



## INFLUENCE OF HEAD-TEACHERS CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE ON TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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### Abstract:

The study focused on influence of head-teachers conflict management style on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted 122 head-teachers in 61 public secondary schools in Awka education zone. No sample was taken, as the population size was manageable. A 16-items structured questionnaire validated by three experts was used for the study. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient to determine its degree of reliability which obtained overall reliability coefficient values of 0.95. Data related to the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that respondents disagreed that head teachers use integrating conflict management style while they agreed in using obliging conflict management style for their job satisfaction. The study revealed that head teachers' years of teaching experience does not affect the uses of integrating and obliging conflict management style in their job satisfaction. It was concluded that integrating conflict management style are rarely used by the head teacher. It was recommended, among others, that Head teachers should strive at minimizing conflicts and use appropriate methods to manage them such integrating either than obliging conflict management style.

**Keywords:** head-teachers, conflict management style, job satisfaction, public secondary schools

## 1. Introduction

In every living organism, conflict manifests itself in human as natural and social occurrence. The history of conflict draws back to creation times for instance the disagreement between Adam's Son Can and Abel that resulted to murder. Therefore, conflict in schools/institutions has an inherent function of the leader. In recent times, conflict emerges as a rational phenomenon in human norms to a certain extent. That is why it's estimated that in schools, leaders spend 20% of their time averagely to resolving conflict that arise between different stakeholders (Ahmed, 2015). Schools/institutions outcome and effectiveness depend on the manner used to handle conflict. Effect leaders in schools have been known to manage conflict rather eradicating it as an efficacy function (Boucher, 2013).

Conflict has been described as the art of coming into collision, clash or be in opposition or at variance with one another. Obi (2012) defined conflict as an act of discontentment and contention which either the workers or employers of labour utilize to put excessive pressure against each other so as to get their demands. Alternatively, conflict can be defined to as the manner in which a person(s) sees that one needs, goals, interests, values, or behaviours are disagreed with, differ opposed, or negatively influence another person's opinion (Baker, 2011).

Schools, like other organizations, are not immune against conflict. In the school organization, conflict emanates from the interactions between members (students, staff, management and the community) and across the organization as members strive to achieve the goals and objectives of education resulting in: student/student conflict, student/staff conflict, staff/staff conflict, principal/staff conflict and school/community conflict.

Bartol and Martine in Uchendu, Anijaobi-Idem and Odigwe (2014) submitted that poor recognition of teachers' autonomy, lack of objectivity, inadequate flow of information and perception of issues of interest are causative agents of school-based conflict. With such conflicts, teachers cannot contribute meaningfully to teaching - learning process which is central to the provision and actualization of qualitative education and goals of education as enshrined in the Nigerian National Policy on Education.

According to Ahmed (2015), the rise of conflict can test relationships and provide an opportunity for the parties that are involved to understand whether they are valued and trusted. In Nigeria education system, various legislation serves as guidelines for management and administration of educational institutions. However, it appears that most educational institutions have been less successful in how to manage conflicts. The Ministry of Education report indicate that in-spite of the government policies put in place,

Nigerian educational institutions have continued to report increased cases of conflict (Bartol and Martine in Uchendu, Anijaobi-Idem & Odigwe, 2014)

In the recent past the concern has shifted to the changing nature and increased number of organizational conflicts. Most of these conflicts occur in secondary schools, colleges and tertiary institutions. Most of these conflicts are characterized by violence and wanton destruction of institutional property. Between 2010 to 2019 the number of conflicts in public secondary schools alone increased tremendously. According to report by Nigerian Union of Teachers of Anambra State Chapter in Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013), 10% of head teachers in Anambra State went on transfer and 2% left headship all together because of the conflict. The board of teachers had either rejected the head teachers that were transferred or had faced frequent unrest among students in their schools. As a way of preventing and solving future conflicts, the Nigerian Union of Teachers, Anambra State Chapter transferred other head teachers to put off conflicts in their stations. The 2 percent that left headship found educational administration too hot to remain around. These conflicts may have influenced their levels of job satisfaction leading to their decision to leave teaching and in other careers (Lagat, 2013).

A study by Kiboss and Jemiryot in Olielo (2017) indicates that in public secondary schools where conflicts are poorly managed there is low satisfaction among the teachers leading to high rate of teachers' turnover and poor academic performance. In support, Mehrad (2015) contends that one of the key elements that have great contribution in the amount of job satisfaction among staff's is management styles. Mehrad further argued that employing accurate styles of management can be effective in forming of job satisfaction. One of the important managerial and organizational behaviours if conflicts management styles that should be performed by the managers. On the same line, Olielo (2017) revealed that principals' leadership styles have a great impact on the working atmosphere in a school and consequently the teachers' job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction represents a combination of positive or negative feelings that workers have towards their work (Mbithe, 2013). Olcuma and Titrek (2015) defined job satisfaction as a satisfactory or positive emotional state arising from a person's evaluation of their work or work experience. While Boundless (2017) defined job satisfaction as the level of contentment a person feels regarding one's job. Therefore, job satisfaction is a deciding factor in the organization's efficiency because it is in affective reaction to an individual's work situation in which the overall feeling about an individual's job or career which can be related to specific outcomes, such as productivity, ownership of school goals and increase in self-esteem (Sygtak & Ulmer, 2011). In the context of this study, job satisfaction is viewed as employees' attitudes toward their working conditions and working environments and positive emotional response to their jobs and work performance.

A study by Oboegbulem and Alfa (2013) found that teachers with a high job satisfaction will exhibit some characteristics to include highly efficient and effective, friendly to administration, have low turnover and always present in schools. Oboegbulem and Alfa also found that teachers with low satisfaction lead to absenteeism,

apathy, reduced performance, frequent requests for transfers to other schools, value material rewards, are hostile to school officials and work towards promotion to other positions with better prospects or quitting altogether resulting to high teacher education costs.

Ahmed (2015) contended that there are five conflict management styles, with each having a separate consequence on job satisfaction to include integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising management styles. Thus, in this study, the focus shall be on only two out the five mentioned which are integrating and obliging. Integrating is characterized by both high concerns for self and for others. This involves openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties. It is associated with problem solving, which may lead to creative solutions. Integrating style is used to reach out the common solution of the problem.

Boucher (2013) noted that head teacher use integrating conflict management style for their job performance. The manager expects that by the means of numerous conflicting views, one can generate new and improved view point about the solution of the problem (Ahmed, 2015). This style has been found to be useful in utilizing the skills and information of different individuals to generate solutions, and may be appropriate for dealing with strategic issues relating to objectives, policies and long-range planning (Afzalur, Garrett & Buntzman in Oboegbulem & Alfa, 2013). Generally, it is called cooperative style. It helps the manager to find out the real solution of the problem through one sincere effect.

An obliging style involves low concern for self and high concern for others. This style is associated with attempting diminish differences and emphasize commonalities for the purpose of satisfying the needs of the other party. This style has been found to be used by an individual believing that he or she may be wrong and that the issue in question is much more important to the other person involved. It can be used as a strategy when an individual is willing to make a concession with the hope of getting something in return (Afzalur, Garrett & Buntzman in Oboegbulem & Alfa, 2013). In obliging style, the administrators try to absorb conflict by minimizing differences with other parties. In obliging style, administrators are hesitant in expressing one ideas, beliefs and feelings. This style indicates low concern for self and high concern for others. This is also known as accommodating (Ghaffar & Khan, 2012).

Uchendu, Anijaobi and Odigwe (2013) revealed that 89 percent of the head teachers prefer using integrating conflict management style. Moreso the findings showed that no significant correlation was found to exist between head teachers conflict management style and teachers job satisfaction.

Oleuma and Titrek (2015) added that teacher job satisfaction levels were predicted significantly by administrators' decision-making styles. Majority of administrators used rational decision-making style which positively affected job satisfaction and they rarely use avoidant decision-making style that was found to negatively affect job satisfaction.

## 2. Statement of the Problems

Schools are learning environments which need peace and silent atmosphere as intended ideals. Conflicts are inevitable hence cannot miss where people are and coexist. Most secondary school in Awka education zone, Anambra State has been noted to be having high levels of conflicts in the public secondary schools. Despite the government efforts to curb this menace by training, guiding and counseling teachers establishing a department of guidance and counseling, accepting pastoral and chaplaincy services in schools, training school heads in conflict management styles organized in workshops by a department of Basic Education.

In 2010, a seminar was organized and conducted by the government covering the need to use human relationship to reduce conflicts in schools and the society. Post primary education board officials at zonal and school level for teachers and head teachers have also tried to resolve conflicts. Consequently, a code of conduct and regulations for teachers and code of ethics have also been put in place. Conflict has continued to be an elusive matter in our schools, organizations and the society in general. Failure to resolve conflicts affects performance of duty by teachers and may in most cases result to poor working relationship among the various players in the school.

The conflict involves head teachers, teachers, students, support staff. Wherever conflicts occur in schools, the officer held accountable and responsible is the head teacher. With all these conflicts in school, it has emanated into strikes, demonstrations, lock outs, destructions and burning of properties such as laboratories, classes, libraries, instructional materials, poor communication and personal differences among others. The conflicts have resulted to job dissatisfaction among teachers in the state. This study therefore sought to investigate the various conflict management styles employed by administrators of public secondary school and their resultant effects on teachers' job performance in Awka education zone of Anambra state.

### 2.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the influence of head-teachers conflict management style on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined:

- 1) integration conflict management style used by head-teachers on the influence of teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools Awka education zone of Anambra State, Nigeria.
- 2) obliging conflict management style used by head-teachers on the influence of teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State, Nigeria.

### 2.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- 1) How does integrating conflict management style by head-teachers influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?
- 2) How does obliging conflict management style by head-teachers influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

### 2.3 Hypotheses

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

- 1) There is no significance difference in the mean responses of head-teachers on integrating conflict management style used influence their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on years of teaching experience (0-5years, 6-10years, 11-15years, 16-20years and 21-25years).
- 2) There is no significance difference in the mean responses of head-teachers on obliging conflict management style used influence their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on years of teaching experience (0-5years, 6-10years, 11-15years, 16-20years and 21-25years).

### 3. Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was (122 head-teachers) in 61 public secondary schools in Awka education zone, Anambra State. No sample size was used for the study. A 16-item structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was structured on a five-point rating scale with response categories as Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (LE) = 1. The questionnaire was validated by three experts-two in business education and one from measurement and evaluation unit all from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. A test re-test was used to establish the reliability of the instrument by administering it to 10 head-teachers and 10 teachers from selected secondary schools in Ogadi education, Anambra State who were not included in the study population.

Data collected in the test re-test were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient to determine its degree of reliability which obtained reliability coefficients values of 0.95 and 0.94 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively with an overall coefficient of 0.95. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of the three research assistants using on the spot response method. However, those who could not meet were revisited on appointment to retrieve their completed copies. The 122 copies of the instrument given out to the respondents and 118 were retrieved and used for data analysis. Data collected in the study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and determine how close the respondents were in their views. Decision for the research

questions was based on the cluster mean relative to the real limits of number on five-point rating scale. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Where disagreement existed among the three groups, the Scheffe Post-hoc test was conducted to determine the group to which the disagreement relates. A null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated p-value was less than the 0.05 level of significance, as it meant that there was significant difference. Conversely, where the calculated p-value was equal to or greater than the level of significance (0.05), it meant that there was no significant difference and the hypothesis was not rejected.

#### 4. Result

**Research Question 1:** How does integrating conflict management style by head-teachers influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Head-teachers mean responses on integrating conflict management style influence on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone (N=118)

S/N	Integrating Conflict Management Style Influence on Teachers' Job Satisfaction	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Try to investigate an issue with others to find a solution acceptable to them	1.61	1.29	Disagree
2	Try to work with teachers to find a solution to a problem which satisfy the school expectation	1.88	1.33	Disagree
3	Usually exchange accurate information with others to solve a problem together	2.32	1.21	Agree
4	Collaborate with other teachers to come up with decision acceptable to all	1.59	1.35	Disagree
5	Always listen to other's opinion and give feedback	2.37	1.49	Agree
6	Try to see conflicts on both side	1.67	1.35	Disagree
7	Usually seeks for teachers views and invites others to do same	2.58	1.29	Agree
8	Try to bring all teachers concerns in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way	1.68	1.47	Disagree
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>1.96</b>		<b>Disagree</b>

Data in Table 1 show that three out of eight item listed above the respondents rated item 3, 5 and 7 agreed with the means scores ranged from 3.32 to 3.58, while the remaining five items such as 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 were rated disagreed with means scores ranged from 1.59 to 1.88. The overall mean was 1.96 which is average use of the obliging conflict management style being examined. This means that head teachers disagreed that they use integrating conflict management style for their job satisfaction. The standard deviations show that there is homogeneity amongst responses indicating a greater consensus of opinions.

**Research Question 2:** How does obliging conflict management style by head-teachers influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Head-teachers mean responses on obliging conflict management style influence on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone (N=118)

S/N	Obliging Conflict Management Style Influence on Teachers' Job Satisfaction	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Head-teacher do not like to rock the boat so he cooperates with others and accept instructions easily	2.66	1.29	Agree
2	When someone else thinks they have a good idea the head-teacher cooperate and help them	3.56	1.33	Strongly Agree
3	Head-teacher try to adjust his priorities to accommodate other people's needs	3.02	1.21	Agree
4	Head-teacher try to expectation of others	3.67	1.35	Strongly Agree
5	Head-teacher usually agree early, rather than argue about a point	3.37	1.49	Agree
6	Head-teacher try by given in as soon as the other party gets emotional about an issue	2.67	1.35	Agree
7	Head-teacher try by given in totally rather them try to change another's opinion	3.67	1.29	Strongly Agree
8	Head-teacher try by think it is more important to get along to win an argument	2.40	1.47	Disagree
	<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.13</b>		<b>Agree</b>

Data in Table 2 show that three out of eight item listed the respondents rated item 2, 4 and 7 strongly agreed with the means scores ranged from 3.56 to 3.67, four items such as item 1, 3, 5 and 6 were rated agreed with means scores ranged from 2.66 to 3.37, while the remaining one (item 8) was rated disagreed has a mean range of 2.40. The overall mean was 3.13 which is average use of the obliging conflict management style being examined. This mean that head teachers agreed that they use obliging conflict management style for their job satisfaction. The standard deviations show that there is homogeneity amongst responses indicating a greater consensus of opinions.

#### 4.1 Testing of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significance difference in the mean responses of head-teachers on integrating conflict management style used influence their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on years of teaching experience (0-5years, 6-10years, 11-15years, 16-20years and 21-25years).



**Table 3:** ANOVA Summary of respondents' mean responses of head-teachers on integrating conflict management style used influence their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on years of teaching experience (N= 118)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P-value	Decision
Between Groups	50.700	2	25.350	.027	.973	Not Significant
Within Groups	424.633	115	5.662			
<b>Total</b>	<b>475.333</b>	<b>117</b>				

Results in Table 3 show that there is no significant difference among the five groups (0-5years, 6-10years, 11-15years, 16-20years and 21-25years) in terms of their mean responses on integrating conflict management style used influence their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone. It was observed that at 0.05 level of significance, 2 is nominator and 117 of denominator the calculated F-ratio is.027 and *P-value* .973 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significance difference in the mean responses of head-teachers on obliging conflict management style used influence their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on years of teaching experience (0-5years, 6-10years, 11-15years, 16-20years and 21-25years).

**Table 4:** ANOVA Summary of respondents' mean responses of head-teachers on obliging conflict management style used influence their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on years of teaching experience (N= 118)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P-value	Decision
Between Groups	.190	2	.095	.073	.632	Not Significant
Within Groups	263.258	115	5.662			
<b>Total</b>	<b>263.449</b>	<b>117</b>	3.510			

Results in Table 4 show that there is no significant difference among the five groups (0-5years, 6-10years, 11-15years, 16-20years and 21-25years) in terms of their mean responses on obliging conflict management style used influence their job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone. It was observed that at 0.05 level of significance, 2 is nominator and 117 of denominator the calculated F-ratio is.073 and *P-value* .632 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study in the first research question disagreed that head teachers use integrating conflict management style for their job satisfaction with an overall mean responses of 1.96. This agreed with the views of Boucher (2013) who noted that head teacher use integrating conflict management style for their job performance.

The result in Table 3 revealed that there is no significant difference among the five groups (0-5years, 6-10years, 11-15years, 16-20years and 21-25years) in terms of head teachers' mean responses on their use of integrating conflict management style for job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone. This means that the years of teaching experience does not affect the uses of integrating conflict management style in their job satisfaction.

The findings of the study on the second research question agreed that head teachers used obliging conflict management style for their job performances with overall mean responses of 3.13. This disagreed with Akuffo (2015) which revealed that though obliging conflict management style affect job satisfaction positively and it is hardly used by administrators.

Results in Table 4, revealed that there is no significant difference among the five groups (0-5years, 6-10years, 11-15years, 16-20years and 21-25years) in terms of head teachers' mean responses on their use of obliging conflict management style for job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Awka education zone. This means that the years of teaching experience does not affect the uses of obliging conflict management style in their job satisfaction.

## **6. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that integrating conflict management style are rarely used by the head teacher. The subdominant use of integrating style by majority of the head teachers had led to decreased teachers job dissatisfaction in areas like lowering staff turnover, improved academic performance while obliging conflict management style was used lead to teachers job performance and satisfaction. The outcome of the study also revealed that years of teaching experience does not affect the uses of integrating and obliging conflict management style in their job satisfaction.

### **6.1 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers proffer the following recommendations:

- 1) Head teachers should strive at minimizing conflicts and use appropriate methods to manage them such as integrating either than obliging conflict management style.
- 2) The Boards of Management should encourage use of integrating conflict management style among head teachers and conduct team building activities for teacher with an aim of sensitizing then on conflict management.

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