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PRINCIPALS' USE OF COMPROMISING AND AVOIDING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTARCT

The study investigated conflict management strategies adopted by principals for promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 262 principals in the 262 public secondary schools in Anambra State. There was no sampling for the study because of the manageable size of the population. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire" (CMSQ) was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and it yielded overall reliability index of 0.65. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that the compromising conflict management strategies adopted by principals for promoting teachers job satisfaction include: encourage parties involved in conflict to make sacrifices so as to be satisfied with their jobs and encourage teachers to use give and take approach in conflict situation. The findings of the study also revealed that there was no significant difference between female and male principals on the adoption of conflict management strategies for promoting teachers job satisfaction. Based on the findings, it was recommended that principals should collaborate with relevant stakeholders to improve their knowledge on the use of conflict management strategies.

Introduction

Every nation of the world desires to improve the lives of her citizens. This can only be achieved through the development of skills and potentials of the citizens to equip them for productivity and social adjustment. It is through education that this development can be achieved. Education has been regarded as a veritable instrument for all round development in a country. According to Adesina (2011), education is a major force in the economic, intellectual, social and cultural empowerment. He further stressed that education has the capacity to bring about character and intellectual change as well as restructure capabilities for desired development. The researcher defined education as the transmission of worthwhile experiences in the lives of the learners to enable them to contribute meaningfully towards the development of their society.

In Nigeria, formal education is arranged in these levels; early childcare and development, basic, secondary and tertiary education. This study will focus on the secondary level of education. Secondary education as the name implies is the education offered to pupils after basic education (primary) and before tertiary education. Secondary education takes in graduates from primary education and prepares them for tertiary education. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), states that the broad aim of secondary education within the national objectives is the preparation of children for useful living within the society and for higher education. The principal is the one who is responsible for the management of resources in secondary school in order to achieve set goals.

The principal is charged with the responsibilities of overseeing the administrative duties and the day to day functioning of the school. According to Allen (2015) the principal is an individual in a school setting who directs the affairs of the school to achieve the primary goals and objectives. Furthermore, Allen posited that for a school principal to accomplish set objectives, he has to work with other people within the school system and be able to inspire them to work cooperatively with him so as achieve the educational goals. In the context of this study, a principal is one who is charged with the responsibility of organising human and material resources in order to achieve the predetermined goals of education in the school as stated in the National Policy on Education. The principal coordinates teachers' activities towards achieving educational goals. Teachers are the key figures for any educational reform needed in the school. Korb and Akintunde (2013) averred that the teacher is a facilitator of knowledge and plays a vital role in nation building. The provision of high quality education system depends on high quality teachers. Teachers play vital roles in the implementation of the educational policies. As a result of the roles teachers play in the attainment of educational goals, what teachers do or do not can go a long way in promoting or restricting the attainment of educational goals. There is need for principals to ensure that teachers are satisfied with their jobs for improved performance.

Scholars have divergent opinions on what job satisfaction means as a result of their experiences. According to Akhtar, Hashmi and Naqvi (2010) job satisfaction is a favourable and unfavourable subjective feeling with which employees view their work. In the view of Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016), job satisfaction is a worker's emotional response to different job related factors resulting in finding pleasure, comfort, confidence, rewards, personal growth and various positive mobility including upward mobility, recognition and appraisal done on a merit pattern with monetary value as compensation. Teachers' job satisfaction describes the extent to which teachers are pleased, comfortable or satisfied with their jobs. Job satisfaction in the context of this study is therefore defined as the extent to which teachers are contended with their jobs and the opportunity their jobs afford them to meet their needs.

Teachers' job satisfaction affects the productivity of teachers in the school. Jain and Verma (2014), posited that when teachers are satisfied with their job, they can perform their responsibilities with more concentration and devotion. A satisfied teacher will put in more efforts towards teaching and learning which in turn, will improve students' performance. Adopting the right management strategies in the school will enhance teachers' job satisfaction and conflict management is part of the management strategies. A conflict management strategy is one of the factors that improve teachers' job satisfaction. This is in tandem with Mehrad (2015), who opined that using accurate conflict management strategies can be effective in the forming of job satisfaction.

Conflict management strategies according to Arop, Owan and Ekpang (2018) refer to those techniques or approaches that can be used to prevent, control or resolve conflicts. The authors stressed that conflict management strategies are very important to any school because it is through these strategies that negative effects resulting from conflict can be minimized and controlled. In the context of this study, conflict management strategies refer to those techniques or approaches that are applied by the school principals in conflict situations in order to control or prevent conflict among teachers in the school.

Conflict management strategies are important in the school system because when they are applied by the school principal, staff are focused towards performing their tasks which will improve teachers satisfaction on the job. Supporting this, Khan, Langove, Shah and Javid (2015), opined that a successful conflict management strategy will reduce hostility and aggressiveness at work. There is need for the principal to apply conflict management strategies to a specific situation in order to encourage teachers to work towards the attainment of educational goals.
There are several strategies that could be used to manage conflict in the school. Anashie and Kulo, (2014) identified the following conflict management strategies to include: dominance, compromise, synergy, culture of civility, win-lose strategy, lose-lose strategy, win-win strategy. Robbins cited in Kodikal, Rahiman and Pakeerrappa (2014) revealed five conflict management strategies: compromising, collaborating, accommodating, competing and avoiding.

The compromising and avoiding conflict management strategies will be adopted for this study. Compromising conflict management strategy shows moderate concern for self and for others. Compromising strategy attempts to resolve a conflict by identifying a solution that is partially acceptable to both parties. This strategy is unassertive and cooperative. Kartal, Yirci and Ozdemir (2015), opined that this strategy emphasises common features so as to downplay differences and to satisfy the interests of the other party. Those who use this strategy give up something of importance in order to arrive at a solution that is partially satisfactory to members. Kalagbor and Nnokam (2015) stressed that compromising strategy is more effective in the school system when issues are complex and parties in conflict are looking for middle ground and are willing to exchange concessions. This strategy gives people the reason to integrate with the parties involved in conflict situation in order to find a solution to their problems. Another conflict management strategy is the avoiding conflict management strategy.

Avoiding conflict management strategy is also known as withdrawal strategy. This strategy shows low concern for oneself and others which the result is a lose-lose outcome. This strategy is applied when the principal does not want to get himself involved in conflict situation in the school. Umana (2019) argued that those who actually avoid conflict frequently have low esteem or hold a position of low power. The principal applies this kind of strategy in the school when the reason for the conflict is not significant, or when he does not possess enough information to take care of the conflict. Crossfield and Bourne (2018), opined that this strategy may appear unappealing to teachers who may believe that the administrator is insensitive. It seems that female and male principals manage conflict differently in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Researchers have investigated the influence of gender in the adoption of conflict management strategies among school principals. Gender means the masculinity or femininity attribute of an individual. Okorji and Nzekwe (2019) observed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on their use of conflict management strategies. Gender will be introduced as a moderating variable in this study to ascertain the influence of gender on conflict management strategies adopted by principals in promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Conflict management strategies adopted by principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State have become a sensitive issue over the years because of the need to ensure that teachers are satisfied with their jobs. However, the undesirable state of affairs in public secondary schools in Anambra State seems to suggest that there are deficiencies in the conflict management strategies adopted by principals for promoting teachers job satisfaction. The researcher observed that conflicts ensue from time to time in the school and these affect the job satisfaction of teachers. In public secondary schools in Anambra State, the researcher observed that there are cases of conflict which appear in the form of open confrontation between the principals and

teachers, poor communication between the principals and teachers, poor interpersonal relationship between teachers and principals and teachers failure to adhere to instructions. Onyali and Nnebedum (2108) observed that conflicts that exist in secondary schools in Anambra State appear to be evident in principals' criticism of staff in front of students, teachers' rude words in response to principals, exchange of unpleasant words among principals and staff, poor interpersonal relationship, hatred among principals and staff, teachers gossiping of principals among others. According to Ezeugbor, Onyali and Okoye (2015) conflict exists in secondary schools in Anambra State and has been observed to have most often threatened the peaceful coexistence of staff and students which results in poor teaching and learning. These situations have led to poor teachers' job satisfaction thereby making teachers to engage in activities that are counterproductive in the school. These activities include lateness and absenteeism to work, non-compliance to instruction, truancy, teachers' failure to prepare their lesson notes and not coming to the classrooms to teach. It is against this backdrop that the researcher was prompted to conduct this study on conflict management strategies adopted by principals for promoting teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Purpose of the study.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate conflict management strategies adopted by principals for promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to examine:

1. Principals' use of compromising conflict management strategies for promoting teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals' use of avoiding conflict management strategies for promoting teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the compromising conflict management strategies adopted by principals for promoting teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra state?
2. What are the avoiding conflict management strategies adopted by principals for promoting teachers' job satisfaction 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 difference in the mean ratings of female and male principals' adoption of compromising conflict management strategies in promoting teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female and male principals' adoption of avoiding conflict management strategies in promoting teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Research Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Anambra State of Nigeria. The population for the study consisted 262 principals in 262 public secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra state. There was no sampling for the study. This was because of the small and manageable size of the population. A researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire" (CMSQ) was used for data collection for the study. The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, two from the department of Educational Management and Policy and one in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.65 using Cronbach Alpha. The data collected was analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test to test the null hypotheses.

Results

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Female and Male Principals on the Compromising Conflict Management Strategies Adopted for Promoting Teachers' Job Satisfaction.

S/N	ITEMS	Female (N=206)			Male (N=48)		
		Mean	Sd	Decision	Mean	Sd	Decision
1	Encourage Parties involved in conflict to make sacrifices so as to be satisfied with their jobs	2.88	0.77	Agree	2.79	0.54	Agree
2	Invite teachers in conflict for dialogue in order to be satisfied with being a teacher	2.88	0.86	Agree	2.83	0.81	Agree
3	Encourage teachers to make sacrifices in order to achieve tasks assigned to them.	2.34	0.89	Disagree	2.27	0.79	Disagree
4	Encourage teachers to mutually accept a decision in order to accomplish their teaching tasks	2.80	0.89	Agree	2.70	0.97	Agree
5	Encourage teachers to	2.76	0.98	Agree	2.67	1.10	Agree

	participate in negotiation						
6	Encourage teachers to use give and take approach in conflict situation	2.73	1.09	Agree	2.69	I.06	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**2.73**	**0.91**	**Agree**	**2.65**	**0.87**	**Agree**

Results on Table 1 showed that the mean ratings of female and male principals on items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 are above the cut off 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as compromising conflict management strategies adopted by principals. On the other hand, female and male principals' mean score for item 3 is below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the statement as compromising conflict management strategy.

The overall standard deviation scores of female and male principals which are 0.91 and 0.87 indicated that there is homogeneity amongst female and male principals' responses, indicating a similar consensus of opinion. The cluster mean of 2.73 and 2.65 female and male principals respectively which are above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicated that the adoption of compromising conflict management strategies by principals for promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation Scores of Female and Male Principals on the Avoiding Conflict Management Strategies Adopted by Principals for Promoting Teachers' Job Satisfaction.

S/	**ITEMS**	**Female (206)**		**Decision**	**Male (48)**		**Decision**
N		**Mean**	Sd		**Mean**	Sd	
7	Ignore teachers who are in conflict so that they can make decision on their own	2.32	1.06	Disagree	2.31	1.03	Disagree
8	Play a neutral role in conflict situation to enable teachers to be creative	2.50	0.94	Agree	2.77	0.93	Agree
9	Always withdraw myself from conflict situation	1.99	0.88	Disagree	2.00	0.74	Disagree
10	Refuse to acknowledge that conflict exists in the school to enable teachers meet their expectations in the job	2.02	0.84	Disagree	2.10	0.84	Disagree

11	Put aside issues that are less important at the moment to enable teachers focus on their job	2.52	0.84	Agree	2.58	1.05	Agree
12	Avoid disagreement with my teachers so that they can enjoy freedom of work.	2.59	0.55	Agree	2.46	0.65	Disagree
	Cluster Mean	**2.32**	**0.85**	**Disagree**	**2.37**	**0.87**	**Disagree**

Data analysis presented on Table 2 revealed that both female and male principals mean ratings for items 28 and 31 are above the cut off mean indicating agreement with these items as their avoiding conflict management strategies. Both female and male principals' mean ratings for items 27, 29 and 30 are below the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the avoiding conflict management strategies.

The mean ratings of female principals for item 32 is above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating agreement with the item as the avoiding conflict management strategies adopted by principals while that of the male principals is below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the item by male principals. The overall standard deviation scores which are 0.85and 0.87 for both female and male principals respectively are closer, indicating similarity in their responses in each cluster. The cluster mean value 2.32 and 2.37 for female and male principals respectively are below the mean score of 2.50 and this indicated disagreement with the adoption of avoiding conflict management strategies by the principals for promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Testing the Null Hypotheses

Table 3: The t-test Analysis of No Significant Difference in the Mean Scores of Female and Male Principals on the Compromising Conflict Management Strategies Adopted for Promoting Teachers Job Satisfaction.

Variables	N	X	SD	t-cal.	t-crit	Df	∞	Remarks
Female Principals	206	2.73	0.38	1.18	1.96	252	0.05	Not Significant
Male Principals	48	2.66	0.41					

Data presented on Table 3 revealed that the t-calculated value of 1.18 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 252 degree of freedom. Thus the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female and male principals on the compromising conflict management strategies adopted for promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: The t-test Analysis of No Significant Difference in the Mean Scores of Female and Male Principals on the Avoiding Conflict Management Strategies Adopted for Promoting Teachers Job Satisfaction.

Variables	N	X	SD	t-cal.	t-crit	Df	∞	Remarks
Female Principals	206	2.11	0.43	-0.75	1.96	252	0.05	Not Significant
Male Principals	48	2.20	0.49					

Data presented on Table 4 revealed that the t-calculated value of -0.75 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 252 degree of freedom. Thus the null hypothesis is not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female and male principals on their avoiding conflict management strategies adopted for promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State

Discussion

The result of the study revealed that compromising conflict management strategies adopted by the principals for promoting teachers job satisfaction included; encourage parties involved in conflict to make sacrifices so as to be satisfied with their jobs, invite teachers in conflict for dialogue in order to be satisfied with being a teacher, encourage teachers to mutually accept a decision in order to accomplish their teaching tasks, encourage teachers to participate in negotiation and encourage teachers to use give and take approach in conflict situation. This is in agreement with the finding of Ajai (2017) who revealed that principals apply compromising conflict management strategies in the school. The finding of this study also corroborates the finding of Kalagbor and Nnokam (2015) who revealed that compromising conflict management strategies include expedient mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts among students, students are always allowed to meet to solve their problems and students are encouraged to make concession. The possible explanation for this agreement could be as a result that these studies were carried out in Africa and that participants are faced with similar situations. The compromising conflict management strategies adopted by principals in secondary schools give principals the opportunity to ensure that teachers are satisfied with the conflict management strategies adopted in the school.

The findings of the study also indicated that avoiding conflict management strategies adopted by principals for promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State included; play a neutral role in conflict situation to enable teachers to be creative and put aside issues that are less important at the moment to enable teachers focus on their job and. The finding of this study is in disagreement with the study of Deebom and Buapu (2017) which revealed that avoiding conflict management strategies are adopted by principals. This finding supports the finding of Fareo and Jajua (2018) which revealed that universities do not adopt the avoidance conflict management strategy. This reason for this agreement may be as a result that both studies were carried out in Nigeria and that respondents apply the same conflict management strategies. This is an indication that principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State barely adopt the avoiding conflict management strategies in conflict situation. This could also indicate that avoiding conflict management strategies are usually adopted in trivial situations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that principals adopt conflict management studies with exception to competing and avoiding conflict management strategies for promoting teachers job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Both female and male principals agreed that they adopt conflict management strategies such as compromising, accommodating and collaborating conflict management strategies for promoting teachers job satisfaction.

These conflict management strategies adopted by the principals for promoting

teachers job satisfaction could lead to improved job performance of teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the difference in the mean ratings of female and male principals in the adoption of conflict management strategies adopted for promoting teachers job satisfaction was not significant.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. State Ministry of Education should pay regular visits to public secondary schools in Anambra State for the monitoring of principals' use of conflict management strategies in settling of conflicts in the school.
2. School principals should collaborate with relevant stakeholders to improve their knowledge on the use of conflict management strategies.
3. All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) should organise regular orientation and sensitization programmes for principals to enlighten and improve their knowledge on the application of conflict management strategies.
4. The government, through the State Post Primary School Service Commission should encourage and support principals to participate in international conferences in order to acquaint themselves with knowledge of conflict management strategies.

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