seeks to resolve conflict by placing maximum focus on both groups' concerns. In this vein, Agu and Obiukwu (2022) referred to collaborating as a problem-solving approach. This style is more effective and can be relevant in a school setting because it encourages teamwork, sharing of ideas and confrontation of differences.

Furthermore, the hostile, dishonest and unfriendly attitudes of some secondary school principals towards their teachers could demotivate them from performing additional roles that contribute to the attainment of educational objectives in Anambra State. Ihueze and Unachukwu (2022) observed that some secondary school teachers in Anambra State neglect their duties and exhibit an 'I do not care attitude' towards engaging in behaviour that enhances educational improvement. Ihueze and Unachukwu added that the cases of teachers disengaging in activities within their schools seem to prove that organisational behaviour among secondary school teachers in Anambra State is low. Perhaps, the undesirable behaviour of teachers could be reciprocal of the unfair treatment of the principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. To buttress this, Thompson and Unachukwu (2022) observed that teachers, who perceive any form of unfairness in the treatment meted to them by the system may sooner than later begin to exhibit varying degrees of negative behaviour. The series of principals' unhealthy or unethical behaviours such as being biased, refusing teachers to air their views on school affairs, favouritism, untimely dissemination of communication and most especially poor application of conflict management styles might be among the contributing factors to unwillingness of teachers to act beyond their formal job description and expectations. It is against this background that prompted the researcher to investigate principals' conflict management styles as predictors of teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to examine principals' conflict management styles as predictors of teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the predictive value of accommodating conflict management style on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. ascertain the predictive value of collaborating conflict management style on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of accommodating conflict management style on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of collaborating conflict management style on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Accommodating conflict management style does not significantly predict teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Collaborating conflict management style does not significantly predict teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Methods**

The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study was a correlational research design. The population of the study was 267 principals in the 267 public secondary schools from the six Education Zones in Anambra State. Census sampling technique was employed in the study to select the entire population of 267 principals for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection: Principals' Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (PCMSQ) and Teachers' Organisational Behaviour Questionnaire (TOBQ). The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. Face validation was done by three experts while construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help of SPSS v.26 and the results showed that construct validity was met. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha technique and the average coefficients were established at 0.76 for PCMSQ and 0.82 for TOBQ. The

administration and retrieval of the instrument from the respondents was ‘on the spot delivery’ by the researcher together with three research assistants. Out of 267 copies of the instrument administered, 262(98%) of the instrument were correctly completed and returned. Simple linear regression analysis was used for the study at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the predictive value of accommodating conflict management style on teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Summary of simple regression analysis on the predictive value of accommodating conflict management style on teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State

|                            | Unstandardized<br>$\beta$ | Std. Dev.<br>$\beta$ | Standardized<br>$\beta$ |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Constant                   | 31.246                    | 6.524                |                         |
| <b>Accommodating Style</b> | 0.661                     | 0.328                | 0.635                   |
| R                          | 0.635                     |                      |                         |
| R <sup>2</sup>             | 0.524                     |                      |                         |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup>        | 0.501                     |                      |                         |

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 1 indicated that the regression line has a positive intercept as presented by the constant value of 31.246. This means that if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero) at the expense of principals’ accommodating conflict management style, teachers’ organisational behaviour will be valued at 31%. The analysis also revealed that principals’ accommodating conflict management style has a positive predictive value on teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ( $R = 0.635$ ). However, the standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) was also valued of 0.635, meaning that principals’ accommodating conflict management style is a positive predictor of teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in principals’ accommodating conflict management style leads to 0.635(64%) increase in teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.524 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 52% of the variations in teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in principals’ use of accommodating conflict management style. The adjusted  $R^2$  supported the claim of the  $R^2$  with a value of 0.501 indicating that 50% of the total variation in the dependent variable (teachers’ organisational behaviour) was explained by the independent variable (principals’ use of accommodating conflict management style). Thus, adjusted  $R^2$  supports the statement that the explanatory power of principals’ use of accommodating conflict management style is moderately strong in enhancing teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the predictive value of collaborating conflict management style on teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 2:** Summary of simple regression analysis on the predictive value of collaborating conflict management style on teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State

|                            | Unstandardized<br>$\beta$ | Std. Dev.<br>$\beta$ | Standardized<br>$\beta$ |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Constant                   | 30.815                    | 6.713                |                         |
| <b>Collaborating Style</b> | 0.637                     | 0.358                | 0.612                   |
| R                          | 0.612                     |                      |                         |
| R <sup>2</sup>             | 0.504                     |                      |                         |
| Adj. R <sup>2</sup>        | 0.485                     |                      |                         |

The summary of the simple regression analysis as shown in Table 2 indicated that the regression line has a positive intercept as presented by the constant value of 30.815. This means that if all the variables are held constant or fixed (zero) at the expense of principals’ collaborating conflict management style, teachers’ organisational behaviour will be valued at 30%. The analysis also revealed that principals’ collaborating conflict management style has a positive predictive value on teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State as shown by the regression coefficient ( $R = 0.612$ ). However, the standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) was also valued of 0.612, meaning that principals’ collaborating conflict management style is a positive predictor of teachers’ organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit improvement in principals’ collaborating conflict management

style leads to 0.612(61%) improvement in teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.504 indicated that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 50% of the variations in teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in principals' use of collaborating conflict management style. The adjusted  $R^2$  supported the claim of the  $R^2$  with a value of 0.501 indicating that 50% of the total variation in the dependent variable (teachers' organisational behaviour) was explained by the independent variable (principals' use of collaborating conflict management style). Thus, adjusted  $R^2$  supports the statement that the explanatory power of principals' use of collaborating conflict management style is moderately strong in enhancing teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Test of Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Accommodating conflict management style does not significantly predict teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 3:** Test of significance of simple regression analysis on accommodating conflict management style as significant predictor of teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State

|                            | Unstandardized<br>$\beta$ | Std. Dev.<br>$\beta$ | Standardized<br>$\beta$ | t-<br>value | p-<br>value |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Constant                   | 31.246                    | 6.524                |                         | 24.015      | 0.000       |
| <b>Accommodating Style</b> | 0.661                     | 0.328                | 0.635                   | 20.361      | 0.000       |
| R                          | 0.635                     |                      |                         |             |             |
| $R^2$                      | 0.524                     |                      |                         |             |             |
| Adj. $R^2$                 | 0.501                     |                      |                         |             |             |
| F                          | 39.628                    |                      |                         |             | 0.000       |

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 3 revealed that the regression line is constant at 31.246; simple regression coefficient (R) is valued at 0.635 while the  $R^2$  is valued at 0.524 and Adjust  $R^2$  is valued at 0.501. The F-ratio associated with regression is significant at 39.628, the t-test is 20.361 and the p-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance at 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that accommodating conflict management style does not significantly predict teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that accommodating conflict management style significantly predict teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Collaborating conflict management style does not significantly predict teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 4:** Test of significance of simple regression analysis on collaborating conflict management style as significant predictor of teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State

|                            | Unstandardized<br>$\beta$ | Std. Dev.<br>$\beta$ | Standardized<br>$\beta$ | t-<br>value | p-<br>value |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Constant                   | 30.815                    | 6.713                |                         | 22.483      | 0.000       |
| <b>Collaborating Style</b> | 0.637                     | 0.358                | 0.612                   | 19.516      | 0.000       |
| R                          | 0.612                     |                      |                         |             |             |
| $R^2$                      | 0.504                     |                      |                         |             |             |
| Adj. $R^2$                 | 0.482                     |                      |                         |             |             |
| F                          | 35.435                    |                      |                         |             | 0.000       |

The summary of the test of significance of simple regression analysis as shown in Table 4 revealed that the regression line is constant at 30.815; simple regression coefficient (R) is valued at 0.612 while the  $R^2$  is valued at 0.504 and Adjust  $R^2$  is valued at 0.482. The F-ratio associated with regression is significant at 35.435, the t-test is 19.516 and the p-value = 0.000. Since p-value (0.000) is less than the specified level of significance at 0.05, the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that collaborating conflict management style does not significantly predict teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that collaborating conflict management style significantly predict teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Discussion

Findings on the predictive value of accommodating conflict management style on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State indicated that accommodating conflict management style has a positive predictive value of 0.635 on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that as accommodating conflict management style continue to increase/or decrease, it will bring about corresponding increase/or decrease in teachers' organisational behaviour at the value of 64% respectively in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also revealed that accommodating conflict management style significantly predicted teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding of the study is in line with Agu and Obiukwu (2022) who found that the most effective conflict management strategies used were accommodating strategy. Abdul et al. (2023) findings from the study showed principals' conflict management strategies on effective management of secondary schools include accommodation approaches which have positive influence on teachers' job performance. Onyali and Nnebedum (2023) revealed that all the items under the accommodating strategy and collaborating strategy used by principals in managing conflicts in schools are effective in Anambra State. Udeogu and Onyeizugbe (2024) revealed on the overall that principals' use of accommodation conflict management technique had a positive high relationship with to teachers' job performance in government owned secondary schools in South East, Nigeria. The similarities in the studies showed that accommodating conflict management style of principals is a good conflict resolution because of it unique advantages among which include allowing conflicts to be resolved quickly, restores peace and harmony, helps maintain positive working relationships and preserve trust and there is often a spirit of friendliness when one of the parties is accommodating.

Findings on the predictive value of collaborating conflict management style on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State indicated that collaborating conflict management style exhibit a positive predictive value of 0.612 on teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This means that any increase/or decrease in collaborating conflict management style will also increase/or decrease teachers' organisational behaviour at the value of 61% respectively in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also revealed that collaborating conflict management style significantly predicted teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding of the study justifies the works of Amajuoyi (2022) that the utilization of collaborating conflict management strategies had a significant influence on secondary school teachers' job effectiveness. In the findings of Ikediugwu and Ibezim (2023), collaborative intervention technique has a positive influence on teachers' job performance and teachers can use it to resolve conflict in the school. Obiakor et al. (2024) revealed that collaborating strategy were among the significant principals' conflict management strategies adopted for teachers' job effectiveness in public secondary schools. The similarities found among the studies was that principals' collaborating leadership style is associated with the features of encouraging problem-solving, building stronger relationships, long-term solutions, improved communication, create sense of respect and shared responsibility

## **Conclusion**

It can be said that schools like other human organizations are prone to one or other type of conflict due to day to day human interactions. The school principals are therefore expected to exhibit adequate abilities to effectively manage the raging daily conflicts emanating in the school environment. Based on the findings, the study concluded that principals mix applications of conflict management styles jointly are positive and significant predictors of teachers' organisational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should ensure that they setup conflict management committee (CMC) in their schools that will serve as the body responsible for managing teachers' conflict. Staff in this committee should be adequately trained on how to handle conflicts and other related matters.
2. Secondary school principal should not rely totally on one conflict management strategy as the best for all situations, instead they should learn how to use various conflict management strategies and apply any one based on the type of conflict and the people involved in it.

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