

**TEACHER CONFLICT HANDLING STYLES AND ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IBADAN
NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE**

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between teacher conflict handling styles and student academic performance in Secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design, while the population composed of all SS2 teachers and SS2 students of the secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to sample 39 teachers and 50 students, while research instrument titled "Relationship between Teacher Conflict Handling Styles and Student Academic Performance Questionnaire" was administered on the respondents. Six hypotheses were posited and tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between problem solving handling style of conflict and academic performance of secondary school students ($r = 0.645$; $P < 0.05$). The study recommended that all teachers of secondary schools should adopt the problem-solving style of resolving conflict. Also, various governments that in some cases have conflict with their workers should adopt the problem-solving style of handling conflict because it will reduce to barest minimum the conflict experienced in various government organizations and the community or nation at large.

Key Words: Teacher; Conflict handling styles, Academic performance; Secondary school students; Ibadan North Local Government Area; Oyo State.

Introduction

Nigerian secondary schools are known to be the second level of education after the first level, which is the primary school. The products of the first level invariably transit to the secondary level, which the World Bank holds in high esteem more than the third level of education. To that extent, Knight (2006) confirmed that many years ago, the World Bank greatly did not see the importance of higher education and so down played its importance. The secondary education that was given more priority is bedeviled with many problems among which are overt conflict that usually resulted in crisis situations such as protests, demonstrations, riots and even strikes. These Onanuga (2003) said are inimical to effective academic performance, though, students' academic performance has from time immemorial and up till date been a subject of concern especially if one considers the huge government financial allocation to the second level of education which has not so much yielded encouraging results. Despite the fact that teachers' salaries are paid and such they put in their efforts, yet, it is with little returns in terms of non-realisation of good academic performance. It should however be realized that as much as the teachers are carrying out their duties of teaching, counseling and lots more on these students, one cannot rule out the occurrence of conflict, which can be of various dimension(s). It can be conflict between the teachers and the school management, teachers and teachers, teachers and the students or even between the teachers and the parents, teachers and government. Conflict is a state of disequilibrium where there exists misunderstanding between two or more parties involved. It should still be recognized that there is no development that can be achieved in a crisis ridden system which has been torn apart by conflicts as witnessed in our secondary schools these days. Though we need to note that no individual, organization, state, village is immuned from conflict. Opeloye (2006) and Alimba (2013) posited that the conflict causative factors in secondary schools are: rumour mongering, domineering attitude of principals, communication breakdown, resources problem and lack of opportunities for promotion.

Researchers in the area of student academic performance have however researched and found the variables that predicted student academic performance. Such factors include: leadership style, school climate, teacher and student characteristics, materials, resources,

pattern of curriculum organization, parental and school community. As much as conflict has been discovered that it cannot be avoided and can occur at any time, it can have its overt consequence on the secondary school students' academic performance. If there is conflict, it is then imperative to find a way of handling such conflict. These handling styles are of various types and can have their adverse or positive relationship with student academic performance. It is against this background that this study examined the relationship between the teacher conflict handling styles and secondary school student academic performance in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

It has been discovered that conflict cannot be avoided in any organization, within individuals among which are the secondary school teachers. As much as such conflicts cannot but occur, there should be ways of handling the conflicts. But the problem is that which of the conflict handling styles will have relationship with secondary school student academic performance in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. It is against above view that this study examined the relationship between teacher conflict handling styles and secondary school student academic performance in Ibadan North Local government of Oyo State.

Purpose of the Study

This is a study that found out the relationship between the teacher conflict handling styles and the academic performance of the students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The specific objectives of the study are:

- (i) To find out if there is any significant relationship between dominating handling style and the academic performance of the students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State
- (ii) To examine whether there is any significant relationship between competing handling style and the academic performance of students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State
- (iii) To investigate if there is any significant relationship between avoiding handling style and the academic performance of

students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State

- (iv) To find out if there is any significant relationship between compromising handling style and the academic performance of students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State
- (v) To study if there is any significant relationship between confronting handling style and the academic performance of students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State
- (vi) To examine if there is any significant relationship between problem solving handling style and the academic performance of students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State

Hypotheses

- Ho1:** There will be no significant relationship between dominating handling style and the academic performance of the students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State.
- Ho2:** There will be no significant relationship between competing handling style and the academic performance of the students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State.
- Ho3:** There will be no significant relationship between avoiding handling style and the academic performance of the students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State.
- Ho4:** There will be no significant relationship between compromising handling style and the academic performance of the students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State.
- Ho5:** There will be no significant relationship between confronting handling style and the academic performance of the students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State.
- Ho6:** There will be no significant relationship between problem solving handling style and the academic performance of the

students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State.

Literature Review

Conflict Management in School

The better educators and students understand the nature of conflict, and are better able to manage conflicts constructively (Kinard, 1988). Tschannen-Moran (2001) sees conflict management as “a philosophy and a set of skills that assist individuals and groups in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of their lives”. Conflict as a concept never remains positive or negative but it has always been seen as a basic and result oriented part of school life (Hanson, 1991). Conflicts offer competitive as well as cooperative context in the organization but it varies according to the situation. Problems exist in managing conflicts when the context is competitive, individualistic or when the context and the conflict resolution procedures are incongruent. The effectiveness of a conflict resolution and peer mediation program may be limited when the classroom and school context is competitive (Fisher, 1997)

Conflict Handling Approaches

Conflict management is the capability to handle conflict efficiently and conflict handling refers to the methods used by any one or mutual groups to deal with conflict (Gordon, 2003). Conflict handling approaches mean the different techniques by which individuals handle conflict. The expression conflict handling approaches is applied to explain any act taken by an opponent or an intermediary to seek to handle or resolve a conflict. According to Rahim (2002) these strategies are as follows: Integrating entails cooperation and problem solving where in both groups share knowledge and rummage around for ways to persuade each other. Compromising involves splitting problems down the central point to determine conflict. Obliging style connotes that an individual cares about the desires of others by rebuffing his or her own wants. Avoiding style involves an individual restraining or moving back from conflict. Dominating style involves a person forcing problems to fulfill his or her wants, and congregate at the cost of another (Rahim, 2002). Exclusively, the integrating style is illustrated by

individuals who have a high concern for themselves and for others, while those using an obliging style have a low anxiety for self and high anxiety for others. Those employing dominating style have a high apprehension for self and low apprehension for others, whereas the avoiding style is described by a low worry for self and others. The compromising style has a medium apprehension for self and others (Rahim, 2002)

Conflict Handling Approaches and Team Performance

Conflict as much as it adds to a team's performance is usually eradicated by such teams and organizations (Robbins, 1991, p. 431). The authority of philosophers explains that a reasonable presence of clash is essential so as to accomplish optimal efficiency of firm. Numerous conflict handling researchers (Amason, 1996; Jehn, Northcraft, and Neale, 1999) have recommended that conflict handling approaches engage acknowledgment of the following: definite style of conflicts, which might have unconstructive effects on individual and team performance, possibly will have to be condensed. These conflicts are in general caused by the pessimistic responses of team members (e.g., individual assaults of team members). There are other styles of conflicts that might have encouraging effects on the individual and team performance. These conflicts narrate to differences concerning to jobs, strategies, and other organizational problems. Conflict handling approaches entail creation and upholding of a reasonable amount of these conflicts. Team members while cooperating with each other will be involved to cope up with their incongruities fruitfully. This describes learning how to employ different conflict-management approaches to deal with a range of circumstances efficiently (Rahim, 2002; Sobia, Atif and Hira, 2012).

Problem Solving and Student Academic Achievement

Sanaullah, Abdul and Mehran (2012) carried out a study entitled "the impact of problem solving skill of heads' on students academic achievement, and said Problem solving is the key to management function. In an organization, problem of various nature do occur, but their tackling is the art of an experienced head, well-versed in the managerial skill. The main objectives are to compare the managerial skill of Problem solving of the heads on the variables of school type,

designation, qualification, total experience and experience in the present school; to explore the impact of managerial skill of Problem solving on student's achievement. The researcher recommended that training in Problem solving skills should be given to all heads to have effective school management and better students' achievements. The researchers agreed that problems do occur in life but their proper solution is a skill, which many people are devoid of. Educational institutions have many problems in daily business. It is up to the sharpness and proper training and experience of the head to devise a proper solution to each and every problem. Problem solving is the process of eliminating the discrepancy between the actual and desired situation (Archer, 1980).

Research Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This because the variables that were used in this work are not to be manipulated, rather they have occurred.

Study Population

The population of the study comprised of all the teachers and the students in the Senior Secondary School 2 in all the secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The samples for this study comprised of 39 teachers and 50 students out of all the secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of the State. The random sampling technique was adopted for the sampling of the respondents for the study. The names of the schools from which respondents were sampled are: (i) Ijokodo High school, Polytechnic Road, Ibadan (ii) Oba-Akinbiyi High School, Mokola, Ibadan (iii) Emmanuel College High School, Orita UI, Ibadan and (iv) Abadina College, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Research Instrument

Two instruments were developed for the study and these are (i) A structured questionnaire titled Relationship between Teacher Conflict

Handling Styles and (ii) Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State. The first instrument was sectionalized into two, and these are A and B. Section A dealt with background information of the respondents such as sex, age, length of job experience, educational qualification, and marital status of the respondents. Section B dealt with the variables in the study and these are: dominating, competing, avoiding, compromising, confronting and problem solving styles. The other instrument is on the students' academic performance. It was also sectionalized into two which are A and B. Section A sought for background information about the students, while the other section was on standardized WAEC questions on Mathematics and English language.

Validity of Instrument

During validation, the content, construct and face validation was done. The instruments were given to experts in the area of (i) conflict management and (ii) evaluation. The instruments were carefully studied and necessary comments and corrections were effected on the instruments.

Reliability of Instrument

Reliability means consistency with which an instrument measures what it is purported to measure. This was ascertained through the Cronbach alpha method. So a pilot study was carried out in Methodist Grammar School, Oju-Irin, Bodija, Ibadan that was not finally included in the sampling of respondents for this study. The reliability test yielded coefficient of 0.83.

Administration of Instruments

Before the administration of instruments, consent of the concerned school principals were sought. Upon granting of their consent, the researcher was led to the head of the respective SS2 Schools and the teachers that were sampled.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained were analysed with the use of simple percentage for the biodata information of the respondents, while Pearson Product

Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyse the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings and Discussion

This section discussed the findings, and started with the presentation of biodata of the respondents.

Table 1: Sex of the Sampled Teachers

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	16	41
Female	23	59
Total	39	100

Table 1 above showed the gender distribution of the teachers sampled for the study. There were sixteen (16) males and twenty three (23) female teachers representing 41% and 59% respectively.

Table II: Age Distribution of the Sampled Teachers

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 24	1	2.6
25 – 29	5	12.8
30 – 34	3	7.7
35 – 39	1	2.6
40 – 44	13	33.2
45 – 49	11	28.2
50 – 54	4	10.3
55 – 59	1	2.6
Total	39	100

Table II showed the age distribution of teachers. One teacher was aged 20-24years (2.6%), five teachers (12.8%) were aged 25-29years, while three teachers (7.7%) were of age 30-34years. Additionally, one (2.6%) teacher fell in age group 35-39years. The largest frequency of the teachers were thirteen (33.2%) in number and their age group was 40-44years. There were eleven (28.2%) teachers in the age group 45-49years. Further, four (10.3%) of the sampled teachers

were between the ages 50-54years and one (2.6%) teacher fell in the age group 55-59years.

Table III: Length of Job Experience of the Sampled Teachers

Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 5	8	20.5
6 – 10	3	7.7
11 – 15	11	28.1
16 – 20	9	23.1
21 – 25	6	15.4
26 – 30	1	2.6
31 – 35	1	2.6
Total	39	100

Table III above showed the length of job experience of the sampled teachers. Eight teachers (20.5%) had put in 1-5 years working experience. Three (7.7%) of the teachers had been in service for between 6-10 years. Eleven (28.1%) teachers had put in between 11-15 years in service. There were nine (23.1%) teachers that had put in between 16–20 years in service. Additionally, six (15.4%) teachers had put in between 21-25 years of service, while one (2.6%) of the teachers each had put in 26-30 years and 31-35years of service respectively.

Table IV: Educational Qualification of the Sampled Teachers

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
NCE / OND	4	10.3
B.Ed./B.A/B.Sc.	21	53.8
M.Ed./M.A/M.Sc.	12	30.8
Ph.D	-	-
Others(PGDE)	2	5.1
Total	39	100

Table IV showed the educational qualification of the teachers sampled for the study. Four (10.3%) teachers had the NCE/OND, twenty one (53.8%) teachers had B.Ed. /B.A/B.Sc., while twelve (30.8%) teachers had M.Ed./M.A/M.Sc. None of the teachers had the Ph.D degree and some two others had other degrees such as PGDE.

Table V: Marital Status of the Sampled Teachers

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	5	12.8
Married	34	87.2
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	-	-
Separated	-	-
Total	39	100

The marital status of the respondents was shown on table V. There were five (12.8%) of the teachers that were single, while thirty four (87.2%) were married.

Table VI: Sex of the Sampled Students

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	16	32.0
Female	34	68.0
Total	50	100

Table VI showed the sex distribution of the students. Sixteen (32.0%) were males, while thirty four (68.0%) were females.

Table VII: Age Distribution of the Sampled Students

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
12 – 14	11	22.0
15 – 17	34	68.0
18 – 20	5	10.0
21 – 23	-	-
Total	50	100

Table VII showed the age distribution of the students, and from the table, there were eleven (22.0%) that fell in the age group 12-14years, while majority of the students thirty four (68.0%) fell in the age group 15-17years. Five (10.0%) students were aged 18-20 among the samples.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There will be no significant relationship between teacher dominating handling style and academic performance of secondary school students

Table VIII: Relationship between Teacher Dominating Handling Style and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P Value	Remarks
Teacher Dominating Handling Style	39	9.87	2.250	0.060	0.718	Not Sig
Academic Performance of Secondary School Students	50	12.31	3.045			

Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The table of analysis as shown on table VIII showed that there was no significant relationship between teacher dominating handling style and academic performance of secondary school students ($r=0.060$; $p>0.05$). This showed that teacher dominating handling style of conflict has no significant relationship with the academic performance of the secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Two: There will be no significant relationship between teacher competing handling style and academic performance of secondary school students

Table IX: Relationship between Teacher Competing Handling Style and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P Value	Remarks
Teacher Competing Handling Style	39	12.28	2.523	-0.084	0.613	Not Sig
Academic Performance of Secondary School Students	50	12.31	3.045			

Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table IX showed that there was no significant relationship between teacher competing handling style and academic performance of secondary school students ($r= 0.084$; $p>0.05$) and so the posited hypothesis is upheld.

Hypothesis Three: There will be no significant relationship between teacher avoiding handling style and academic performance of secondary school students

Table X: Relationship between Teacher Avoiding Handling Style and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P Value	Remarks
Teacher Avoiding Handling Style	39	13.28	2.685	-	0.375	Not Sig
Academic Performance of Secondary School Students	50	12.31	3.045	0.146		

Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table X showed that there was no significant relationship between teacher avoiding handling style and academic performance of secondary school ($r=-0.146$; $p>0.05$). It therefore implied that teacher avoiding handling style has no significant relationship with the academic performance of the secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The posited hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Four: There will be no significant relationship between teacher compromising handling style and academic performance of secondary school students

Table XI: Relationship between Teacher Compromising Handling Style and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P Value	Remarks
Teacher Compromising Handling Style	39	15.26	2.185	-0.151	0.360	Not Sig
Academic Performance of Secondary School Students	50	12.31	3.045			

Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table XI showed that there was no significant relationship between teacher compromising handling style of conflict and academic performance of secondary school students ($r = -0.151$; $P > 0.05$). This makes the posited hypothesis to be accepted.

Hypothesis Five: There will be no significant relationship between teacher confronting handling style and academic performance of secondary school students

Table XII: Relationship between Teacher Confronting Handling Style and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P Value	Remarks
Teacher Confronting Handling Style	39	11.13	2.041	-0.002	0.989	Not Sig
Academic Performance of Secondary School Students	50	12.31	3.045			

Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table XII showed that there was no significant relationship between teacher confronting handling style of conflict and academic performance of secondary school students ($r = -0.002$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Six: There will be no significant relationship between teacher problem solving handling style and academic performance of secondary school students

Table XIII: Relationship between Teacher Problem Solving Handling Style and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	P Value	Remarks
Teacher Problem Solving Handling Style	39	15.97	1.693	0.645*	0.031	*Sig
Academic Performance of Secondary School Students	50	12.31	3.045			

Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table XIII above showed that there was a significant relationship between teacher problem solving handling style of conflict and academic performance of secondary school students ($r = 0.645$; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis was not accepted, rather the alternative was accepted. This finding is in line with that of Sanallah, Abdul and Mehran (2012) that agreed that problem solving skills help heads of schools to have effective school management and better students' achievements.

Summary

This is a study that examined the teacher conflict handling styles and academic performance of students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Conflict is unavoidable in any organization, once human beings are there and especially in the school setting. It is however inimical if solution(s) is not found to such conflict. It is against

this that this study found out the relationship between the conflict handling styles of the teacher and the academic performance of the secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design, while the population composed of all the teachers and SS2 students of government owed schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The analysis of the six posited hypotheses showed that there was a significant relationship between problem solving handling style and the academic performance of the students of secondary schools in Ibadan North Local government Area of Oyo State($r = 0.645$; $P < 0.05$).

Conclusion

Conclusively, it was only the problem solving style of solving conflict that is significant out of the six styles that were tested in the study.

Recommendations

The study recommended that all teachers of secondary schools should adopt the problem solving style of resolving conflict because it has a significant relationship with student academic performance, instead of the adoption of the dominating, competing, avoiding, compromising, confronting styles of resolving conflict, which were not of any significant relationship with student academic performance. This style (problem solving) can also be adopted by various governments that in some cases have conflict with their workers, and it will reduce to barest minimum the conflict experienced in various government organisations and the community or nation at large.

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