



Effect of School-Based Conflicts on Academic Performance among Senior Secondary School Students in Central Senatorial Zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the Effect of School-based Conflict on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Central Senatorial Zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. The study was guided by research objectives which were translated into research questions and research hypotheses that were formulated and tested using one-sample t-test at a 0.05 level of significance. The study reviewed related empirical researches conducted on school-based conflict and academic performance of students. Descriptive survey design was adopted with a population of 12,325 senior secondary (SS2) students of which 7,606 are males with 4,719 females drawn from four (4) local government areas (Bungudu, Gusau, Maru and Tsafe) of the central zone of the State. A sample size of 378 was selected using proportionate and simple random sampling while purposive sampling was used to select schools. Data collected were analysed using simple percentages while mean and standard deviation were used to present responses of research questions. The study findings revealed among others 3.64% equivalent to 95% that there is relationship between school-based conflict and academic performance of students; it revealed that 3.50% equivalent to 95% of school administrators, teachers and counselors played important roles in managing and resolving school-based conflict. The study concluded that there is concrete relationship between student academic performance and school-based conflict; it also concluded that school administrators, teachers and counsellors play an important role in managing and resolving school-based conflict. The study therefore, recommended among other things that, conflict resolution strategies should be giving more consideration by the school administrators, teachers, counselors and students in the process of planning and implementation of school policies, so that school will achieve its desired objectives.

Keywords: School-based conflict, Roles, Relationships, Academic Performance

Introduction

Conflict is a phenomenon in human organizations that is essential and unavoidable, because where there is human interaction, there is a tendency of individual likes and dislikes. These agreements and disagreements among people and groups lead them to conflicts. Conflicts are neither constructive nor disruptive but the way and manner these are managed and resolved make them either positive or negative. Schools, like any other social organizations, experience one or other type of conflict. Different conflict management strategies are adopted for resolving conflict; mediation, negotiation, avoidance and collaboration (Ghaffar, 2019). The approaches used to resolve conflicts in a positive manner are crucial for organizational life because lack of success in conflict resolution will not only cause breakdown in the relationships among the personnel, it will also affect their performance, motivation and efforts negatively. Therefore, conflicts will also reflect on organizational goals. In this context, it is crucial to take necessary measures to prevent conflicts to occur and to generate solutions to satisfy the parties in case conflicts occur. The most important role and responsibility in this process are on the conflict managers and the individuals involved, in the conflicts that occur in school it's an indispensable reality of human life where human relationships are experienced (Goksoy and Argon, 2016). However, unresolved conflicts can lead to job dissatisfaction, high absenteeism and turnover, prolonged disruption of activities and lack of concerted effort by organization members. Methods used to manage conflicts in school are needed to solve conflicts and find possible solutions in the form of organizational optimization. Conflicts that occur in schools need to be managed properly by the head of school so that they have the potential to make the organization effective (Jantzi and Leithwood, 2016). Conflict is resolved through the method of problem solving (Omboko, 2020). Conflicts are not desired to generate failure simply because they are not managed well and therefore generate negative results. But the focus should be on how to manage the process instead of how to define it as a concept. School-based conflicts can take place between administrators-teachers, teachers-teachers, teachers-students or student-students or among the parents. It should be kept in mind that regardless of the type of conflict



or the group that part take in it, conflicts will be more complicated unless they are resolved and people involved in the conflict may experience negative feelings (Valente and Lourenco, 2020). This will negatively affect the job performances of the personnel and will affect student academic performance in schools (Goksoy and Argon, 2016). Conflict can be harmful if it leads to a breakdown in communication and work relationships, as well as tension, argument, low performance in duty and hostility, all of which have an impact on the smooth operation of schools (Eze and Victor, 2022). This study assesses the effect of School-based Conflict on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. This is done with a strong consideration on the relationship between school-based conflict and academic performance of students and the roles of school administrators, teachers and counsellors in managing and resolving school-based conflicts in Senior Secondary Schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State.

Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to assess the effect of school-based conflict on academic performance of Senior Secondary School Students in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. But the specific objectives are:

1. Find out the relationship between School-based conflict and academic performance of senior Secondary School students in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria.
2. Determine the role of School administrators, teachers and counselors in managing and resolving School-based conflicts in Senior Secondary Schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Ha1: There is significant difference on the relationship between School-based conflict and academic performance of Senior Secondary school students in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Ha1: There is significant difference on the role of School administrators, teachers and counselors in managing and resolving School-based conflicts in Senior Secondary Schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

School-based conflict

School conflict is described as the dispute between individuals or groups about ideas, interests, beliefs, and values within the school community (Nadar, 2022). The school is a microsystem of society where ongoing developments are represented. By preparing students, teachers, and parents to navigate a world characterized by rapid change and interpersonal tensions is an important role that schools play to supporting student's growth. According to Valente, Lourenco and Nemet (2020) conflicts between students and teachers, arise due to, misunderstandings of the teacher's explanation, arbitrary grades and divergent evaluation criteria, a lack of didactic material, discrimination, disinterest in the course material, etc. Conflicts between students can also result through miscommunication, altercations, fighting, group rivalry, discrimination, bullying, usage of resources and places, dating, sexual harassment, loss or damage to school property, etc. Assaults between students and teachers, lost work materials, issues in the school canteen or similar setting, lack of teachers, lack of pedagogical support from teachers, evaluation, approval and disapproval criteria, and failure to meet administrative and bureaucratic requirements of management can all lead to conflicts between students, parents, teachers, and administrators (Nadar, 2022).

School conflict is a disagreement between opposing groups which comprises student- teacher conflict, student- student conflict and student-school community (Onyango, 2020). Conflict in schools can come in different forms; for example teachers seem reluctant to obey the principals, they do not seem to follow rules or accept extra work, they do not easily *get along* with their authority heads. The principals also adopt an authoritative approach. They pressurize teachers for the uninterrupted school activities. It is very common that, conflict between teachers and the school authorities occur in the school almost every day. In institutions, conflict occurs between individuals, due to their frequent interaction with one another. Conflict is an expression of hostility, antagonism and misunderstanding between members in an organization (Ghaffar, 2019). The way educators and students understand the nature of conflict, the better they can manage conflicts constructively (Onyango, 2020). Conflicts as a concept never remain positive or negative but it has always been seen as a basic and result oriented part of school life. Conflicts offer competitive as well as cooperative context in the organization but it varies according to the situation. Problems exist in managing conflicts when the context is competitive, individualistic



or when the context and the conflict resolution procedures are incongruent. The effectiveness of a conflict resolution and peer mediation programme may be limited when the classroom and school context is competitive (Ghaffar, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The origins of the conflict perspective can be traced to the classic works of Karl Marx. Conflict theory of education is an ideology that focuses on how conflict function in educational context. Conflict theorists believe that conflict exists between socioeconomic groups. They also believe that conflict in public schools preserves social hierarchies; conflict theory states that, conflict occur between different groups because of limited resources (Deutschmann, Lorenz, Nardin, Natalini and Adalbert, 2020). Conflicts occur between students as a result of communication breakdown, tension, argument, inadequate resources like time, attention of teachers and facilities. Conflict theory, is a theory states that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources (Career Guide, 2022). Conflict theory holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than by consensus and conformity. Central tenets of conflict theory are the concepts of social inequality, the division of resources and the conflicts that exist among different socioeconomic classes (Hayes, 2023). Conflict theory can be used to analyze power dynamics within the classroom. Students may have different levels of power and status based on their race, ethnicity, gender, social class or academic ability. Teachers may also have more power and authority than students, which can create tension and conflict. Conflict theory can help us understand how conflict related issues like power dynamics, social inequality and competing interest affects student academic performance (Naveed, 2021).

Types of Conflict in Schools

Conflict that exists in schools is mainly related to social and pedagogical changes Torrecilla, Olmos and Rodriquez (2016). Conflicts in school affect the quality of learning, student performance, teacher's performance and indirectly the community. Conflicts between students occur as a result of misinformation and previous experience related to certain issue, different perception for the same problem, different interest, motivation, personal objectives and inequitable resources allocation in the school, limited opportunities for career advancement, subjective appraisal of student performance and breaches in rules and regulations (Catana, 2015). Conflict theory of education is an ideology that focuses on how conflict function in educational context. Conflicts occur between students as a result of communication breakdown, tension, argument, inadequate resources like time, attention of teachers and facilities (Career Guide, 2022). Conflict theory can help us understand how conflict related issues like power dynamics, social inequality and competing interest affects student academic performance (Naveed, 2021). Valente, Lourenco and Nemet (2020) identified causes that generate conflict, and not only concerning the expectations of the teacher-student but also the student towards the teacher. The authors highlighted the problems that cause conflict: Discipline problems, the attitudes of undisciplined student which may lead to conflicts that distract the attention of instructors in the school; these are the result of provocation and disobedience of the student towards the teacher or the teacher on the student to exercise their authority. Conflicts in school between teachers affect the quality of teaching and learning, teacher's performance, community concern and indirectly the student performance (Thapa, 2015). Effective leadership in the administration of School helped to enhance academic performance of student (Akpan, Okey and Esirah, 2016). Leadership is a process of influencing the activities of a group of people by a leader in efforts towards goal achievement (Mouton, 2021). Leadership is the ability to get things done with the assistance and co-operation of other people within the school system (Murphy, 2014). The current study anchored the theory, because correspondence theory identifies that the structure of schools mirrors the structure of workplace. The school system and the workplace are deigned in such a way that conflict manifest, this can positively or negatively have impact on student academic performance.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was employed through and structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The design enabled the researcher to get information on causes of School-based conflict, types of school conflict, effect of school-based conflict on the academic performance of students, and the strategies used for resolving conflict



related issues. This study comprised of 12,736 senior secondary II (SS2) students of which 7,606 are males with 4,719 females. These figures were drawn from four (4) Local Government Areas (Bungudu, Gusau, Maru and Tsafe) of Zamfara State Central Senatorial Zone. A proportionate sampling procedure was adopted to select the sample size of 378 students among the group of the respondents (male and females), a purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 Senior Secondary Schools out of the 80, which are in the central senatorial zone of Zamfara State. Simple random sampling technique (by balloting) was used to select 243 males and 135 female students (Bungudu 69, Gusau 206, Maru 41 and Tsafe 62), who were selected based on their schools which makes the total of 378 respondents that comprise the sampled size of the study. The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Education. The result of the pilot study was statistically analysed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha co-efficient (r) and the reliability co-efficient of 0.864 was obtained. A letter of introduction was collected by the researcher from the Head, Department of Education to Zamfara State Ministry of Education Science and Technology (ZMOEST) to seek permission and approval to visit the selected schools. The researcher and research assistant administer the instruments and the instruments were completed and retrieved. The data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while all the hypotheses were tested using the one-sample t-test.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/No	LGEA	No. of Schools	No. of Students		
			Males	Females	TOTAL
1.	Bungudu	19	1,393	860	2,253
2.	Gusau	31	3,746	2,978	6,724
3.	Maru	12	913	406	1,319
4.	Tsafe	18	1,554	475	2,029
Total		80	7,606	4,719	12,325

Source: Zamfara State Ministry of Education Science and Technology (ZSMOEST), 2024.

Table 2: Sample size Distribution Table

S/N	LGAS	SCHOOLS	Males	Females	Total
1.	Bungudu	5	24	45	69
2.	Gusau	5	152	54	206
3.	Maru	5	20	21	41
4.	Tsafe	5	47	15	62
Total		20	243	135	378

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Presentation of Results

Table 3: One-sample t-test on the Relationship between School-based Conflict and Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State Nigeria

Category	T	N	M	Df	Sig.	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Relationship between SBC and Academic Performance	137.916	378	3.64	377	0.05	3.639	3.5873	3.6910



Source: Fieldwork (2025)

The result in table 3 above reveals that there is significant difference on the relationship between school-based conflict and academic performance of senior secondary school students in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. The mean score of 3.64 for the group of respondents was obtained, calculated at 2.50 with p-value of 0.05.

Table 4: One-sample t-test on the Roles of School Administrators, Teachers and Counselors in Managing and Resolving School-based Conflict in Senior Secondary Schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria

Test Value = 3.50								
Category	T	N	M	Df	Sig.	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Role of School Admin., Teachers and Counselors	141.782	378	3.50	377	0.05	3.503	3.6166	3.7183

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

The result of one-sample t-test in table 12 above reveals that there is significant difference on the roles of administrators, teachers and counselors in managing and resolving school-based conflict in senior secondary schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. Mean score of 3.50 for the group of respondents was obtained, calculated of 2.50 and p-value at a 0.05 level of significance was obtained.

Discussions of Findings

The discussion is based on the variables contained in the study which are guided by the research questions and research hypothesis tested. The first finding of the study was on the effect of school-based conflict on academic performance of senior secondary school students. Hypothesis one (1) was used to find out whether there is significant difference on the relationship between school-based conflict and academic performance of senior secondary school students in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. The responses of the respondents revealed that majority of the respondents agreed with the relationship between school-based conflict and academic performance of senior secondary school students. The mean score of 3.64 was obtained with standard deviation of 0.56 which is greater than critical value of 2.50 as indicated in hypothesis two. This finding is in line with the statement made by Goksoy and Argon (2016), who said that conflict affect academic performance of students and work performance of the school personnel's. Conflict is considered having an impact on academic performance of students if it leads to breakdown in communication, tension, argument and low attendance to school (Eze and Victor 2022).

Hypothesis two (2) was used in the study to find out whether there is significant difference on the roles of administrators, teachers and counselors in managing and resolving school-based conflict in senior secondary schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. The study reveals that there is significant difference on the roles of administrators, teachers and counselors in managing and resolving school-based conflict in senior secondary schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. Calculated value of 3.50 was obtained as indicated in hypothesis three which is higher than decision mean of 2.50 of the study. The findings are in agreement with the statement of Onyango (2020), who stated that conflict is not the problem it is when conflict is poorly managed that is what makes it to be problem. The way educators and students understand the nature of conflict, the better they can manage conflicts constructively. Ghafar (2019) stated that the effectiveness of a conflict resolution and peer mediation programme may be limited when the classroom and school context is competitive. Catana (2015), state that involvement of teachers in decision making is very crucial in the administrative process, they played an important role in providing solutions to issues that may affect the academic performance of students. However, Alex and Makadi (2022), states that conflict resolution strategies have positive impact on the effective management by ensuring peace and harmony, high job performance, high academic performance, the spirit of teamwork, high retention of teachers and problem-solving.

Conclusion



Based on the results of the findings the study concluded that conflict occur in most of the senior secondary schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. The study revealed that there is concrete relationship between student academic performance and school-based conflict as indicated in table 3 of the study that 3.64% equivalent to 95% of conflict the occur in school affect student academic performance in senior secondary schools in the central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. The study also concluded that school administrators, teachers and counselors play an important role in managing and resolving school-based conflict in senior secondary schools in central senatorial zone of Zamfara State, Nigeria. This is based on the result of the study that indicate 3.50% equivalent to 95% of the administrators, counsellors and teachers help in managing and resolving conflict in senior secondary schools as shown in table 4 of the study.

Recommendations

1. Administrators, teachers, counselors and students should develop strategies for investigating the effect of school-based conflict on academic performance of senior secondary school, since the result of the study indicated that conflict that arise in school affect the academic performance of senior secondary school students.
2. Stakeholders should ensure the provision and proper utilization of guidance and counseling unit in the school so that conflict related problems will be managed and resolved in a systematic way.
3. Students should seek support and guidance from teachers, counselors, mediators and parents in managing and resolving conflict related issues in school.
4. The government through the state ministry of education and education boards should organize from time to time workshop and seminars for teachers and school administrators on how to manage and resolve conflict that may occur in the school.
5. Conflict resolution strategies should be given more consideration by the school administrators in the process of planning and implementation of school policies, so that school will achieve its desired objective.

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