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Conflicts and Conflict Management in Primary Schools of Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State

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Abstract

This research work entitled "conflicts and conflict management in primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State." The population for the study was 1, 147 and 170 respondents were purposively sampled for this study. The analytical tools used were frequency, percentages and analysis of variance (ANOVA).The findings showed that there was a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the causes of conflict in primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State; there was no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the types of conflicts in primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State; there was a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the effects of conflict in primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State; and there was a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the methods of managing conflict in primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. It was recommended that Head teachers should ensure that conflicts is brought down to it minimal level to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, to raise the morale of teachers and pupils, to reduce indiscipline, to maintain unity and to reduce delinquency among pupils in some of the selected primary schools. Head teachers should encourage effective communication, create awareness, effective guidance and counseling, sincerity and openness in the schools, fair hearing at all times to the two parties involved in conflict in the schools.

Key Words: Conflict, Conflict Management, Primary Schools

Introduction

Conflict occurs between people in all kinds of human relationships and in all social settings. Because of the wide range of potential differences among people, the absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaningful interaction. Conflict by itself is neither good nor bad. However, the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constructive or destructive (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Conflict is defined as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship, combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings toward each other (Fisher, 1990). The incompatibility or difference may exist in reality or may only be perceived by the parties involved. Nonetheless, the opposing actions and the hostile emotions are very real hallmarks of human conflict.

Conflict, for Nyamajiwa (2000, p. 3), can be defined as, "the opposition of individuals", or groups' interest, opinions or purpose". It can be between individuals, groups, parties or countries. However, most conflict situations require negotiation whenever they occur. In order to formulate an effective solution, it is essential that all factors which give rise to the conflict situation are carefully identified and explored. Nyamajiwa (2000) has identified some causes or sources of conflict within an organization. These include inadequate information, role conflict/collision, and differences in goals, values, and competition for limited resources, responsibility, personnel, space, tools and equipment, access to superiors. In an organization such as a school, a number of these sources of conflict could be applicable to school heads and class teachers. Almost every day we hear of cases where teachers and heads conflict over issues that concern their practices and district offices are inundated with reports of teachers and heads on collision paths. In most cases, unresolved conflicts result in communication breakdown affecting the smooth running of the school. In other instances head-teachers physically fight with teachers over certain issues. Such situations disturb the tone and climate of the school and ultimately the performance of both teachers and pupils are negatively affected. Perturbed by these circumstances, the study sought to establish the major sources of these conflicts and examine the frequency or occurrences of the negotiations between school head-teachers, teachers and pupils.

Conflicts have become part and parcel of human organizations worldwide. This indeed is a paradox because of the amount of energy and resources expended by organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts. Flippo (1980) attempted an explanation when he remarked that, "a total absence of conflict would be unbelievable, boring, and a strong indication that conflicts are being suppressed". The inevitability of conflict was also established by Harold Kerzner (1998) when he asserted that conflict is part of change and therefore inevitable. It is therefore not an aberration to expect conflicts in the administration of primary schools in kaura local government of kaduna State. The nature and types of conflicts that occur in primary school administration vary from one school to another. The common types of conflicts usually occur between the students on one hand and the school authority on the other. Other forms of conflict include interpersonal conflicts among staff and as well as the students. Higher levels of conflicts include those that involve the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) and the State Government. This study was particularly relevant at a time when Kaduna State workers (teachers inclusive) had to embark on a prolonged strike over the non- implementation of the Harmonized Salary Structure (HSS) announced by the Federal Government. The partial implementation of HSS for workers in the state after a long delay did not help matters. All of these became potential sources of industrial conflicts not only in the educational sector, but also in the entire civil service in the state. The inability of the state government to effect payment of salaries promptly and the subsequent forceful retirement of teachers and other civil servants further aggravated the problem. Some have attributed the problems of conflicts in primary schools to poor salaries and facilities. In the words of Ademola, (a teacher who became a lawyer) cited by Oladepo (1985) the salary was poor to the extent that "… society would not accord me respect as a teacher, for I was regarded as one of the wretched of the earth. When the opportunity came, I called it quit immediately and have had no regrets ever since". An investigation into the nature of conflicts, their causes as well as their effects on school administration are important in order to ensure harmony in the state and to facilitate higher productivity.

Conflict is inherent in organizations, and managing it is a function of the leader. As the nature of organizations has evolved over time, so have the role of conflict in them and the work of the leader in responding to conflict situations. Early organizational theorists viewed conflict as detrimental to organizations. Now conflict is considered a natural phenomenon, "a normal human condition that is always present to some degree" (Schein, 2010, p. 95), and students of organizations see unresolved conflict rather than conflict itself as a deterrent to organizational effectiveness.   The manner in which conflict is handled has potential to affect organizations and influence organizational outcomes (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 2001; Thomas, 1976, 1992). Effectively managing rather than eradicating conflict has become a function of an effective leader.

Conflict management is the principle that all conflicts cannot necessarily be resolved, but learning how to manage conflicts can decrease the odds of non-productive escalation. Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in your environment.

This research work will be based on conflict and conflict management in primary schools in kaura local government of Kaduna state.

Problem Statement

Conflict in any organization may not enable the organization achieve its set objectives if not properly checked. Conflict is a serious problem in modern organization, most of the time, it wastes precious human resources that could have been utilized to enhance activities. Indeed primary schools of kaura local government are not excluded from having conflicts and managing it. Practicing managers and school administrators suggest that they spend more than 20% of their time dealing with conflicts or its aftermath. Thomas and Schmidt (1976).

Conflict bring about low morale in personnel, low production, ineffective communication, lack of cooperation, that usually hampered overall performance of the organization, high labour turnover and so on. Teacher conflicts arises between teachers themselves, teachers with students because of poor leadership style of the headmaster/headmistress, gossips, quarrelling, on little or nothing especially from female teachers.

This study will therefore look at these problems and find out how they are been resolved in primary schools in kaura local government of Kaduna state.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated:

  i.   Identify the causes of conflicts and its management in primary schools in kaura local government area, Kaduna state.
  ii.   Examine the different types of conflicts and its management in primary schools in kaura local government area, Kaduna state.
  iii. Access the effects of conflicts on the management of primary schools in kaura local government area, Kaduna state.
  iv.   Determine the different methods of managing conflicts in primary schools in kaura local government area, Kaduna state.

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were postulated:
HO₁: There is no significant difference in the opinion of the Headmaster/headmistress, teachers, pupils, and Parent-Teachers-Association (PTA) (respondents) on the causes of conflict in primary schools in kaura local government area, Kaduna state.
HO₂: There is no significant difference in the opinion of the Headmaster/headmistress, teachers, pupils, and Parent-Teachers-Association (PTA) (respondents) on the types of conflict in primary schools in kaura local government area, Kaduna state.
HO₃: There is no significant difference in the opinion of the Headmaster/headmistress, teachers, pupils, and Parent-Teachers-Association (PTA) (respondents) on the effects of conflict in primary schools in kaura local government area, Kaduna state.
HO₄: There is no significant difference in the opinion of the Headmaster/headmistress, teachers, pupils, and Parent-Teachers-Association (PTA) (respondents) on the methods of managing conflict in primary schools in kaura local government area, Kaduna state.

Significance of the Study

The study accesses how conflicts are effectively managed in order to attain good performance. The significance of this study is predicated on the need for a peaceful atmosphere conducive for learning and academic exercises. The study unveils the causes of conflict and its effects in the administration of a primary school and how to

prefer solutions existing conflicts and potential ones. It is also hoped that the study would add to already existing research literature on conflict management in organizations and outcome of the study will provide basis for other researches undertaking further studies on the subject matter.

Methodology

In Regards to this study, a survey research design was adopted because the population is large. Survey according to Osuola etal (2001) studies both large and small population by selecting and studying the sample chosen from the population to be discussed. The major instrument that was used is structured questionnaire to collect and assemble data for the study. The population of this study consists of all primary schools in Kaura local government Area of Kaduna state. The total number of primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area =137(consisting of 124 public schools and 13 private schools) with a total of 3140 teachers and approximately 19191 pupils, out of which Ten (10) primary schools where selected. The findings and recommendation of the study are applicable to all primary school Head-teachers, Teachers, and the Parents-Teachers- Association (PTA) in the local Government. To test the reliability of the instrument twenty (20) respondents were selected from Jama'a local Government of Kaduna State. The questionnaire was administered on their ground their scores were then employed. Using T-test statistic, reliability co-efficient 0.75 was obtained. The researcher visited the sampled primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The researcher sought the permission of the Head-teachers in the selected primary schools for the purpose of administering the questionnaires. For the purpose of organizing data and drawing adequate conclusion, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS. 22) was used to analyze the data collected from the respondents. Frequency, percentages and ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used for analyzing the questionnaire. Frequency and percentages was used to analyze the demographic data of the respondents, frequency and percentages was used in analyzing the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One
There is no significant difference in the opinions of the head teachers, teachers and parents on the causes of conflict in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Table 1: Summary of one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the Causes of Conflicts in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Status	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F Calculated	P. Value	F critical
Between Groups	1989.624	2	994.395			
				14.053	.000	4.95
Within groups	11680.084	165	70.788			
Total	**13669.708**	**167**				

The test indicated that there was a significant difference in the opinions of respondents i.e F-ration value (14.053) at 2df 165 and at the level 0.05. The critical value (4.95) is less than F ration value (14.053). The probability level of significance P (.000) is less than 0.05. This means that there is a significance difference in the opinion of the Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents on the causes of conflict in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the causes of conflict in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Hypothesis Two
There is no significant difference in the opinions of the Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents on the types of conflicts in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Table 2: Summary of one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the types of conflicts in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Statujs	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F Calculated	P. Value	F critical
Between Groups	962.790	2	481.395			
				4.337	.015	4.95
Within groups	18315.084	165	111.003			
Total	**19278.280**	**167**				

The test indicated that there was no significant difference in the opinions of respondents i.e F-ration value (4.337) at 2df 165 and at the level 0.05. The critical value (4.95) is more than F ration value (4.337). The probability level of significance P (.015) is more than 0.05. This means that there is no significance difference in the opinion of the Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents on the types of conflicts in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Therefore, the hypothesis is retained, meaning that there is no significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the types of conflicts in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Hypothesis Three
There is no significant difference in the opinions of the Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents on the effects of conflicts in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Table 3: Summary of one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the Effect of Conflicts in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Status	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F Calculated	P. Value	F critical
Between Groups	362.401	2	181.200			
				6.623	.002	4.95
Within groups	4514.075	165	27.358			
Total	**4876.476**	**167**				

The test indicated that there was a significant difference in the opinions of respondents i.e F-ration value (6.623) at 2df 165 and at the level 0.05. The critical value (4.95) is less than F ration value (6.623). The probability level of significance P (.002) is less than 0.05. This means that there is a significance difference in the opinion of Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents on the effects on conflict in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the effects on conflict in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Hypothesis Four
There is no significant difference in the opinions of the Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents on the methods of managing Conflicts in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Table 4: Summary of one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the methods of managing conflict in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Status	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F Calculated	P. Value	F critical
Between Groups	1353.926	2	676.963			
				22.207	.000	4.95
Within groups	5029.925	165	30.484			
Total	**6383.851**	**167**				

The test indicated that there was a significant difference in the opinions of respondents i.e F-ration value (22.207) at 2df 165 and at the level 0.05. The critical value (4.95) is less than F ration value (22.207). The

probability level of significance P (.000) is less than 0.05. This means that there is a significance difference in the opinion of Head Teachers, Teachers and Parents on the methods of managing conflict in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents on the methods of managing conflicts in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Summary of the Major Findings

The following are the summary of the findings after analyzing the data collected
   i.   It was discovered that bad leadership, disobedience and communication breakdown were the causes of conflicts in primary schools in Kaura LGA, Kaduna State.
   ii. That pupil-pupil, pupil-teacher, teacher-teacher, teacher- head teacher, and teacher-parents are the main types of conflict in primary schools in kaura LGEA
   iii. It has been found out that conflict has affected the effectiveness of teaching and learning, low morale among teachers and pupils, and also caused indiscipline in some of the schools in Kaura LGA, Kaduna State.
   iv. The methods used to resolved conflict in the selected primary schools in Kaura LGA, Kaduna State were effective guidance and counseling, sincerity and openness in the schools, fair hearing at all times to the two parties involved in conflicts in the schools.

Conclusion

It was found that there was a significant difference among the respondents on the causes of conflicts in primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. It was found that bad leadership is one of the cause, disobedience on the part of the pupils is also another reason for conflict, communication breakdown leads to conflicts, disagreement between head teacher and teachers leads to conflict, and un healthy competition between teachers can result to conflict in Primary Schools. More so, it was revealed that there was no significant difference among the respondents on the types of conflicts in primary school in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Responses also showed that jealousy among pupils, rivalry between head teacher and teachers, faoviritism in the schools, misunderstanding among teachers and teasing of pupils are some of the types of conflicts experienced in Primary Schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The findings showed that there was a significant difference among the respondents on the effects of conflicts in the management of primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The respondents also agreed those effects in effectiveness in teaching and learning, low morale among teachers and pupils in the schools, leadership problems, and indiscipline in schools, delinquency among pupils, enmity and hatred in the schools. And finally, there was a significant difference among the respondents the methods of resolving conflict in primary schools in Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The result also showed that the following are the methods of resolving conflict, effective communication channel in the schools, awareness programmes, effective guidance and counseling programmes, sincerity and openness in the schools, fair hearing at all times in the school.

Recommendations
The following recommendations were suggested in line with the objectives of the study;
   i.   The head teachers should avoid bad leadership, disobedience to school rules and regulations, communication breakdown, unresolved problems, use of offensive language, and competitions among teachers in their schools at all times in order to reduce the causes of conflicts.
   ii. Teacher-teacher, teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil, teacher-parent, and teacher-head teacher conflicts should be avoided in primary schools at all times in order to have a smooth running of the school activities.
   iii. Head teachers should ensure that conflicts is brought down to it minimal level to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, to raise the morale of teachers and pupils, to reduce indiscipline, to maintain unity and to reduce delinquency among pupils in some of the selected primary schools.
   iv. Head teachers should encourage effective communication, create awareness, effective guidance and counseling, sincerity and openness in the schools, fair hearing at all times to the two parties involved in conflict in the schools.

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