

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AS CORRELATE OF ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN KWARA STATE

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### Abstract

*This study examined the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in public colleges of education in Kwara State, Nigeria. A random sample of 180 respondents from public colleges of education in Kwara State participated in the study. The research design employed a questionnaire with two sections to gather data, which was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study's findings revealed that effective conflict resolution strategies are essential for successful administration in colleges of education. The results showed that management styles of administrators are a primary cause of conflict, and effective conflict management is crucial for positive administrative outcomes. Based on the findings, the study recommends that college administrators should develop expertise in various conflict resolution strategies and consider individual differences among staff members to manage conflicts effectively. Additionally, the study suggests that colleges engage professional counsellors to help individuals or groups understand their goals, actions, and outcomes, promoting effective conflict resolution and administrative outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Administrative effectiveness, conflict resolution strategies, public colleges of education

### Introduction

Conflicts are part of everyday life, they occur in our close relations, at a societal level and on an international level. Conflict is an inevitable and ongoing aspect of human interaction, arising naturally whenever individuals or groups with diverse values, needs, and desires engage within a structured setting, such as an organization, characterized by established rules and hierarchical authority. Human differences cannot be totally suppressed from manifesting. Whenever differences arise, conflicts inevitably emerge, manifesting as collisions, stress, controversies, discords, frictions, and disagreements. While conflicts can arise in any school

organization at any time, their presence does not necessarily signify managerial incompetence. Rather, Conflict is a fundamental and intrinsic element of organizational behaviour, highlighting the intricacies of human interaction and the imperative of effective conflict management (Agbato, 2000).

As noted by contemporary scholars, conflict is an inherent and inevitable component of organizational life, underscoring the need for proactive management strategies. (Akomolafe, 2020; Oluwagbemi, 2020). This perspective is supported by research, which suggests that conflict is an inevitable and normal part of human social relations (Grill, 2019; Adeyemi, 2020). As noted by Amusan (2019), conflict arises from disagreements between individuals or groups, and can occur in any social setting, including workplaces, schools, and communities. This underscores the idea that conflict is an inherent aspect of human interaction, and that no organization or social institution is immune to its occurrence (Ojo, 2020).

Conflicts arise from communicative interactions among individuals who perceive their interests as incompatible. This perspective is supported by more recent research, which suggests that conflict is a ubiquitous and multifaceted phenomenon that exists in all types of organizations, including political, social, economic, and educational institutions (Brewer et al., 2020). As such, conflict can be considered a global phenomenon that requires effective management and resolution strategies to minimize its negative impacts.

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) states that: Education is the most important instrument of change, any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. The structure of education, like other aspects of the education system, continues to change in line with the dynamics of education itself. Structure implies arrangement of programme, persons, positions or unit in a specific manner with a view to achieving a specific objective. According to Fadipe and Adepoju (2008), an educational structure is a frame work. It depicts the period of schooling; it also depicts the administrative set-up of an educational organization. The structure of education in Nigeria is not static. It keeps on changing in line with educational programme, aspirations of government and style of administration. It is also determined by the personnel.

Tertiary education in Nigeria, especially the universities, polytechnics and monotechnics such as colleges of education are often regarded as very complex organization like other organization, they are not free from conflict, as conflict is unavoidable and endemic. Colleges of education as institutions of learning are perfectly qualified to be regarded to be a formal organizations in all respects. They have organizational structures and perform prominent roles in the nation's overall development. As an institution of learning, colleges are complex systems with multiple stakeholders and interlocking roles, which can inevitably lead to conflicts in carrying out their functions (Abioye, 2015). This is consistent with more recent research, which suggests that colleges of education are prone to conflicts due to their complex organizational structures and diverse stakeholder groups (Owens et al., 2020). For instance, college

administrators might have clash with staff in carrying out their functions of recruitment, admission, examination and provision of welfare service for the staff and students. The non-academics who perform support-function might feel unappreciated by both the superior academics and the potentially more prestigious students. Conflict usually results into activities such as disruptions of college programmes, boycotts of lectures, loss of lives and closing down of institutions (Alabi, 2002). Whenever these resultant effects occur, it leads to administrative ineffectiveness. The colleges of education are established for the purpose of producing highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system. For this goal to be achieved, college administrators therefore need to find means to resolve conflict in their college system. This called for conflict resolution strategies.

Conflict resolution strategies are the techniques, mode and methods of dealing with situations in order to restore mutual co-existence among the staff, students, college management and government (Brahm, 2003). According to Deutsch, Morton and Coleman (2000), conflict resolution should be a voluntary process that reflects the schools values if applied throughout the school. Examples of such methods are collaboration, accommodation, avoidance, compromise and competition.

Administrative effectiveness refers to the degree to which college administrators successfully attain their established objectives, encompassing key dimensions such as staff morale, community-service dimension, supervisory role, and disciplinary role. This concept is aligned with recent research on effective administrative leadership in educational settings (Bush & Glover, 2018; Davies, 2020), which emphasizes the importance of achieving a balance between these various dimensions to ensure the overall success and effectiveness of the institution. Research has consistently shown that conflicts arise in colleges of education, varying in degree and proportion (Oyebade, 2014; Akomolafe, 2020). Conflict is an intrinsic and ubiquitous aspect of social life, a persistent phenomenon that emerges in all interactions among individuals and group (Garba, 2001; Oluwagbemi, 2020). In the context of Nigerian tertiary institutions, conflict has become increasingly frequent, intense, and widespread since the 1990s (Garba, 2001). Studies have identified various conflict management strategies, including forcing, structural changes, avoidance, compromise, and smoothing (Ladipo, 2007), as well as suppression, avoidance, compromise, third-party intervention, cooperation, democratic process, job rotation, and confrontation (Hodge & Anthony, 2001; Brewer et al., 2020).

The strategy identified by Oluwagbemi (2020) was effective communication which he described as the best because it would make the group aware of the kind of communication which could lead to problem solving. Likewise, Oyebade (2015) identified certain strategies as important in resolving conflict. These strategies include dialogue, automatic, emergency and delaying approaches. The efforts of all stakeholders in the university management are required in ensuring amicable resolution of conflict. In this regard, Akomolafe (2020) postulated that the first strategy of conflict resolution is commitment to the management of productive conflict,

such that conflict does not become destructive. Akomolafe (2020) emphasized the importance of leaders and those in authority promoting the rule of law, protecting fundamental human rights, and upholding human freedom, fairness, and justice. These values are crucial in minimizing organizational conflict and friction. This study builds on this foundation, seeking to provide an in-depth understanding of conflict's impact on administrative effectiveness in colleges of education, and to identify effective conflict management strategies that can enhance administrative outcomes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The manifestations of conflict in every organization and influence on the administrative effectiveness of colleges of education had been a major concern to researchers. Common observation in Nigerian colleges of education revealed high occurrences of conflicts despite the existence and use of various strategies by the authorities in managing them. Observations also showed that the strategies being used by the authorities in managing or mismanaging these conflicts might have some relationship with the administrative effectiveness of the institutions. According Abioye (2015) the fact that colleges of education still experience incessant conflict seems to suggest that appropriate strategies are not being employed. Existing conflict resolution strategies often appear biased, favoring management, government, or workers, and may even exacerbate staff disillusionment (Adebayo, 2006). This study aims to investigate the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness, focusing specifically on Kwara State-owned colleges of education, in order to identify more effective approaches to conflict management.

Although previous research on conflict management in colleges of education has shed light on the causes, effects, and strategies for managing conflict, a notable knowledge gap remains. Specifically, there is a lack of understanding about the precise impact of conflict on administrative effectiveness in these institutions. While existing studies have explored conflict management strategies, they have not sufficiently examined the relationship between conflict and administrative effectiveness. This study addressed this gap by investigating the impact of conflict on administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-owned Colleges of Education, providing valuable insights to inform policy and practice.

### **Purpose of the study**

This study primarily aimed to explore the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-owned colleges of education. Additionally, the study investigated the moderating effects of staff morale, administrator supervisory roles, administrator's disciplinary role, and community-service dimension on the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in these institutions.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the causes of conflict in in public owned colleges of education in Kwara State?
2. What is the best conflict resolution strategy for administrative effectiveness in in public owned colleges of education in Kwara State?

**Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in public owned colleges of education in Kwara State.
2. There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and staff morale in in public owned colleges of education in Kwara State.
3. There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrator supervisory roles in in public owned colleges of education in Kwara State.

**Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised all three public colleges of education across the three senatorial districts of Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the target population consisted of academic staff and administrators from these institutions. Using simple random sampling, a total of 180 participants (50 academic staff and 10 administrators from each of the three colleges) were selected for the study. The selected respondents were then stratified based on age, rank, educational qualification and length of services. Stratification is a process of classifying a sample or subjects under study into researcher's variables of interest. However, the respondents were reached from their different offices. Two sets of instrument were adapted for this study titled Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (CRSQ) and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (AEQ). Each instrument consists of two sections comprising A and B. Section 'A dealt with demographic data, section B dealt with subject matter to be answered by the respondents by ticking appropriately the column that best describe their views.

**Data Analysis and Results**

The results are given below in two main parts; demographic data and result of hypotheses testing.

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents by gender, rank, educational qualification and length of service

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	112	62.2
Female	68	37.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Rank</b>		
Provost	3	1.7
Deputy-Provost	6	3.3
Dean/Director	83	46.1
HOD	88	48.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
B.Ed	22	12.3
M.Ed	98	54.4
M.Sc	08	4.4
Ph.D	52	28.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Length of Service</b>		
0-5	09	5
6-10	18	10
11-15	68	37.8
16 years above	85	47.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>

The table indicates that male has the highest percentage of 62.2% (112) on the basis of gender distribution. Respondents in the position of Head of Department have the highest percentage of 48.9% followed by Dean/Directors 46.1% and 1.7% and 3.3% for Provost and deputy provost respectively. The educational qualification of the total respondents was led by those with M.Ed which is 54.4%, B.Ed 12.3%, M.Sc 4.4% and Ph.D has 28.9%. It also shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of their length of service, there were 05 respondents with 0-5 years of length of services with 5%, 10% for 6-10years, 37.8% for 11-15years and 47.2% for 16years above with the highest respondents.

**Answering of Research Questions**

**Research Question One:** What are the causes of conflict in public-owned colleges of education in Kwara State?

**Table 2:** Causes of Conflict in public-owned colleges of education in Kwara State

S/N	Causes	Frequency	Percentages
1	Management styles	58	32.2
2	Human factor	42	23.3
3	Competition for limited resources	38	21.1
4	Lack of communication flow	29	16.1
5	Perceived role conflict	13	7.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the causes of conflict in Kwara State-owned colleges of education, adopted management styles has the highest percentages out of the five causes enumerated. Therefore, it can be concluded that management styles of college of education administrators determine to a large extent, the severity of conflict within the college, irrespective of the origin of conflicts.

**Research Question Two:** What is the best conflict resolution strategy for administrative effectiveness in Kwara state-owned colleges of education?

**Table 3:** Conflict resolution strategies adapted for administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-Owned Colleges of Education

S/N	Strategies	Frequency	Percentages
1	Accommodation	62	34.4
2	Collaboration	47	26.1
3	Compromise	38	21.1
4	Avoidance	23	12.8
5	Competition	10	5.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 indicates best conflict resolution strategy for administrative effectiveness in Kwara State-owned colleges of education. Accommodation has been perceived as the best strategy with the highest percentage of 34.4% of all the strategies followed by collaboration 26.1%, compromise 21.1%, avoidance 12.8% and competition 5.6.

**Testing of the Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis one:** There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in public-owned colleges of education in Kwara State.

**Table 4:** Pearson ‘r’ Showing Relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness

Variables	No	Mean	STD	df	r. cal.	r. crit.	Remarks
C.R Strategies	180	140.37	63.40	2	0.62	0.088	Ho1 rejected
Admin. Effectiveness	180	47.48	7.60				

Table 4 shows that the calculated v-value is 0.62 while the critical value is 0.088 with 3 degree of freedom at level of significance 0.05. Since the calculated v-value is greater than the critical v-value, hypothesis is rejected and the alternatives accept that there is a significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Public-owned colleges of education in Kwara State.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and staff morale in public-owned colleges of education in Kwara State.

**Table 5:** Pearson ‘r’ Showing Relationship between conflict resolution strategies and staff morale

Variables	No	Mean	STD	df	r. cal.	r. crit.	Remark
C.R Strategies	180	47.9	2.86	2			H02 rejected
Staff Morale	180	9.7	1.2		0.915	0.88	

Table 5 shows that calculated v-value is 0.915 while the critical v value is 0.088 with 2 degrees of and at significance level 0.05. Since the calculated v-value is greater than critical v value, hypothesis is therefore rejected and alternative hypothesis upheld. That significant relationship exists between conflict resolution strategies and staff morale in Public-owned colleges of education in Kwara State.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative supervisory roles in Kwara State owned colleges of education.

**Table 6:** Pearson ‘r’ Showing Relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative supervisory roles

Variables	No	Mean	STD	df	r. cal.	r. crit.	Remark
C.R Strategies	180	48.6	2.76	2	0.97	0.88	H03 rejected
Supervisory Roles	180	9.9	1.42				

Table 6 shows that calculated v-value is 0.97 while the critical v value is 0.088 with 2 degree of and at significance level 0.05. Since the calculated v-value is greater than critical v value, hypothesis is therefore rejected and alternative hypothesis upheld. That significant relationship exists between conflict resolution strategies and administrative supervisory roles in Public-owned colleges of education in Kwara State.

**Discussion of Findings**

The study investigated the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in Kwara State colleges of education. It was indicated that male has the highest percentage of 62.2% (112) on the basis of gender distribution. Respondents in the position of Head of Department have the highest percentage of 48.9% followed by Dean/Directors 46.1% and 1.7% and 3.3% for Provost and deputy provost respectively. The educational qualification of the total respondents was led by those with M.Ed which is 54.4%, B.Ed 12.3%, MSc. 4.4% and PhD has 28.9%. It also shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of their length of service, there were 05 respondents with 0-5 years of length of services with 5%, 10% for 6-10years, 37.8% for 11-15years and 47.2% for 16years above with the highest respondents.

The findings suggest that the management styles adopted by administrators in Kwara State-owned colleges of education are the primary cause of conflict in these institutions. This implies that the way administrators manage and lead their staff and students has a significant impact on the level of conflict within the college. The fact that management styles have the highest percentage among the five causes enumerated suggests that the root of the conflict lies in the leadership and management approaches used by the administrators. The finding is in support of the opinion of Akindele (2018) that leaders who adopted a transformational leadership style were more effective in managing conflict than those who adopted a transactional leadership style

Accommodation has been perceived as the best strategy with the highest percentage. This is in line with the submission of Abdulkadir and Isiaka (2015) that accommodating differences among individual in an organization is the best strategy in resolve conflict.

The study's findings led to the rejection of the first hypothesis, which posited no significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness in

public colleges of education in Kwara State. Instead, the results support the alternative hypothesis, indicating a significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness. This outcome aligns with Abioye's (2015) finding that conflict resolution strategies significantly impact administrative effectiveness.

The second hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and staff morale in public colleges of education in Kwara State. This result supports Mullins' (1995) assertion that conflict is an inherent aspect of management and organizational behaviour.

Lastly, the third hypothesis found a significant relationship between conflict resolution strategies and administrative supervisory roles in public colleges of education in Kwara State. This is in line with the findings of Nakpodia (2010) that responsibility of administrators as managing human resources can significantly influence its effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

It was found out from the study that conflict resolution strategy is significantly and strongly related to administrative effectiveness. Any good, better or positive actions which occurs to conflict resolution strategy will more likely have positive effect on administrative effectiveness in public-owned colleges of education in Kwara state. This implies that the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies employed, combined with administrators' ability to adapt and apply different strategies, and directly enhances administrative effectiveness in colleges of education.

The causes of conflict in Kwara State-owned colleges of education, adopted management styles have the highest percentages out of the five causes enumerated. Therefore, it can be concluded that management styles of college of education administrators determine to a large extent, the severity of conflict within the college, irrespective of the origin of conflicts.

### **Implication of the Study**

The results of this research would be incomplete without enumerating the implication of this study. Conflict is a natural part of human life. If college administrators avoid conflict and pretends not to see it, this may cause even greater problems in the college and among college staff. This study is conducted as a result of the glaring effects of conflicts on college system, management, student and staff in general. These effects seem to stem mostly from the strategies employed in resolving the conflicts. It seems that some of these strategies are wrongly employed. It is hoped that the findings of this study would reveal better mode of resolving conflicts to administrators of colleges of education.

The findings will assist the college staff in ascertaining the level of influence the conflict resolution strategies have on them. Where necessary, they will through the findings adopt measures that will guide against such negative influence as to affect their jobs and morale. Irrespective of the nature of conflicts, students always bear the brunt. When students suffer,

their parents and the entire society are always affected. This research will assist the students and entire society in understanding the nature and mode of conflict resolution strategies, thereby desisting from apportioning blame indiscriminately. Furthermore, the study is considered essential in order to foster peaceful and conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning in colleges of education. In addition, investigating conflict strategies and their aftermath, will enable government and institutional authorities to take and implement decision(s) that would help to improve resolution strategies and provide conducive atmosphere for effective administration.

Above all, the study would expand the frontiers of knowledge on the subject of conflict resolution strategies and administrative effectiveness of colleges of education. This hopes to stimulate other interested researchers on some of the researchable propositions that might be generated from the present study which can also be replicated in tertiary institution in other states of Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

1. There is need for involvement of the services of professional counsellors to help individuals or group understands their goals, actions and outcomes. This will help to enlighten, correct and cushion the effect of wrong signals already got due to misinformation.
2. College administrators need to master the various strategies and individual differences that exist among the staff so as to help in handling conflicting situation very well as there is no best conflict resolution strategies.
3. College administrators should be equipped on the basic knowledge and skills on conflict resolution strategies in order to use appropriate strategy for each situation to enhance their administrative effectiveness.
4. The college administrators cannot work in isolation, therefore staff should be given opportunity to have voice in what happens to them and a healthy working environment in term of salaries, fringe benefits and advancements opportunities should be provided.
5. Workshops, seminars and conferences in conflict resolution strategies should be organized periodically to get staff and college administrators acquainted with the various ways of solving conflict and the usefulness of applying the strategies appropriately.
6. Committees should be put in place to work on a permanent basis on how to resolve existing or impending conflict to be able to nip in the bud of any destructive effect on conflict.

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