COUNSELING IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONG HEADS AND TEACHERS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOKOTO STATE

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ABSTRACT
This paper examined the definition of counselling conflict and conflict resolution in schools in Sokoto state. It also identified and discussed the causes as well as the various way of resolving conflicts in schools. The types of conflict in schools include: relationship conflict, data conflict, interest conflict; structural conflict and value conflict among others. The role of counselling and counsellors in resolving conflict among school administrators. Finally the paper recommended among other things: the introduction of schools management should be made mandatory in resolving conflicts, also seminars, conferences and symposia for the school administrators should be organized from time to time.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a professional and confidential relationship between a guidance counsellor and a client that is facilitated in order to find a lasting solution to the challenge of the clients that is beyond his or her capacity. Counselling, according to Fakunle (2011), is a professional assistance offered to an individual by a trained counselling psychologist to help the individual solve his developmental and adjustment problem. This shows that developmental challenges being faced by an individual can be resolved through counselling, which will lead to better adjustment. Counselling on the other hand is defined by Ipaye (1983), as a form of personal helping carried out mainly by means of interpersonal communication whereby the counselor help the counselee on achieving adaptive attitude, insight and behavior. It is a method of helping the individual utilizes his psychological resources by focusing on the individual's personality, behavioral and emotional assets that could be mobilized.

Dustin and George (1973), defined counselling as a learning process designed to increase adoptive behavior and to decrease maladaptive. Egbochukwu (2000), sees counselling as a process by which a troubled person (client is help to feel and behave in a more personally satisfying manner through interaction with an uninvolved person (the counselor) who provided information and reaction that stimulates the client to develop behaviors that enable him to deal more effectively with himself and his environment.

What normally courses conflicts between heads, assistants and teachers is that most of time principles see themselves as superior to all because of the position they occupied not minding the level at which these teachers are. Some principles were appointed not on merit but because they participated in the politics they will be compensated by giving that appointment as heads or assistant head. These what made other teachers not to give them respect of being the as heads because they know the level at which they were appointed as their heads. In 2004 an incident happened here in Sokoto where assistant head and the teacher transferred to another school because the person appointed to be their head is a junior to them so they did not give him that respect of being there leader they were always in conflict with him, he is not fully aware of his responsibility as the leader that what led there transfer to another schools. Sometimes you will find them fighting because of one reason or the other.

2.   CONCEPT OF CONFLICT

Conflict may be defined as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, belief, values or goals. Conflicts on teams are inevitable; however, the results of a conflict can be beneficially resolved and lead to quality final products. Conflicts have become part and parcel of human organization world over. This indeed is a paradox because of the amount of energy and resources expended by organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts. Flippo (1980) attempted an explanation where he remarks that "a total absence of conflict would be unbelievable, boring, and strong indications that conflicts are suppressed." The inevitability of conflict was also established when he asserted that conflict are part of change and therefore inevitable.

It is therefore, not aberration to schools in Sokoto state and in Nigeria in general. Conflict has been defined by different scholars depending on perspectives. Burgers in Gandu cited in Sha'aba (2010), stated that conflict involved deep-rooted moral or value differences, high-state distributional questions, such as who dominates who? Fundamental psychological needs for identity, security and recognition are often part of the issue as well. In the circumstance of fundamental differences, people will not compromise their values; they will not give up their chance for a better life by just submitting

to continued injustice or domination, nor will they change or even modify their self identity from another perspective.

Radcliff (1994) regard conflict as division among people over class, religion, language or gender issue etc. he observed that "conflict is a state rather than process" and that people who have opposing interest. Halman, (2005) dramatically or theoretically defined conflict as struggle which grows out of interplay and two opposing forces in a plot or action. According to him, in a conflict situation, there is usually a protagonist, who may be struggling against the forces of nature such as flood, hurricane or wicked weather e.g. tsunami.

In all the definition stated, it can be observed that human conflict refer to a situation of differences and/or divisions between individual or group of people over values, interest or desires. The conception of conflict has led to other related terms such as crises, conflict analysis, conflict management, conflict prevention and the ultimate desire of all societies' peace. Contextually, the Cambridge advance learner's dictionary defines conflicts as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles: conflict and crises are interrelated, but we may have conflict without crises. A crisis is also a situation where a conflict has become so threatening or dangerous that people are afraid there will be fight or war. In other words, crisis is the summit, the peak, the topmost or ultimate boiling or turning point in a conflict where the worst may possibly happen (Sha'aba, 2010). This conceptually speaking, we can have conflict without crises. That is the conflict may not be serious enough to reach a turning point of great danger.

Conflict analysis is the critical investigation into the rest of the conflicting light of the actor, structures and dynamics of conflict situation so as to determine intervention mechanism, resolution of the whole range of intervention efforts to reconcile parties and group with incompatible interest, and to prevent the situation from degenerating into violence or prevent relapse into further violence (Francis, 2007). Conflict is perceived in most parts of the world including Nigeria as something abnormal, dysfunctional and therefore detestable forerunner of negative change. Conflict challenges the rational man to think of alternative ways of meeting human needs and interests. Conflict is precipitated from the pursuit of divergent interest, goals and aspirations by individuals and or group in defined social and physical environment.

Conflict can be defined as a disagreement through which the parties involved receive a threat to their needs, interests or concern (Mayer, 1990). Conflict, to a large degree, a situations that naturally arise as we go about managing complex and stressful life situations in which clients are personally invested (Ury, 1988). The encyclopedia and psychology sees conflict as "the basis of all emotional disturbances. Conflict can also be define as a situation that emerge wherever two or more reasons (or groups) seek to possess the same object, occupy the same space or the same exclusive position, play incompatible roles, maintain goals, or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes (North, 1968 in Mullins, 1996).

3.   CONCEPT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution, otherwise known as reconciliation, is conceptualized as the method and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution. The term conflict resolution may also be used interchangeably with dispute resolution, where arbitration and litigation processes are critically involved. Furthermore, the concept of conflict resolution can be though to encompass the use of non violent resistance measures by conflicted parties in an attempt to promote effective resolution. Conflict comes about from differences between individual; their needs, values and motivations. Sometimes through these differences individual can complement each other, but at other times there will be conflict. Conflict is not a problem in isolation, it is how it is dealt with that determines whether it resolves or escalates (Help guide, 2006).

Conflict can endanger relationship, but if handled effectively, it can provide opportunities for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two people. Since relationship conflicts are inevitable, leaving to deal with them (rather than avoiding them) is crucial (Bercovitch, 1984).

4.   TYPE OF CONFLICTS

It is not uncommon for a minor conflict to escalate into major crises without even those directly involved noticing the signs along way. People often ignore the early signs of conflict. By evaluating conflict according to some categories below, we can begin to determine the causes of a conflict and design resolution strategies that will have a higher probability of success.

1)   *Relationship Conflict*: Relationship conflict occurs because of the presence of strong negative emotions, misperception or stereotypes, poor communication or miscommunication, or repetitive negative behaviours. Relationship problems often fuel disputes and lead to an

unnecessary escalating spiral of destructive conflict. Supporting the safe and balance expression of perceptive and emotions for acknowledgement (not agreement) is one effective approach to managing rational conflict.

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

3) *Interest Conflicts:* Interest conflicts are caused by competition over perceived incompatible needs. Conflicts of 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 interest and intention underline and motivate positions in negotiation and must be addressed for maximize resolution. Interest base 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 dispute to be resolved, parties must be assisted to define and express their individual interests so that all of these interests may be jointly addressed. Interest based conflict is best resolved through the maximizing integration of the parties respective interests, positive intentions and desired experiential outcomes.

4) *Structural Conflicts:* Structural conflicts are caused by forces external to the people in dispute. Limited physical resources or authority, geographic constraints (distance or proximity), time (too little or too much), organizational changes and so forth can make structural conflict seem like a crises. It can be helpful to assist parties in conflict to appreciate the external forces and constraints bearing upon them. Structural conflict will often have structural solutions. Parties appreciate that a conflict has an external sources can have the effect.

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

5.   CAUSES OF CONFLICT

It is not uncommon for a minor conflict to escalate into major crises without even those directly involved noticing the sign along way. Nyamajiwa (2004:4) cited several sources, of conflict viz: goal incompatibility of resources, performance expectations and organizational structures. Goal incompatibility occurs when there is a lack of agreement concerning the direction of evaluating task accomplishment. This source of conflict is said to be the most frequent in all organization. In an organization such as the school, individual teachers may bring with them different time and goal orientations that may create a state of high differentiation.

Furthermore to that, Nyamajiwa (2000, p. 4) recognizes that conflict within an organization can be caused by competition for limited resources. He asserts that at a school for instance books and furniture are mostly in short supply. Another source of conflict is activity or performance of one person in a group that affect the subsequent performance of other members. In other words, one member's work cannot begin until another member provides some needed information. In many organizations, the structure or role is a potential source of conflict. There can be function conflict in a functional structure and division conflict in a product structure. In a school, this type of conflict can be seen in the relationship between the head and the teachers. The problem lies in the view points and each member and their roles in schools. Several strategies have been suggested for resolving conflict of them coming to jointly address the imposed difficulties.

6.   CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

When conflicts go unaddressed, they can have a negative impact on productivity and team work. Using conflict resolution strategies in the work place will help maintain a healthy work environment. Conflict

resolution requires specific leadership skills, problem solving abilities and decision making skills. The following are some of the conflict resolution skills. Francis, (2007)

a) *Listen, and then speak out:* Listening to an employee's issue is the most important step in resolving conflict. You should simply listen to all parties involved to completely understand the nature of conflict and then start trouble shooting solutions.

b) *Gather the group:* As a leader, you'll need to arrange a meeting with all involved parties to discuss the issue. Give every one a chance to speak; this is a good opportunity to hear all sides and gain a fully understanding of the conflict. Having a group meeting may also expedite a resolution that will satisfy everyone.

c) *Be impartial:* Don't take sides! In a leadership position, you shouldn't display any sort of opinion that favors one another. If you are partial toward one person, try to access the situation from all sides to come up with a fair and reasonable solution.

d) *Do not postpone conflict resolution:* Address the conflict immediately. Otherwise, the situation could escalate and could affect employee performance. Just make sure not to address the situation too quickly or without careful consideration, as your decision will directly affect the demeanor and performance of working in a term.

e) *Promote team work:* Encouragement and motivation are powerful. Remind your staff of successful project that requires term work to complete. This is one of the most effective conflict resolution techniques and will really make the employees think about the importance of working a team.

f) *Broadcast praise:* As stated above, the power of encouragement and motivation can be multiplied when it is spread to recognize those who are modeling the term work and cooperation that is desire within any conflict. Try to give suitable models in these instances because behaviour modeling can be risky if there are elements in the model that are undesirable.

g) *Written communication:* If an issue has escalated or one of the employees has a hot temper, written communication may be a more effective way of breaking down the wall did resolving conflict. Ask each employee to write a letter to the other, outlining the problem. By writing a letters instead of talking face to face they benefit from the opportunity to more carefully select their words. They can also make sure that the exchange doesn't erupt into a yelling match. Additionally, letter writing provides a means to document this communication easily.

h) *Mediation:* Sometimes, two individuals in a conflict simply can not work it out together without the aid of third party. If your workers conflict has escalated to the point where outside intervention is necessary, set up a mediation session. Train a staff member in the art of mediation. Allow this staffer to sit down with the feuding individuals and assist them in working through their problems in a productive manner.

i) *Compromise:* Ask each person to give a little and take a little by arranging a compromise between the two. Ask both of the members to come to your offer and talk the problems through with them, presenting potential compromises and allowing them to mull these opinions over. By arranging a compromise instead of just selecting one member's interests over the other, you can reduce the likelihood that one staff member feels slighted by the way in which the conflict was resolved.

j) *Voting:* If you simply must put a conflict to bed, voting can be an effective method. If, for example, two employees are arguing over a potential advertising campaign or other business endeavor, set up a vote and allow other employees to weigh in. the numbers will solve the conflict and serve as a once-and-for-all answer.

7.   COUNSELING AND CONFLICTING RESOLUTION AMONG HEADS AND TEACHERS

Conflict occurs when people (or other parties) perceive that, as a consequence of a disagreement, there is a threat to their needs, interest or concerns. There is a tendency to vie conflict as a negative experience caused by abnormal difficult circumstances. The people in the dispute (also known as disputants) feud to perceive limited options and finite resources available in seeking solution, rather than multiple possibilities that may exist outside the box (Healey, 1995). Therefore, conflict can be defined as a disagreement through which the parties involved perceived a threat to their needs, interest or concerns (Mayer, 1998) conflict, to a large degree, are situation that naturally arise as we go about managing complex and stressful life situation in which client are personally invested (Ury, 1888).

As a counselor, recognizing and managing conflict is an essential part of building emotional intelligence. By being able to teach clients the skills needed for resolving conflict you are assisting them to keep their relationship strong and growing. An unresolved ignored conflict can engage large amounts of our attention and energy. It is not always to fix the problem that ignites a conflict, but it can be of great benefit to provide clients with the skill of managing conflict effectively. Counselor in a counseling process can assist clients to develop healthy, functional and positive coping mechanisms for

identifying conflict likely to arise, the consequences, as well as the strategies in which client can constructively manage their conflicts. New opportunities and possibilities may be discovered which in turn transform the personal conflict into a productive learning experiences (Healey, 1995).

It is also believe that the counsellor through the help of conference of principles can organized a workshop, seminar or symposium where the heads assistant and the teachers will be informed about their responsibilities so that they will leave in peace and harmony with one another. It will also help in making them alive to their responsibilities. In addition, the ministry of education in collaboration with the parent teachers association can also help in settling the dispute or conflict among them. Ministry of education should appoint a person who deserves to be appointed as head this will make others to respect and take order from him.

The parent teachers association has a vital role to play in resolving and managing conflict between them being them as elders in the society. This can be done during their meetings with the school.

8.   CONCLUSION

Conclusively conflicts affect schools almost all the time. Most administrators handled conflicts by trial and error approach because they are not fully aware of the formal way of resolving conflicts in schools. On the other hand the head as school administrator was seen as perpetrating conflict among teachers when he/she exercise unfairness on the allocation of these resources which in most cases are scares. On the other hand, Adhiambo and Samatwa (2011) in a similar study established that causes of conflict between teacher's and administration were: academic performance, difference in opinion, negative attitude towards each other, disciplining of students, intimate relationship between teachers and administration, irresponsibility on the part of all the parties, lack of time management and improper lesson planning by teachers. However, the study established that most teachers preferred someone other than the head, preferably the district education officer to resolve conflict particularly where the head is an interested part. In fact confrontational strategy is the best where both parties resolve the conflict in good and orderly manner.

9.   SUGGESTIONS

After the completion of the study, the following recommendations were drawn:
1. The induction of school management should be mandatory and conflict resolution should be among the important aspect in this inductions.
2. School management should not only refine their own professional development, but should build more teacher leaders in their schools. This will equip the school with a team of expert educators who will know what to do during the time of conflict resolution.
3. Seminars, conferences and symposia for the school administrators should be organized from time to time.
4. Courses in conflict management and human relations should be included in the curriculum for teachers in training as a way of preparing them for conflict management in schools.
5. Courses in human relations should be introduced into the secondary schools curriculum to carry along the student on the issue of tolerance and other acceptable societal behavioral virtues.
6. Government should made it compulsory for each school to have a professional counsellor who will assist in resolving issues of conflict that may arise in the school.

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