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SCHOOL CONFLICTS: CAUSES AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN CLASSROOM RELATIONSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to identify school conflicts, its causes and management strategies in classroom relationships. Accommodation, avoidance, competition, collaboration, compromise are the management strategies for conflict resolution in schools. The review of relevant literature shows that conflict is an essential and unavoidable human phenomenon because where there is human interaction, there is likelihood of personal likes and dislikes. Conflict exists in all schools. The school is inserted in a space where the conflict manifest itself daily and assumes relevance, being the result of the multiple interpersonal relationships that occurs in the school context. Thus, conflict is part of school life, which implies that teachers must have the skills to manage conflict constructively, recognizing the diversities of school conflicts. This study aimed to present its causes, highlighting the main ones in the classroom, in the teacher-student relationship. Causes of conflict includes difference in perceptions, overlapping authority, poor communication network, misunderstanding amongst others. Based on this discussion, the paper suggests that teachers and students should be educated and enlightened on their code of conduct, there should be good communication network, vertically and horizontally in the school system and infusing and integrating conflict resolution into school curriculum and culture is also imperative.

Keywords: Conflict, School, Management, Conflict Resolution, Conflict Strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflicts have become part and parcel of human organization's world. It is an inevitable friction in an organization. Relationship and conflicts are inevitable realities of life; they are a set of dynamic phenomena present and indispensable in human societies. All organizations, no matter how serene and calm they may appear are bound to have conflict or find conflicting interests among themselves. The school as an educational organization is not left out because it encounters at one point in time or the other, conflicts and conflicting interest among teachers, students, principals and other staff. According to Ossail and Nwalado (2011), it can arise from event of staff and student's interactions. It can also emanate from school administrative cadre, among students, or some times between schools and its host community.

One of the most striking characteristics of human beings is the diversities. Different ways of being, thinking and existing, different needs, world view, ethical positions mark the relationships between people. In this sense, inter personal conflicts are understood as tension that involves different interests or positions, are inherent to human relationships and are present in various social organizations among them, especially, the school. Dealing with this situation, teachers need training in conflict management so that they can correctly manage the classroom conflicts and educate also the students for conflict management. Bartol and Martine in Uchendu et al. (2014) submitted that poor recognition of teacher's 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 policy on education.

Recognizing that the school is an organization that brings together social diversity and adopting as an assumption that interpersonal conflicts are inherent to human relationships, the researcher define the school conflict as the theme of this study. In this sense, the study address school conflicts with a focus on classroom conflicts in the teacher- students relationship. Conflicts which inevitably occurs in daily life everywhere where men life is an indispensable reality of school life where human relationships are experienced at the highest level. Many personnel and students with different characteristics spend their time together at schools. Conflict is inevitable between both teachers and students at schools where differences in culture, personality, values, beliefs, attitudes, needs, preferences, goals, interests and power come together. This is an important problem faced especially by teachers followed by management, counseling and guidance teachers and parents (Türnüklü, 2002). Today we have many positive and negative stimuli in terms of social and cultural, factors as well environmental and individual conditions, and conflict is one of the issues on which school administrators and teachers spend a lot of time.

When they cannot acquire the necessary skills, administrators and teachers who cannot overcome conflict situations will be entrapped by one of the most important problems that can steal away the time that should be spent on instruction (Argon, 2014). At schools conflicts may be experienced in many issues such as distribution of work among personnel, financial resources, in and out of class teaching activities and practices, rewards, punishment, assessment practices, use of power-authority, being late for class, leave of absences, political views, negative personal attitudes, passing grade levels and scoring system, issues regarding the legislation, student behaviors, dress code, assignments and placements for staff and distribution of resources (Karip, 2000).

Conflicts can take place between administrators-teachers, teachers-teachers, teachers-students or parents-parents or among the students. It should be kept in mind that regardless of

the type of conflict or the group that take part in it, conflicts will deepen and be more complicated unless they are resolved and people involved in the conflict will experience negative feelings (Argon, 2014). This will negatively affect the job performances of the personnel and will decrease the quality of education and training at schools. The current study, undertaken in line with the literature, examined and discussed the conflicts experienced at school based on teacher views. In this respect, the study aimed to determine teacher views regarding the conflicts experienced at schools, the reasons behind conflicts, the impact of conflict on teachers and the responses conflict generates.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Conflict

Conflict does not suddenly exist in space. Something, someone or a situation somewhere can spark off a conflict. Wherever people gather and interact for a common purpose or for similar purposes, relationships invariably develop and with relationships conflict. It comes in most cases from known to unknown. In other words, one does not anticipate conflict and yet it occurs when it is least expected. What may spark off conflict on this end may not necessarily spark off on the other. Akpuru-Aja (2007) defines conflict as an attitude, a behaviour and action (process) that brings about strains and stresses in relationship between two or more people on the attainment of a set of interests or goals. Conflict sets in when parties treat each other with doubt and suspicion thereby resulting in frustration of either of the parties. According to Nwalado (2011), conflict is an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or difference within or between social entities such as individuals, groups, organizations. Whenever two individuals opine in different ways, a conflict arises. In layman's language, conflicts are nothing but a fight either between two individuals or among group members. No two individuals can think alike and there is definitely a difference in their thought process as well as their understanding. Disagreements among individuals leads to conflicts and fight.

Conflicts according to Obi (2004) involves opposite needs in action at the same time such as apparent incongruity between the human needs of teachers working in a school and the needs and demands of the school system itself. Conflict arises in a relationship between two or more parties who believe they have incompatible goals. In other words, conflict exists whenever an action by one person or group of persons prevent, obstructs, interferes with, injures or in some ways stops the desired action of another person or group of persons. According to Jaja et al. (2011), conflict connotes disagreement that can lead to argument or debate which results in dispute or controversy in ideas or view points by two individuals or groups. Conflict set in when parties treat each other with doubt and suspicion thereby resulting in frustration of either of the parties. Some individuals or groups do not treat others with the kind of respect that they deserve. Conflicts are bound to occur when some persons choose to treat their fellow human with disdain. Disagreement, contrasting images of each group's intentions, inactions or actions may also create a situation of conflict.

The behaviour of people differs for the fact that their characteristics and individual differences, attitudes, personalities, interest, intelligence and emotions are different. However, conflict arises when there is a perceived or actual threat to the needs, interests or concerns between groups bordering on their interactions and relationships (Kalagbor, 2017). Nicholson (1992) cited in Urias (2018) describe conflict as an activity which takes place when conscious beings (individuals or groups) wish to carry out mutually inconsistent acts concerning their wants, needs or obligations. It implies that conflict is instigated seriously and or intentionally by individual(s) or groups in pursuance of self or group interest.

Whichever form, intent or purpose, conflict is a product of unpleasant conditions in an organization resulting from clash of interest, competing values or want of scarce resources between or among individuals, group or groups.

Conflict Classification

Structural conflict: In structural conflicts, causes are associated with equal control situations, possession or resource distribution, unequal power, and authority, geographical, physical or environmental factors that prevent cooperation and time pressures. It can also be caused by forces external to the people in dispute. It can be helpful to assist parties in conflict to appreciate the external forces and constraints bearing upon them. Structural conflicts will often have structural solutions. Parties' appreciation that a conflict has an external source can have the effect of them coming to jointly address the imposed difficulties.

Value conflict: Value conflicts are caused by perceived or actual incompatible belief systems. Values are beliefs that people use to give meaning to their lives. Value explain what is "good or "bad", "right" or "wrong" "just" or "unjust". Differing values need not course conflict. People can live together in harmony with different value system. Value disputes arise only when people attempt to force one set of values on others or lay claim to exclusive value systems that do not allow for divergent beliefs. It is of no use to try to change value and belief system during relatively short and strategic mediation interventions. It can, however, be helpful to support each participants expression of their values and belief for acknowledgement by the other party.

Relationship conflict: Relationship conflicts occur because of the presence of strong negative emotions, misperceptions or stereotypes, poor communication or miscommunication, or repetitive negative behaviours. Relationship problems often fuel disputes and lead to an unnecessary escalating spiral or destructive conflict. Supporting the safe and balanced expression of perspectives and emotions for acknowledgement (not agreement) is one effective approach to managing relationship conflict.

Interest conflict: Interest conflicts are caused by competition over perceive incompatible needs. Conflict of interest result when one or more of the parties believe that in order to satisfy his or her needs, the needs and interests of an opponent must be sacrificed. Interest-based conflict will commonly be expressed in positional terms. A variety of interests and intentions underlie and motivate positions in negotiation and must be addressed for maximized resolution. Interest based conflict may occur over substantive issues (such as money, physical resources, time etc); procedural issues (the way the dispute is to be resolved); and psychological issues (perception of trust, fairness, desire for participation, respect, etc) for an interest-based dispute to be resolved, parties must be assisted to define and express their individual interests so that all of this interest may be jointly addressed. Interest-based conflict is best resolved through the maximizing integration of the parties' respective interest, positive intentions and desired experiential outcomes.

Data conflict: Data conflict occur when people lack information necessary to make wise decisions, are misinformed, disagree on which data is relevant, interpret information differently, or have competing assessment procedures. Some data conflicts may be unnecessary since they are caused by poor communication between the people in conflict. Other data conflicts may be genuine incompatibilities associated with data collection, interpretation or communication. Most data conflicts will have "data solution.

School Conflict

Conflict may occur in any organization and hence school. The school as microcosms of society brings together different views of the world, different ways of being, thinking, and living, thus becoming a space for representing social differences and being a place where different conflicts occur daily. Dealing with this situation type, requires learning and that is why teachers need training in conflict management so that they can correctly manage the classroom conflicts and educate also the students for conflict management. The level of conflict present in the school has important implications for the schools' overall performances. When there is little or no conflict, organizational performance suffers. Lack of conflict in an organization often signals that manager emphasize conformity at the expense of new ideas, are resistant to change and strive for agreement rather than effective decision making (Jones, 2000).

Types of Conflict

Conflict is inescapable fact of life whether it is friendships, family dynamics, or even workplaces, there will be conflict from time to time. If you can identify what the cause and type of the conflict is, it will be easier to solve it. Thus, conflict can be personal in which it can be intra-personal or inter-personal.

Intra-personal conflict: Humans are complex beings. Each of us carries unique potential, morals, ideas, beliefs. Intra-personal conflict has to do with when a person is in conflict with himself. This could be as a result of an exaggerated feeling of personal inadequacy. If the individual does not receive quick assistance in form of counseling therapy, he may fall into frustration, depression and ultimately commits suicide (Kinanee 2018). There is need for adequate counseling service within the school. Intra-personal conflict can arise when the ideas, missions, or visions of the organization especially the school, are not aligned with the moral value and belief systems of an individual. This type of conflict can be resolved by soul-searching and understanding what one truly wants.

Inter-personal conflicts: On the other hand, inter-personal conflict is a condition of contention between two individuals in the school. It can be between a principal and a teacher or a teacher and his students. These differences can be about philosophy, work ethic, rule adherence, vision or management style. Inter-personal conflict adversely affects productivity and morale. They can easily escalate if not attended to in a timely manner.

Intra-team conflict: Organizational goals are often ambitious. They require the coming together of people within varying levels of experience and expertise. Therefore, it is common for the workforce to be divided into teams for smooth functioning. Like some other types of conflicts in an organization, intra-team conflict is a result of diverse personalities working together in the same team. It is possible that a few people from the team or the group hold a few values and belief in common, but as the size of the team increases, the chances are that conflict does too. This type of conflict, can be managed by a clear division of responsibility, a fair division of work, and a management policy under which no team member is given any kind of "special" treatment.

Inter-team conflict: When the members of a group (formal or informal), clash with those of another group in the school, what is at play is described as an inter-group conflict. For the

school organization to function effectively, there has to be equilibrium among cogs of the wheel. To do this, the school heads and teachers need to eradicate bias, allocate workload effectively and build morale.

Causes of Conflict in Schools

There are many potential causes of conflict in the school. Mullius (2011) enumerated the causes of conflict as follows:

Poor communication network: Poor communication network is highly rated as one of the main causes of conflict in schools (Iwuagwu, 2011). School principals who introduce innovation without first educating the teachers and students of the nature foreseen benefits of the innovation in the school, cannot expect genuine cooperation and participation from them. And this can lead to conflict. Also, when decisions are not disseminated effectively, sources of conflict can be created for or by teachers and students.

Overlapping authority: When two or more teachers or departments claim authority for the same activities or tasks, conflict is likely to occur.

Limited resources: Most school resources are limited and as a result, teachers and principals struggle to have their own share. The greater the limitation of resources than usually, the greater the potential for conflict.

Role conflict: A role is the expected pattern of behaviour associated with members occupying a particular position within the structure of the school. In practice, the manner in which some teaches actually behave may not be consistent with their expected pattern of behaviour, problems of role incompatibility and role ambiguity arise from inadequate or inappropriate role definition in the school system and can be a significant cause of conflict.

Task inter-dependence: When the task of a teacher is dependent upon the work of another teacher, there is potential for conflict. Also, if the work of a department in the school is dependent upon the output of another department, a similar situation could arise. If reward or punishment system are perceived to be based on keeping up with performance level, then the potential for conflict is even greater.

Inequitable treatment: A teacher's perception of unjust treatment in the operating of personnel policies and policies or in reward and punishment system can lead to tension and conflict.

General Causes of Conflict

Prevalent causes of conflict not recorded in any particular order may include but not limited to the following:

Incompetent management: Incompetent management that fails to properly perform their responsibility will lose the confidence of their subordinates. When a leader is also uninformed about the duties of the followers, it can be a cause of tension and result in conflict.

Misunderstandings: One major cause of any misunderstanding is lack of communication. One good way to effectively reduce the potential of conflict is the avoidance of assumptions

through the creation of partner or team agreements. These agreements regulate or guide relationship and aid to clarify among colleagues the “dos” and “don’t” of the expected organizational behaviour.

Greed: Various parties may want to have control over issues or resources. They may want to divert more to themselves even if it means creating artificial scarcity of resources.

Lack of information: Conflict may arise when an individual feels he has been starved of information. When individuals keep experiencing changes, they are not privy to or decision are being made without the notice or involvement of some individuals, this can cause serious conflict between or among colleague or individuals at the workplace.

Non-compliance with rules and regulations: Some people are irritated by other people’s flagrant disregard for rules and regulations. Whole some people, on the other hand, are persistent rebels against rules and regulations, this is a gateway for conflicts in organization.

Religious intolerance: The belief system among people especially within the African region has led to conflict in many aspects of life. This has resulted to loss of lives and property, displacement, regrets and trauma.

Classroom Relationships

Building relationships in the classroom is an essential part of any instructor’s career. Having healthy teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships is an effective way to help prevent academic failure, social conflict and quarrelsome behaviour. Positive classroom relationships are foundation of an identify safe classroom. You cannot create a sense of identify safety without a continuous focus on how the students are feeling and treating one another. Positive classroom relationships are based on trusting, positive interactions with the teacher and among the students. In the classroom, positive relationships are foundation for learning success. Yet as teachers, we sometimes neglect to take the time to learn about our students as people, which can create barriers to learning and make even small interactions (or conflicts) challenging to handle.

How Teachers can Build Positive Relationships in the Classroom

A few simple things make a lot of difference to students

Use words thoughtfully: For example, even when you need to give student difficult feedback, make sure you understand what they were doing, and be encouraging them to rethink and revise their work.

Connect with each student daily: Find the unique ways that each child contributes, and give them more opportunities to do so.

Monitor and support student engagement: By regular observation, you may realize that one student needs extra time to finish her work or, you may ask one student to help another so both of them will improve their understanding of the task. Always try to give negative feedback privately.

Turn mistakes into learning opportunities: One match teacher would have the students analyze their mistakes. When she asked them to share what they discovered, all their hands shot up. Mistakes were safe to make in that classroom.

Send a positive call, not an e-mail home. One parent remembers clearly the teacher who said “I am so happy to have your son in my class, he has such an inquisitive mind and contributes so much”. That teacher did not know how much it meant to that parent, whose son was having trouble in school at the time.

Create norms for the classroom that address not only behavior, but also respect and empathy. Help students learn to understand their own feelings, perspective-taking activities help students consider how others feel.

Help create a sense of belonging inside and outside the classroom. For example, watch the students at recess. What are they doing? Is a boy off by himself, or is a girl sitting alone at lunch? Discuss with the student’s ways to be inclusive in the games.

Pay attention on how students interact with each other. Who is dominating? Who is left out? Teachers can be very intentional about grouping students. First, teach students how to work together by practicing with simple group activities. Then, give them opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups on a regular basis, mixing up the groups and watching how they work together.

The Impact and Importance of Positive Student Teacher Relations

The following are benefits of establishing positive relationships between educators and pupils of all ages:

The relationship between student and teacher plays a large role in the trajectory of a child’s academic success and social development. Establishing a positive relationship with the teachers helps a student feel more comfortable and safer in their classroom environment. As a result, students are more likely to participate actively in class and challenge themselves academically:

- The student-teacher relationship is a cornerstone in a student’s social maturation process cultivating a positive rapport with a non-parental authority figure, allows students to define themselves, adapt to their environment and grow their emotional and social intelligence. It takes guts and determination to address a teacher privately and let them know how much doing well in the classroom matters to them and teachers value that outreach and display of maturity.
- The presence of positive student-teacher relationships alone does not translate to academic success, but students that establish a strong bond with their teacher do perform better than students whose relationships with teachers involve some sort of conflict.
- Another importance of healthy student-teacher relationships in a classroom is that the classroom will be free of behavioural disruptions, which leaves teachers more time to instruct their class. Positive student-teacher relationships help to establish a learning environment in which educators and students display mutual respect for one another, rather than exchanges that involve conflict.
- Positive student – Teacher relationships assist educators with professional growth: students are not the only ones that benefit from healthy student teacher relationships. One primary benefit for the educator is that, as teachers work strategically to develop these relationships, they improve their interpersonal and professional skills as well.

Teaching is a profession that requires the ability to clearly communicate information even during stress inducing scenarios. It is important for teachers to find ways to successfully manage stress, in order to express concepts and avoid frustration. When students feel a sense of classroom pride and teachers are able to effectively communicate with their class, engagement occurs. A classroom in which students and teachers can focus on education rather than disturbances is one in which they both can thrive.

Conflicts in the Classroom

Students aren't always going to get along; and conflicts are a normal part of childhood. In fact, learning how to resolve peer tensions can teach many social skills, including empathy and sharing. The school builds a social interface favorable to involvement, where conflicts proliferate in the educational process complexity, being common and daily in classes. Thus, in the classroom different types of conflict occur, being a challenge for most teachers to know how to face, manage and resolve these conflicts. Teachers often perceive conflicts as indiscipline, violence, disrespect, and like all situations threatening his authority and inexperienced and experienced teachers emphasize the teacher-student conflict as a frequent situation in difficult classes. The classroom coexistence problems are mainly related to social and pedagogical changes. In these sequences, there are several conflict situations that teachers can face during classes. Some of them indicated by the teachers are mainly:

- The student's presence that did not focus on activities
- Students with serious learning and communication difficulties.
- Students group who does not do classroom work maintain aggressive and provocative attitude
- Students with destructive attitudes towards school materials
- Students with aggressive and violent attitude towards colleagues and teachers
- Students that deliberately disrupts the classroom such as dominating class discussions, engaging in leisure conversation etc.
- Students that re impolite to other in the classroom such as competing with fellow students or insulting other' opinions
- Students who take and display entrustment in the class that can be used as weapons, in an attitude of defiance to the teacher.

Causes of Conflict in the Classroom

Conflicts are inevitable in human relationships, and the teacher-student relationship is no exception. It is common for teachers to encounter situations when their messages, despite all their best intentions, are ineffective in modifying unaccepted behavior. When this happens, there is conflict in the classroom. Many teachers believe that the occurrence of conflicts in their classroom is a suggestion that they are somewhat inept professionally. Such teachers usually blame themselves because they are convinced that there should be no conflicts in classroom where there are "good" teachers and "good" students. Given the increase in the classroom conflicts, multiple causes, which include a combination of external and internal factors in the school environment, are indicated below.

- Increase in compulsory education
- The increase in students per class

- The progressive decline in the teacher’s authority about students and students are less likely to comply with rules and limits which results in conflict.
- Insufficient school facilities to aid teaching and learning in the classroom. This negatively affects the psychological environment in overcrowded classrooms.
- Lack of space for practical and collaborative activities in the classroom.
- Indiscipline among students in the classroom
- Provocation and contempt of the students towards the teacher, or the teacher towards the students to exercise their authority.
- Lack of students’ study habits and carrying out work, leading to a negative attitude during class.
- Poor communication between teacher-students or students-students. Communication relies on clear and complete messages being sent as well as being received.

Resolving Conflicts in the Classroom

Conflict is an inescapable part of human progress, but it can make for fraught situation in the classroom. There are many options for conflict resolution for educators or teachers who are caught in the middle of classroom conflict. Not every conflict will be the same and so not every conflict can be resolved in the same manner. But understanding basic strategies can help most situations. Thus, the following are several different options for conflict resolution among students in the classroom:

Cool off: First, before problem-solving can begin, the students need time to calm down. For younger students, have them take some deep breathes:

Share, listen check: Students need to listen to each other share their issues, and then check that they understand them. This can take practice and coaching from a teacher. When sharing, students should use respectful but assertive “I statements”, like “I feel sad when you do not let me play because I am alone”. Students can work on reflective listening and paraphrasing when they check for understanding.

Take responsibility: once students have shared their perspectives, they need to take responsibility for their own actions. You cannot prompt students by asking them an open-ended question like, “what could you have done differently to change what happened?”

Brainstorm solutions: Now, the students can work together to find a solution that is acceptable to both. This is a good time for students to learn to compromise. It can be helpful for a teacher to start the discussion with some suggestions, but it is best that the ideas come from the students.

Choose a solution: Students can now go over their brainstormed list of solutions to eliminate the ones that are not good for both of them and ones that would not address future problems.

Affixm, forgive or thank: Students can close out the session by acknowledging what happened and forgiving the other student if an apology or forgiveness is warranted. They can then thank each other for working on the solution together.

Teachers should focus on peace making from the beginning: Teachers that are truly focused on conflict resolution proactively teach students the skills they need to work

collaboratively and solve problems collectively. They do not wait for conflicts to arise to begin the work of peacemaking.

Here are Some Simple Ways Teacher can Focus on Peacemaking

- Directly teach students the skills they need to work in partners or groups including the importance of communication needs, setting goals, and what to do if something goes wrong.
- Encourage students to role-play situations that require empathy, communication, and problem solving
- Help students see how their actions impact others, both positively and negatively.
- Teach students your process for resolving classroom conflicts before issues come up. This way, students are prepared to take an active role in resolving their problems.
- Remember that conflicts often arise from a combination of fear, anxiety, or frustration. Help students learn to recognize emotional triggers and manage them in healthy ways, such as with mindful activities, movement or reflection.
- Tracking: As an assignment, teacher should make students to observe and track various conflicts that they either witness or are involved in over a period of time. These can be tracked in a journal and written without specifically identifying other students. The identities are not as important as the activity they witness and the reaction of those involved. Encourage students to be on the lookout for situations where conflict resolution can help. This will also set a baseline for how severe a problem may be.
- Listening: Many conflicts start because of misunderstanding and miscommunication. Teaching students good listening habit can be an important tool. This is a good opportunity to let students realize the power of listening.

Conflict Management in School

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspect of conflict while increasing the positive aspect of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organizational setting. The management of conflict requires skills such: problem-solving, efficient communication and mature negotiation concentrating on the interests of the conflicting parties. Thus, conflict management in schools as it relates to teachers pertain to a given condition whereby teachers acquire programmed and patterned mediums through which they can twig and deal decisively with conflict as a way of embellishing conditions of conflict in schools at all time. According to Fisher, (2000) conflict management is viewed not just as a mechanism to handle divergence of interest or values within an organization, but as an approach capable of facilitating societal change, leading to fair or just and responsive system. Mckinny (2018) defined conflict management as the practice of being able to identify and handle conflict fairly and efficiently. Conflict management is the process of minimizing the negative aspect of conflict in order to promote the positive (Rahim, 2002). This definition quickly tells us that there are various aspect of the concept of conflict. It goes further to indicate that these aspects are constituted of both positive and negative dimension.

Appropriate conflict management measures are essential ingredients for the steady grow of any organization including the school especially when bedeviled with conflicts in the management of its Human Resource. Best (2000) define conflict management as the handling and treatment of conflicts in such a way as to reduce its destructive effects to the barest minimum. Thus, in trying to manage conflict, efforts should be deliberately made to manage

and control the behavior and feelings of people toward one another. Conflict management with relationships left untamed is nothing but an abysmal waste of time and resources.

Strategies of Conflict Management

Though it is not possible to have a conflict free school environment due to individual differences and interest, yet, when not managed, it could lead to chaos and anarchy. The school is a space for socialization per excellence and, precisely, due to the variety of styles, cultures and values, it becomes an environment rich in conflicts. Conflict commonly seen as something negative, destructive and generating violence, is, in fact, extremely necessary for individual evolution. It should be noted that the conflict itself does not generate violence; this comes when there is lack of peaceful solutions to conflict resolution, when there is no conflict constructive management. The following steps should be followed to manage conflicts

Step I

According to Dumham (2005), the first step in managing conflict is to analyse the nature and type of conflict. Here, questions may be asked and answers may come from the administrator's experience, partners, teachers, student etc.

Step II

Once the administrator has a general understanding of the conflict, selection of the most appropriate response to conflict is made. Griffin and Marhead (2007) suggests five ways which are: accommodation, avoidance, competition, collaboration and compromise.

Accommodation: The use of the strategy often occurs when one of the conflict parties' desires to preserve peace or vies the matter as minor. It occurs when the goals are compatible, but the interactions are not considered important to overall goal attainment. The difficulty with the habitual use of the accommodating approach is that it emphasizes preserving a friendly relationship at the expense of appraising issues critically and protesting personal rights.

Avoidance: When conflicts are handled by avoidance, the two parties to a conflict try to ignore the problem and do nothing to resolve the disagreement. Avoidance is often ineffective since the real source of the disagreement has not been addressed. Conflict is likely to continue and communication and cooperation are hindered. It is believed that individuals who constantly avoid conflict have low self-esteem. However, the avoidance or ignoring of conflict can sometimes make it excavate or deteriorate.

Competition: This occurs when each party to a conflict tries to maximize its own gain and has little interest in understanding the other party's position and arriving at a solution that will allow both parties to achieve their goals. It is an attempt to satisfy one's own need at the expense of the other person's. This can be done by using formal authority, physical threats or by simply ignoring the claims of the other party. The problem with the repeated use of this approach is that it breeds hostility and resentment.

Collaboration: This strategy aims to find an innovative solution acceptable to all the parties. It is also a way of handling conflict in which the parties to a conflict try to satisfy their goals without making concessions and instead, come up with a way to resolve their differences that

leave them both better off. Although this approach is not appropriate for all situations, when it is used appropriately, it has the most beneficial effect on the parties involved.

Compromise: This takes place when each party is concerned about not only its own goal accomplishment, but also the goal accomplishment of the other party and is willing to engage in a give and take exchange and make concessions until a reasonable resolution of the conflict is reached.

Step III

Pre-negotiation: According to Dunham (2005), to set the stage for effective negotiation, the groundwork must be laid. There must be initiation, the school head raises the possibility of negotiation and begins the process. Conditions must be right for negotiation to be successful logistics must be established.

Step IV

Negotiation: When negotiating, the school head should be sure to openly discuss interest unclear rather than stated positions. To manage conflict, he or she should concentrate on inventing options for satisfying interest. The school head should not judge ideas or favour any of the options. Only after the parties have finished listening should the options be discussed. And at end, every partner must be confident that the others will carryout their part of the agreement (Dunham, 2005).

Step V

Post negotiation: Once negotiation is complete, the group will need to implement the decisions made. As noted earlier, classroom conflict is an unavoidable reality. Thus, being inevitable, adequate strategies are needed to resolve it so that the conflict potential advantages are taken advantage of and its harmful effects are minimized or canceled out. Conflict management strategies are understood as the behaviour types that are adopted in the conflict context, that is, they are basic strategies to manage a situation in which the parties consider their interest to be incompatible. It is important to note that the choice between different conflict management strategies, depends on the conflict level and the various situations that must be manage effectively, that is to manage conflict functionally, it is important to recognize that one strategy may be more appropriate if its use leads to the effective formulation or resolution of the conflict.

Characteristics of Conflict

The following are some characteristics or features of conflict.

Conflict is a process: conflict occurs in layers: first layer is always misunderstanding. The other layers are differences of values, differences of interest, differences of viewpoint, differences of interest, and interpersonal differences. It is also called a process because it begins with one party perceiving the other to oppose or negatively affect its interests and ends with competing, collaborating, compromising or avoiding.

Conflict is inevitable; conflict exists everywhere. No two persons are the same. Hence they may have individual differences. And the differences may be because of values or otherwise, lead to conflict. Although inevitable, conflict can be minimized, diverted and or resolved.

Conflict is a normal part of life: Individuals groups and organisations have unlimited needs and different values but limited resources. Thus, this incompatibility is bound to lead to conflicts. The conflict is not a problem but if it is poorly managed then it becomes a problem.

Perception: It must be perceived by the parties to it, otherwise it does not exist. In interpersonal interaction, perception is more important than reality. What we perceive and think affects our behaviour, attitudes, and communication.

Opposition: One party to the conflict must be perceiving or doing something the other party does not like or want.

Interdependence and Interaction: Without interdependence there can be no interaction. Conflict occurs only when some kind of interaction takes place.

Everyone is inflicted with conflict: Conflict may occur within an individual, between two or more individuals, groups or between organizations.

Conflict is not Unidirectional: It comes into different ways in accordance with degree of seriousness and capacity. At times, it may improve even a difficult situation.

Omoluabi (1995) cited in Jaja et al. (2011) emphasized the characteristics of conflict to include:

- Conflict as a Multidimensional construct involving different dimensions of individual and group behaviours.
- At least two or more involving individuals or groups for the concept to be understood.
- Conflicting parties having an affective involvement on subjects.
- Divided interest on issues.
- Attempts being exposed or resolve conflicts especially when it is really turning negative.
- Sometimes, conflict involving a third party for resolution to take place.
- Conflicts been resolved partially or totally, and may be temporary or ending.

Positive and Negative Impact of School Conflicts

Conflict can inspire innovations and creative strategies in addressing challenging issues, as well as improving work, results, and encourage organizations to achieve high levels of quality and achievement. In this context, Goksoy and Argon (2016) argue that school conflicts have positive and negative impacts on psychological, social, and organizational results. Negative psychological impact includes discomfort, necessity, insignificance feelings, sadness, resentment, frustration, and stress. In turn, at the social level, results of hostility, intolerance and violence are present. As for negative results within the institutions, the author highlights the existence of a tense environment, weakened cooperation, communication failures, poor performance, and an undisciplined environment. Inevitably, in this way, there is a decrease in education quality. The conflicts traditional and negative view has

implications for the training of students, as the current discourse in many schools is about how to avoid conflicts since their educational potentials is sometimes not perceived by the school community. This discourse conceives the conflict by the violent consequences that result from its non-management.

Conflict is recognized as an engine of social development and its effects are positive when the conflict is managed well. Thus, about the positive impacts arising from the school conflict, these have various levels of benefits. At a personal level, the conflict allows learning to be related to the perception of errors, and to develop new ideas. On the other hand, at the social level, it enables the reinforcement of communication, respect for others, and enhances commitment. Regarding the benefits at the organizational level, it makes it possible to understand problems, seek and develop new solutions, and develop a democratic and enriching environment in the school. Thus, conflict can contribute to the construction of broader visions of certain situations and, at the same time, guarantee rights and opportunities for all; regardless of interpersonal differences. According to Robert –Okah (2005), the following are the positive and negative impact of conflicts.

Positive Impacts:

Conflict prevent stagnation: Conflict between divergent views in an organization often gives rise to high quality decision or solution to problem. Conflict may cause dominant view point or favoured position of a group to be questioned.

Brings about progress: Conflict brings about development. Conflict represents aggressive pursuit of goals by individuals or groups who are motivated to achieve goals. Also, through conflicts, individuals, groups assess themselves for co-operation and improvement.

Increased Cohesion: Conflict among people often increases their strength and cohesiveness. E.g. bring them more together. As a rule, members in intergroup conflict situation close ranks and put aside their differences. This rise in cohesion stimulates grater effort that may translate into action to resolve problems.

Activates people: Conflict helps to eliminate monotony are boredom. It keeps one moving and makes life more meaningful and interesting in an organization.

Conflict may be educational: Those involved in conflicts, exchange ideas, learn from one another and can through the process correct certain or previously held misconceptions.

Negative Effect of Conflict

Conflict can lead to instability and chaos: It polarizes thought and action can bring cooperation to a standstill. This kind of conflict can destabilize the system and if not properly handled can run the organization.

A continuous conflict may lead to lose of employees. It may even affect the health of the party involved. For instance, some people may lose their lives during or after the conflict.

Conflict leads both sides to engage in negative stereotyping. They perceive each other in increasingly negative light. Such negative perceptions can lead to sabotage, stealing, lying, distortion of information and other disastrous actions that affect the organization negatively.

Extreme conflicts reduce reliance on reason and evoke emotional behaviour. The low trust and suspicion associated with conflict cause individuals to reduce interaction with opposition, conceal activities, restrict communication and take untenable positions.

CONCLUSION

Conflicts of various types have always been present in the classroom, and the causes that originate them are of great importance, as they allow a better conflict understanding and consequently, a more correct intervention to its management. It should be noted that personal harmony and the development of attitudes that promote understanding, dialogue, and tolerance are indispensable for negotiating conflicts in the teacher – students' relationship. The school is an institution that reproduces a microcosm of society, bringing together diverse identities. This context with diverse personalities, rules and values is full of conflicts, problems, and differences between the different actors that make up the school (student, teachers, staff, and parents). Thus, the school system, in addition to involving a range of people, with different characteristics, includes a significant number of continuous and complex interactions, depending on the stages of development of each one. So, school is a place where individuals with different characteristics backgrounds, experiences, and personalities live together daily. Among so many differences, naturally, divergences of the most diverse species arise. It is essential, then the proper management of conflicts that may arise so that harmony and respect are present in the school of the main causes presented for the school conflict, we highlight family problems. Being the family the main student emotional support, it becomes the life model of this. In this way, unstable and weakened family relationships directly, affect the behaviour of your children, behaviours that these, after reproduced in the school social relationships. Ending school conflicts is impossible, since they are intrinsic to the human being, being an integral part of their development and the interpersonal relationships they experience daily. Learning to live with school conflict requires creating attitudes of openness interest in differences, and respect for diversity, teaching how to recognize injustice, taking measures to overcome it, resolving differences constructively and moving from conflict situations to reconciliation. So, it is essential that the initial and continuous training of teachers encompasses conflict management, providing them with tools so that they can resolve the conflicts they experience in the classroom.

Recommendation

In consideration of the simplistic nature of this write-up, suggestions were made as follows:

- Teachers and students should be educated and enlightened on their code of conduct.
- Teachers should make sure that harmony and appreciation coexist in a classroom environment and conflict should not interfere negativity, in the teaching and learning process.
- The school head as conflict mediator should play the role of a judge by ensuring the rationality and objectivity reign in the dialogue so that the warring parties reach a consensus on the issue of concerns.
- There should be good communication network vertically and horizontally in the school system.
- Infusing and integrating conflict resolution into school curriculum and culture is also imperative.

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