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AN INVESTIGATION INTO CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN KWARA STATE-OWNED COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study investigated conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-owned Colleges of Education. The research design used was a descriptive survey. Using proportional stratified random sampling technique, 100 Deans and HODs were selected as participants. Research instruments titled: "Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire" (CRSQ) and "Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire" (AEQ) were designed and used to obtain relevant data. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage and rank ordering were used to answer the research questions raised while Pearson product-moment correlation statistics was used to test the hypothesis formulated at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that inadequate facilities was ranked the most cause of conflict with 87 points. Negotiation was ranked the most conflict resolution strategy put in place by the institutions' management with 91 points. There was a significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness (Cal. p -value = .001 < set p -value = .05). It was recommended that the government should provide more facilities in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education in order to reduce conflicts on campuses.

Keywords: Conflict resolution strategies, Administrative effectiveness, College of Education, Kwara State

Introduction

The quality of education depends substantially on the effectiveness of the school system, and the efficiency of the personnel in the school is a determining factor in the overall school effectiveness. Hence, practicing tolerance and living together in peace with one another as good neighbour should be a genuine concern of all, especially at Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education. Conflict is a natural part of life which often arises in school settings due to the varying ideas school administrators have about issues, differences in their backgrounds and experiences. These differences can cause damage to the school if not well managed. Conflict is a consequence of struggle for power, position, properties and opportunities among individual workers in an organization. It is, therefore, a basic ingredient of human relations within an institution.

There is occurrence of disagreement in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education between the management and the staff. This often leads to disruption of the institutions' academic programme. Student-Student, lecturer-student and lecturer-lecturer conflicts, among others, are observed conflicts in these institutions. Causes of conflict in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education are delay in payment of salary, inadequate provision of students' welfare services, inadequate provision of learning resources and ineffective communication among management, staff and students.

Violence emerges out of intolerance for differences in beliefs, views, cultures and social traditions, in which peace can be cultivated through training of the mind to control the

deserving and desiring, developing tolerance and respect for differences, concern and love for others and moving from competition to cooperation (UNESCO, 2005). Conflict according to Zabadi (2009) is a disagreement over values between human beings which are inevitable and even sometimes desirable in the society. Since human beings seek after the same things which are not abundantly available to everyone at the same time, they tend to have conflicts with each other as they attempt meeting these needs. Such disagreements are expressed verbally, and in the extreme, violently to the extent that human life itself is endangered. It may be caused by competition for inadequate resources, contradicting value system, psychological needs of group and individual manipulation of information and perception (Albert, 2001).

Conflict is a dynamic phenomenon which consists of five stages: Initiation, escalation, controlled maintenance, abatement and termination/resolution. In this process, peace is the ultimate target or result of conflict or even violence. Francis (2007) described peace as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence, and about peaceful co-existence. This portrayed peace as absence of war (direct violent), peace as justice and development (absence of structural violence), peace as respect and tolerance between people, inner peace (spiritual peace) and peace as a "wholeness". The major cause of conflicts in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education include poor communication flow within the campus. Ineffective administrative control, poor job performance and inadequate facilities for both staff and students, among others, are traceable to causes of conflicts in the institutions.

Administration is an act of getting things done through and with people. Administration focuses more on implementation of plans in order to achieve institutional goals and objectives. Hornby (2002) defined administration as activity done in order to plan, organise and successfully run a business, school or other institution and a process or act of organising the way that something is done. Administration, according to Eden (2006), revolves round planning activities which aim at the fulfilment of the goals of a particular organisation or institution. It calls for the ability of the administrators to make the right decisions to fulfil the required goals. In institutional setting, therefore, administration has been extended as a service activity or tool through which the fundamental objectives of the institutional process may be more optimise efficiently when allocating human and material resources as well as to make the best use of existing resources (Liverpool & Jacinta, 2013 & Akinnubi, 2014).

Adeyemi (2009) conducted a study on principals' management of conflicts in public secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The findings showed that conflicts have not been effectively managed by principals of schools because of their inability to effectively utilize the strategies for resolving conflicts, that is, communication, negotiation, conciliation and mediation. Salleh and Adulpakdee (2012) conducted a study on the perceptions of teachers and school principals toward the causes of conflict and effective methods to conflict management at selected Islamic private secondary schools in Yala Province, Thailand. The results showed that the principals perceived that the main cause of conflicts occurred in school was "ambiguously defined responsibilities" and the teachers agreed that different perception was the major cause of conflict in school.

The aim of an individual/group in a conflict may not necessarily be achieved but may be subdued by the conflict through negotiable settlement. Conflict resolution performs a healing function in the societies. It provides opportunity for the examination of the alternative means in situation of positioned disagreements, and restores normalcy in the society by facilitating discussions and placing parties in conflicts in situation in which they can choose alternative positive decisions to resolve differences (Otite, 2007). According to Otokun (2008), conflicts are not discrete situations with a clear beginning and end. It obviously emerges out of a

preexisting situation and it doesn't usually end with settlement, even though the intensity of the conflict may shift as one would expect in a dynamic situation. Conflicts resolution connotes a sense of finality, where the parties to a conflict are mutually satisfied with the outcome of a settlement and the conflict is resolved in a true sense. This could be done through communication - exchange and sharing of information can help remove doubt, suspicion and contribute to the process of confidence building; negotiation - direct bargaining by parties involved in the conflict; conciliation - bring parties to agreement through face-to-face negotiation; and mediation - third party involvement and fact finding (Best, 2007).

Mediation is a conflict resolution strategy where a neutral and impartial third party, the mediator, facilitates dialogue in a structured multi-stage process to help parties reach a conclusive and mutually satisfactory agreement. A mediator assists the parties in identifying and articulating their own interests, priorities, needs and wishes to each other. Conciliation is another conflict resolution process that involves building a positive relationship between the parties of dispute. Conciliation tries to individualize the optimal solution and direct parties towards a satisfactory common agreement. Negotiation is the process of finding an agreement that is satisfactory to all of the groups/individuals involved. It is used to ensure a "win-win" situation. Negotiation is best when it includes the members in conflict and peers who are stakeholders in the process. Or, a third party may be called when ongoing conflict resolution/negotiation does not work among the team members. Communication is a method of resolving conflict in colleges of education where the management ensures that both staff and students are carried along about the activities of the institution (Osland, Kolb & Rubin, 2001).

Conflict is a tension between two or more social entities (individuals, groups or large organizations) that arise from incompatibility of actual and desired responses. Conflicts have become part and parcel of human organizations world over. This indeed is a paradox because of the amount of energy and resources expended by institutions to prevent and resolve conflicts. There is no gain saying the fact that a total absence of conflict would be unbelievable, boring, and a strong indication that conflicts are being suppressed (Filippo, 1999). Thus, conflict is part of change and, therefore, inevitable. The nature and type of conflicts that happen in an institution vary from one institution to the others. The common types of conflicts that arise in College of Education include the one between the students on one hand and the institution management on the other. Other forms of noticeable conflict include interpersonal conflicts among staff and as well as the students on campus.

Problem Statement

Kwara State Colleges of Education in the recent past have been experiencing conflict on campuses. A state of disagreement has been occurring between management and academic staff, management and students, academic staff and students and students and students. The environment has not been conducive for both staff and students. This is inimical to the attainment of institutions' stated goals and objectives. Conflict is seen as an inherent feature of tertiary institutions, College of Education inclusive. Conflict in tertiary institution has been a major concern to stakeholders in education. It is on this note that this study examined the influence of conflict resolution strategies on administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (i) examine the causes of conflict in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education;
- (ii) examine conflict resolution strategies that are put in place by the management in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education.

- (iii) determine the level of administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education.
- (iv) Determine the significant relationship that exists between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education.

Research Questions

- (i) What are the causes of conflict in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education?
- (ii) What conflict resolution strategies are put in place by the management in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education?
- (iii) What is the level of administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education.

Methodology

A descriptive survey method was used to collect data on conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education. The design was appropriate for data collection on both the independent (conflict resolution strategies) and dependent (administrative effectiveness) variables. The target population was all Deans and HODs in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education which include: Ilorin, Oro and Lafiagi. Using proportional stratified random sampling technique, 100 Deans and HODs were selected as participants in the sampled Colleges of Education because they could provide required information in pursuance of the study.

The major instruments used for data collection were "Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire" (CRSQ) and "Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire" (AEQ) designed to collect data on lecturers' opinion about the influence of conflict resolution strategies on administrative effectiveness. The instruments were validated by experts in Educational Management and Test and Measurement. Test re-test method was used for the reliability test, which was analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation statistic yielding coefficients of .94 and .83 for CRSQ and AEQ respectively.

Data for the study were collected from 100 Deans and HODs at Kwara State Colleges of Education- Ilorin, Oro and Lafiagi. Three trained research assistants who were lecturers in the Colleges of Education complemented the efforts of the researchers. The data collected from the participants were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage and rank ordering to answer the research questions, while Pearson product-moment correlation statistics was used to test the formulated hypothesis at .05 significance level.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the causes of conflict in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education?

Table 1: Causes of conflict in Kwara state-owned colleges of education

Causes	Frequency	Rank
Poor communication flow	69	2
Ineffective administrative control	54	3
Poor job performance	11	4
Inadequate facilities	87	1

Table 1 shows that inadequate facilities was ranked number one with 87 points as the cause of conflict in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education, while poor job performance was ranked the least with 11 points. Poor communication flow and ineffective administrative control were not too popular among the respondents as causes of conflicts in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education with 69 and 54 points respectively.

Research Question 2: What conflict resolution strategies are put in place by the Management in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education?

Table 2: Conflict resolution strategies put in place by the management in Kwara state-owned colleges of education

Strategies	Frequency	Rank
Communication	71	3
Negotiation	91	1
Conciliation	88	2
Mediation	44	4

From Table 2, negotiation with 91 points was ranked the most conflict resolution strategy put in place by the management of Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education, while mediation was ranked the least with 44 points. Conciliation and communication with 88 and 71 points respectively were not too popular among the respondents.

Research Question 3: What is the level of administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education?

Table 3: Level of administrative effectiveness in Kwara state-owned colleges of education

Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	5	5
Moderate	67	67
Low	28	28
Total	100	100

Table 3 shows level of administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education with high 5 (5%), moderate (67) and low (28%).

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education.

Table 4: Conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Kwara state-owned colleges of education

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	Calculated t-value	p-value	Decision
Conflict resolution strategies	100	2.012	1.043	98	.679	.001	Significant
Administrative effectiveness	100	3.356	2.786				

Set-p-value= .05

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