

PRINCIPALS CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AS CORRELATES OF TEACHERS ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE.

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Abstract

The study examined principals' conflict management strategies as correlates of teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research guided the study questions and three null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. 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. There was no sampling because the population was small and manageable by the researcher. Three instruments were used for data collection: Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (CMSQ) and Teachers' Organizational Behaviour Questionnaire (TOBQ). The instruments were subjected to face and construct validation. Face validation was done by three experts, two in Educational Management and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all in Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, COOU, Igbariam Campus while construct validation was carried out by Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the help SPSS v.26. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha technique and the average coefficient values of 0.83 for PCSQ, 0.77 for CMSQ and 0.83 for TOBQ were obtained and considered highly reliable and suitable for the study. Direct method of data administration was utilized by the researcher together with six research assistants. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool was used for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship among accommodating conflict management strategy ($r=0.612$, $p=0.000$), collaborating conflict management strategy ($r=0.572$, $p=0.000$) and teachers' organizational behaviour while avoidance conflict management strategy ($r = -0.285$, $p=0.183$) exhibited a negative and insignificant relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded that principals mix applications of conflict management strategies jointly are positively and significantly correlated to teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that Ministry of Education in line with Post Primary Schools Service Commission, Awka should sponsor principals in workshops, seminars and conferences to enable them up-date their knowledge on communication and conflict management skills in order to create conducive school environment that would enhance and sustain teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study contributed to knowledge by establishing the empirical fact that teachers' job organizational behaviour stemmed from accommodating strategy, collaborating strategy and avoidance strategy that are promoted by principals who jointly apply mix conflict management strategies in managing conflicts and running the affairs of the school. It established that Principals' Conflicts Management Strategies are essential in developing motivated, committed and competent teachers who are willing to put extra efforts to discharge their duties which lead to higher organizational behaviour in school.

Keywords: Conflict Management Strategies, Teacher's Organizational Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Education system is an organization made up of people with diverse views, attributes and opinions brought together with the intention to provide the educational needs of the society. One of the ultimate aims of education is to strengthen the individuals and the society's problem-solving capacity and ability so that people can solve different problems using education. Education lies at the heart of social and economic development. It has the power to reduce poverty, improve health, and promote democracy. Secondary education is the education which children receive after primary or basic education and before the tertiary level. The members of staff in the school interact and work together to achieve common objectives. The attainment of secondary education objectives of preparing learners for further studies and useful living in

the society is contingent on the competency of the teachers and their organizational behaviour. This showed that 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.

In the context of Anambra State which is borne out of the fact that Anambra is considered educationally an advantaged State, the public secondary schools are often grapple with limited resources, large class sizes, high workload demands and inadequate support systems which as a result, some teachers display poor organizational behaviour as evidenced in several cases of heightened absenteeism, low morale, lack of interest in the teaching job, conflicts, lack of motivation, poor class attendance and other statutory demands such as preparation of lesson notes. This poor exhibition of organizational behaviour of teachers is the biggest danger as it leads to absence of fulfillment of school goals and objectives. The principals' behaviour such as conflict management strategies that supposed to have enhanced teachers' organizational behaviour seem not to be handled with all seriousness which might has resulted to low performance and commitment of teachers in some public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Conflict is serious disagreement and argument about something important. If two people or groups are in conflict, they have had a serious disagreement or argument and have not yet reached agreement. Agu and Obiukwu (2022) defined conflict as people striving for their preferred outcome which if attained prevent others from achieving their preferred outcome thereby resulting in hostility and breakdown in human relationships. In schools, conflict can exist among staff members and leadership of the schools. Whatever be the cause, the effect of conflict is often too high if not properly managed with the right strategies. Ughamadu *et al.* (2022) stated that conflict in the school organization is not the problem but rather lack of conflict management strategies. Onyali and Nnebedum (2023) 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 strategy, the principals try to work together with each teacher in school. Amajuoyi (2022) maintained that collaborating strategy is a strategy of conflict resolution where leaders try to work together with their staff members and maximize efficiency through cooperation. Usman *et al.* (2023) 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' concerned. In this vein, Nwogwogwo (2024) referred to collaborating as a problem-solving approach. This strategy is more effective and can be relevant in a school setting because it encourages teamwork, sharing of ideas and confrontation of differences, unlike avoiding conflict strategy that does not allow for confrontation of differences.

Avoiding conflict management strategy is a strategy that occurs when one party in a potential conflict ignores the conflicting issues that give right to the conflict. This strategy is typified by delegating controversial decision, accepting default decision and not wanting to hurt anyone's feeling. It can be appropriate when victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial, or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem. Chikendu (2023) describe avoidance strategy as a strategy that does not intend to make the conflict go away but rather pushes it underground for it to resurface again. It is evident that people who use this style pretend as if everything is alright. They try to ignore the presence of the conflict. Avoidance simply means to avoid discussing the issue or problem explicitly. Ibanga *et al.* (2024) described it as not openly dealing with or discussing the problem. Conclusively, the work of Obiakor *et al.* (2024) found that administrators, who use competing and avoiding style, are more likely to cause high levels of conflict in their schools while the same studies discovered that female teachers use compromising often to resolve their conflicts.

Consequently, 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. Sequel to this, Thompson and Unachukwu (2022) further noted that some secondary school administrators fail to take

into consideration the well-being, needs and emotions of the teachers which could make them become disconcerted, thereby developing negative attitudes towards their workplace. The series of principals' unhealthy or unethical behaviours such as being biased, refusing teachers to air their views on school affairs, favouritism, poor application of conflict management strategies, untimely dissemination of communication and poor application of conflict skills 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 conflict management strategies as correlates of teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to examine principals' communication skills and conflict management strategies as correlates of teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between accommodating conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. assess the relationship between collaborating conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. investigate the relationship between avoidance conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between accommodating conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between collaborating conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between avoidance conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant relationship between accommodating conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between collaborating conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant relationship between avoidance conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Method

The study adopted correlational research design. The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study was 267 principals in the 267 public secondary schools from the six Educational Zones in Anambra State (Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC), Awka Anambra State as at Second Term 2023/2024 Academic Session). There was no sampling because the population is small and manageable by the researcher. Three instruments were used for data collection: Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (CMSQ) and Teachers' Organizational Behaviour Questionnaire (TOBQ). The instruments are structured in four sections namely A, B and C. Section A deals with the personal data of the respondents, while section B, C and D deals with PCSQ, CMSQ and TOBQ respectively.

Section 'B' was Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (CMSQ) as structured by the researcher to measure the conflict management strategies applied by principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument CMSQ contained 30-items spread across four Clusters 'A-C.' Cluster 'A' elicited information on accommodating conflict management strategy with 10-items; Cluster 'B' elicited information on collaborating conflict management strategy with 10-items; and Cluster 'C' elicited information on avoidance conflict management strategy with 10-items. These items were placed on 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The range of scores was weighted as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Section 'C' was Teachers' Organizational Behaviour Questionnaire (TOBQ) as also structured by the researcher to measure organizational behaviour of teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument TOBQ has 20-items with a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) (4 points), Agree (A) (3 points), Disagree (D) (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD) (1 point). The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot test on 20 principals from public secondary schools in Enugu State. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method and the average coefficient of 0.83 for PCSQ, 0.77 for CMSQ and 0.83 for TOBQ. Out of 267 copies of the instrument administered, 264 (99%) of the instrument were correctly completed and returned, while 3(1%) were either misplaced or not properly completed. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical tool was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between principals' accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between principals' accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State .

Variables	N	r	r ²	Remark
Accommodating Management Strategy	264	0.612	0.523	Moderately Positive
Teachers' Organizational Behaviour	264			

****Significant at $p < 0.05$**

The summary result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 4 showed that principals' accommodating management strategy has a moderate positive relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State with: $r = 0.612$, $r^2 = 0.523$, percentage (%) = 52.3 and $N = 264$. This revealed a moderate positive correlation coefficient value of 0.612 which indicated that there is a moderate positive relationship existing between principals' accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit rise in principals' accommodating management strategy leads to 0.547(55%) rise in teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (r^2) value of 0.523 showed that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 52% of the variations in teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in principals' accommodating management strategy.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between principals' collaborating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between principals' collaborating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Variables	N	r	r ²	Remark
Collaborating Management Strategy	264	0.572	0.451	Moderately Positive
Teachers' Organizational Behaviour	264			

****Significant at $p < 0.05$**

The summary result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 5 showed that principals' collaborating management strategy has a moderate positive relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State with: $r = 0.572$, $r^2 = 0.451$, percentage (%) = 45.1 and $N = 264$. This revealed a moderate positive correlation coefficient value of 0.572 which indicated that there is a moderate positive relationship existing between principals' collaborating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in principals' collaborating management strategy leads to 0.572(57%) increase in teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (r^2) value of 0.451 showed that the explanatory power of the variable was moderately strong. This implies that 45% of the variations in teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in principals' collaborating management strategy.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between principals' avoidance management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between principals' avoidance management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State .

Variables	N	r	r ²	Remark
Avoidance Management Strategy	264	-0.285	0.204	Lowly Negative
Teachers' Organizational Behaviour	264			

Not Significant at $p > 0.05$

The summary result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 6 showed that principals' avoidance management strategy has a low negative relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State with: $r = -0.285$, $r^2 = 0.204$, percentage (%) = 20.4 and $N = 264$. This revealed a low negative correlation coefficient value of 0.285 which indicated that there is a low negative relationship existing between principals' avoidance management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that a unit increase in principals' avoidance management strategy leads to 0.285(29%) decrease in teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (r^2) value of 0.204 showed that the explanatory power of the variable was low. This implies that 20% of the variations in teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State were accounted for by the variations in principals' avoidance management strategy.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant correlation between accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	N	r	r ²	p-value	Remark
Accommodating Management Strategy	264	0.612	0.523	0.000	Significant
Teachers' Organizational Behaviour	264				

**Significant at $p < 0.05$

The summary result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 10 showed the significant relationship between principals' accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State with $p\text{-value} = 0.000$. Since $p\text{-value}$ (0.000) is less than 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between principals' accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that there is significant relationship between principals' accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between collaborating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 5: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant correlation between accommodating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	N	r	r ²	p-value	Remark
Collaborating Management Strategy	264	0.572	0.451	0.000	Significant
Teachers' Organizational Behaviour	264				

****Significant at $p < 0.05$**

The summary result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Table 11 showed the significant relationship between principals' collaborating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State with $p\text{-value} = 0.000$. Since $p\text{-value} (0.000)$ is less than 0.05, the study rejected the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between principals' collaborating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State and accepted the alternative hypothesis that there is significant relationship between principals' collaborating management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between avoidance management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the significant correlation between avoidance management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	N	R	r ²	p-value	Remark
Avoidance Management Strategy	264	-0.285	0.204	0.183	Not significant
Teachers' Organizational Behaviour	264				

Not significant at $p > 0.05$

Discussion

Findings on the relationship between principals' accommodating conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State showed that principals' accommodating conflict management strategy has a positive relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that an increase in principals' practices of accommodating conflict management strategy will increase teachers' organizational behaviour and vice versa in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also revealed that principals' accommodating conflict management strategy has a significant relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The finding of the study is in line with Agu and Obiukwu (2022) 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 resolution strategy is a good conflict management strategy practiced by principals because of its advantages. Accommodating conflict management strategy is benefit teachers in schools when one of the parties in a conflict is willing to give more, it tends to preserve the relationship between the parties and open up communication. Also, there is often a spirit of friendliness when one of the parties is accommodating.

Findings on the relationship between principals' collaborating conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State showed that principals' collaborating conflict management strategy has a positive relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that an increase in principals' practices of collaborating conflict management strategy will increase teachers' organizational behaviour and vice versa in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also revealed that principals' collaborating conflict management strategy has a significant relationship with teachers' organizational 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. Usman et al. (2023) indicated that the effectiveness of the existing collaborating management strategies used in schools on teachers' job performance was at a moderate level with positive and significant impact. 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. Nwogwugwu (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, allowing employees to learn from each other, employee productivity rates go up, overall problem-solving becomes easier, team collaboration increases the organization's potential for change, and remote teams are more efficient.

Findings on the relationship between principals' avoidance conflict management strategy and teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State showed that principals' avoidance conflict management strategy has a negative relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This implies that an increase in principals' practices of avoidance conflict management strategy will decrease teachers' organizational behaviour and vice versa in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study also revealed that principals' avoidance conflict management strategy has no significant relationship with teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is in agreement with Manafa (2019) who found that avoidance conflict management strategy is an ineffective conflict management strategy. By avoiding conflict, the principal is only delaying the time when the conflict situation will occur and when it occurs, the outcome become more severe than it would have been if the conflict situation is addressed initially. Similarly, Ughamadu et al. (2022) noted that avoidance conflicts management strategy is mostly used in public schools which negatively impact on teachers' activities. Chikendu (2023) asserted that avoidance conflict management strategy worsen the conflict situation present in the school and negatively impact teachers' effectiveness. However, Ibanga et al. (2024) revealed that there was insignificant and negative relationship between containing conflicts and avoiding strategy. Obiakor et al. (2024) however, found that avoiding techniques had negative and no significant relationship with teachers' job performance in schools. The similarities found among the studies were that principals' use of avoidance conflict management strategy was not seen to be beneficial in promoting teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State and it has proven to be ineffective.

Conclusion

The principal sees to the daily management of the school. Sometimes misunderstanding, misinterpretation and break down of law and order occur as a result of breakdown of communication between the principals, the staff and the students. The ability of the principal to effectively manage the school is the function of his conflict management strategies. Based on the findings, the study concluded that principals mix applications of conflict management strategies jointly are positively and significantly correlated to teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ministry of Education in line with Post Primary School Service Commission should sponsor principals in workshops, seminars and conferences to enable them up-date their knowledge on communication and conflict management skills in order to create conducive school environment that would enhance and sustain teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State should endeavour to enforce a mix of conflict skills in order to ensure the flow of relevancy that will improve teachers' organizational behaviour in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Principal's of public Secondary Schools should ensure that they do not avoid conflict situations in their schools rather they should manage it effectively through the adoption of suitable conflict management strategies like accommodating and collaborating strategies.

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