MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICTS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN: IMPLICATIONS TO EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This paper examines management of conflict in senior secondary schools in Ilorin: implications to Educational management. A literature review was carried out which led to the understanding of the concepts. Ten (10) senior secondary schools were selected 52 through the stratified random sampling technique out of 18 senior secondary schools while a sample of two hundred respondents made up ten (10) teachers and ten (10) students from each of the ten schools of selected through the simple random sampling technique was used for the study. A self-designed questionnaire conflicts and school activities questionnaire (CASAQ) which was validated was used. The researcher administrated and collected the questionnaires while data collected was analyzed with both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The finding revealed that, causes of conflicts among students in secondary schools include: high handedness of students, strict application of rule and regulation, incompetence of principals' inadequate physical facilities, permeation of neighborhood conflicts into the school, inadequate social amenities, communication gap, indiscipline and inferiority/ superiority complex amongst students. The paper gave the causes, effects and management of conflicts among students in secondary schools include: high handedness of students, strict application of rule and regulation, incompetence of principals inadequate physical facilities, permeation of neighborhood conflicts into the school, inadequate social amenities, communication gap, indiscipline and inferiority/ superiority complex amongst students.
Keywords: *Management, Causes, Effects, conflict and Secondary schools*

Introduction

Conflict is inevitable in human societies, in the sense that whether we like it or not, it must certainly occur. This implies that, conflict takes place in all forms of organizations. Conflict is used in expressing misunderstanding, disagreements, antagonism and hostility between and among people. Conflict must however be properly managed so as to minimize its negative effects and maximize the positive impacts by utilizing the opportunities they open to organizations. According to Esquivel and Kleiner (1997), conflict is generally seen as, a disagreement regarding interests or ideas. In line with this Tomas in Abdulgafar (2020) is of the view that, conflict is a process which begins when a party perceived that the other has frustrated or is about to frustrate some of their concerns. In the same vein, Foundation Coalation (2003) pointed out that, conflict may be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals.

Abdulraheem (2004) is of the conviction that conflict could mean strife, controversy, discord of action or antagonism of interests. It could be deduced from these definitions that, conflict is a disagreement which arises as a result of clash of interests, indifference in orientation, desire or opinion, simply because a group of people must live together, work or share resources. The sources or causes of conflict in human societies are numerous Duke (1999) as well as Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) identified sharing of scarce resources, interdependency, incompatible personalities, competition for scarce resources, personality clashes, negligence of duty by some officials, poor condition of service, forceful/compulsory retirement and indiscipline as the sources or causes of conflict. It should be noted that, in contrast to the notion held by some people that conflict is detrimental to the success of organizations; it also has some benefits geared toward the growth and developments of organizations. This is because it improves quality of decisions, stimulates involvement in discussion, encourage people to test their capabilities and builds group cohesion.

Schools are very important public places which assemble people with different personalities and goals. The school contains mainly staff (academic and non-academic) and students. Conflict could arise between staff and students' conflict could be inter-school. The bulk of the students in Secondary schools are in their adolescence age that belongs to the "here and now" group (The Victorian association for Dispute Resolution (VADR), 2001). When one takes a casual look at Secondary Schools, they seem to be breeding places for conflicts and they are also faced with conflict situations. In the same vein, AbdulGafar (2020) reported that conflict between principals and students occurs frequently because many students manifest reluctance to obey school rule. Intra-school conflict could be due to inter-house sports. Quiz carry over competitions from neighborhood clashes, rival cult groups and so on. Inter-school conflicts on the hand could be due to football matches, issue of girl-friends, inter-House competitions etc.

Literature Review
Conflict as a Concept
Conflict according to Abdulraheem (2004) can be defined as a disagreement between two or more individuals, groups, organizations, states, communities and nations, with each one of them trying to gain acceptance of his views or opinions over others. Conflicts are usually caused by 'need' satisfaction of individuals, groups, communities or nations. Human needs as posited by Maslow Theory (1953) include: physiological, security, social, self-esteem and self-actualization. Maslow emphasized that, the physiological need is at the base of the pyramid while Self actualization is at the peak but the irony about needs is that, once the individual or group attains one, they tend to move to the next in order of hierarchy. Community conflicts usually emanate from lands, chieftaincy, and sighting of markets; political issues etc while conflicts between nations could be due to resources control, power shift, boundary dispute, relations, ethnics or ideology conflicts. However, conflict can range from very trivial matters like issue like cult groups, vandalism and superiority complex. Ahmed (2004) stressed that, conflict is unavoidable in values and goals. He listed the causes of conflicts in organization to include: resources allocation, psychological needs (feelings, anger, tension etc) values, and changes by new ideas, distribution of rewards, historical background, ignorance, competition and frustration amongst others.

The varieties as Dupe (1999) stated, include: intra-personal, interpersonal, intra-groups, inter-group and intra-organizational conflict. Students in secondary schools can be involved in any of these modes of conflicts. Intrapersonal conflict occurs to individuals and it usually leads to psychological stress. Any students with this type of conflict can be a source of trouble in a school because he or she creates crises anytime. As put forward by Dubin and Rose (1995), there are three basic types of conflict namely: task conflict (disagreement about the substance of discussion in relation to how a task is to be accomplished), interpersonal conflict (also called personality clash which may take the form of making antagonistic remarks on the personal characteristics of a group member) and procedure conflict (disagreement on the procedures to be adopted in accomplishing a group or organizational goal).

Positive effects of conflict Esquived and Kleiner (1997) are that it promotes constructive competition; helps in analytic thinking, helps organizational development and encourages more dedication and commitment to organizational goals. On the other hand however the negative effect of conflicts include: lack of cooperation, blockage in communication, distrust, loss of friendship and development of enmity. Conflicts as Msila (2012) observed, can be resolved using various strategies which include: dialogue, cooperation negotiation, training and re-training of students on the dangers behind conflicts, fair reward system resources available should be judiciously allocated, provision of facilities to reduce conflicts e.g. Classrooms, sports pitches or equipment, institutionalizing effective communication as a way of giving every student a sense of belonging. The School is a formal organization which is usually set up to achieve set goals and objectives. The ultimate aim of every school is to produce well-integrated citizens that will be useful not only to themselves but also the societies in which they leave. Adeyemi (2009) as the Accounting Officer therefore has a duty to ensure that the School is operating in a conducive atmosphere.

Consequently, they should have zero tolerance for conflicts and when they occur, they should face it with all the seriousness it requires.

Research Questions
 The following questions were raise to raise the study:
1. What are the causes of conflicts in senior secondary schools?
2. What are the effects of conflicts in on School activities in secondary schools?
3. What are the strategies that can be employed to effectively manage conflicts in senior secondary schools?

Methodology
The study adopted the survey research design. This is because it gathers the opinions of individuals who are only a fraction of larger group. Similarly, Dibal (2006) states that it: is the most commonly used research design and it selects sample of individuals from a known population. The population of the study was made up of teachers and students. Ten (10) public secondary schools were selected amongst the eighteen (18) Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. A. sample of two hundred respondents which comprised of 100 teachers and 100 students were used for the study.

The ten (10) teachers were made up of the Principal, two Vice Principals and Seven Class teachers from each school while ten (10) students were selected randomly among Senior Secondary School 1-3 of each of the Schools. A self-designed thirty-four items questionnaire was used for the data collection. The data was collected using one research assistant in each of the school. One hundred and Ninety completed copies of the questionnaire were returned and the data were analyzed using the frequencies and percentage scores were used to analyze Research questions.

Results and Discussion
Research Question 1: What are the causes of conflicts in Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin West local Government Area of Kwara State?
Table 1: Causes of Conflict in Senior Secondary Schools

Causes of Conflict in Senior Secondary	**N**	**Agree**	**%**	**Disagree**	**%**
Highness handedness	190	137	72	53	28
Strict application of rules and regulation	190	133	70	57	30
Administrative incompetence of principals	190	114	67	76	33
Denial of rights and privilege	190	118	62	72	38
Negligence of duties	190	155	81	35	19
Youthful exuberance	190	171	90	19	10
Inadequate facilities for staff and students	190	87	44	103	56
Communication gap	190	144	76	54	24
General indiscipline	190	46	24	144	76
Inferiority/superiority complex	190	143	75	47	25
Inadequate basic amenities	190	32	17	158	83
Favourtism	190	27	14	163	86
Role conflict	190	21	11	169	76
Misunderstanding of motives	190	11	6	179	94

Table 1 presents the opinions of the respondents on the causes of conflicts in senior secondary school. The table reveals that, high handedness, and strict application of rules and regulation, administrative incompetence of principals, youthful Exuberance, over-zealousness of some academic communication gap, superiority complex among students, inadequate basic amenities etc are responsible for conflicts in Senior Secondary schools.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of Conflicts on School activities in Secondary Schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Table 2: Effects of Conflict in Schools

Effect of Conflict	N	Agree		Disagree	%
Possible loss of life and properties	190	160	84	30	28
Closing down of school	190	148	78	42	22
Arrest of staff and students connected with the conflict	190	144	76	46	24
Suspension or dismissal of staff or student found guilty	190	118	62	72	38
Making students pay for damages	190	155	81	35	19
Hampers student's progress	190	87	44	103	56
Lower morale of teachers	190	144	76	54	24

Table 2 shows that, possible loss of lives and properties, closing down of schools, arrest of staff and students connected with the conflict, disciplinary action against those found guilty, suspension or dismissal of staff or student making students to pay for damages, hampering student's progress and lowering of morale of teachers are possible effects of conflicts in Senior secondary schools.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies that can be Employed to effectively manage conflicts in Senior secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Table 3: Strategies for Conflict Management in Senior Secondary Schools

Strategies for Managing Conflicts	N	Agree	%	Disagree	%
Setting up committee to resolve conflicts	190	179	94	11	6
Staff and students participation in decision making	190	169	89	21	11
Using dialogue technique	190	167	88	23	12
Management and staff should be sensitive to students' grievances	190	160	84	30	12
Establishment of students representative councils (SRC) in upholding disciplines in the school using Prefects and Class monitors	190	154	81	36	19
Allowing free flow of information	190	158	83	32	17
Giving regular orientation to students on the need to uphold dialogue rather than violence in solving problems	190	140	74	50	26
Definition of individual roles	190	137	72	53	28
Allowing other parties to mediate in student Conflict e.g P.T.A. religions bodies etc	190	27	67	63	33
Provision of basic amenities such as electricity, potable water and other facilities for students	190	122	64	68	36
Inviting security agents to suppress conflict Synergy among principals of secondary schools in the same axis or Clusters	190	137	72	53	28

The data in table 3 highlights the strategies that could be used to combat conflicts amongst students of secondary schools. Except the use of the data in table 3 highlights the strategies that could be used to combat conflicts amongst students of secondary schools. Except the use of security agencies to curb conflicts which was scored below average by over 70% of the respondents, all the rest strategies were accepted as measures that can curb or reduce conflicts in Senior Secondary Schools in Secondary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. In order of ranking setting up committee to resolve conflict, staff and students participation in decision-making, use of dialogue, diving attention to student grievances on time, collaborating with students' Representative council, free communication channels, regular orientation of students on the dangers inherent in conflict, clear dominion of individual

goes, allowing external bodies to contribute in conflict resolution and synergy among Principals in the sar-He vicinity, axis or duster. This finding corroborates the position of Okotoni and Okoton(2 603)which had highlighted that indiscipline, negligence of duty administrative incompetence, favoritism and youthful exuberance are among causes of conflict in Secondary schools. The study also supports the findings of Adeyemi (2009) which revealed that possible

Conclusion

Conflict is inevitable in human organizations but as much as possible, it should be reduced to the barest minimum. The revelation of causes, effects and possible strategies for conflict management in senior secondary schools may aid the management of secondary schools in Ilorin West on how best to manage the School conditions in such a way that conflicts among students within their school are reduced to the barest minimum including the staff in many instances. In areas where school are clustered like Adeta— Itanma-Oloje-ogidi Axis, the management of these schools should operate as a unit in order to ensure peace amongst their students as a way of preventing inter-school conflicts which usually arise out or inter-School Athletics, football or Inter-house competitions and other social gatherings.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were hereby made for possible implementation by the Principal's of senior secondary schools so as to reduce and manage conflict effectively, particularly among students..
1. Seminars, conferences and symposia should be held regularly or at least, once in a year for proprietors, management and staff of senior secondary schools in Iloirn West Local government Area.
2. School management should endeavor to establish students Representative Council (S.R.C.) in their schools so that students can have a forum to discuss their problems which will be passed forward to the management for consideration.
3. Guidance and Counseling facilities and programmes should be introduced in schools where none exist.
4. Management and principal officers of the school should be transparent and accountable in their dealings with students so that any loophole of crisis may not be created

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