
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This study examined conflict management strategies and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Two hypotheses guided the study, and correlational survey design was adopted. The population comprised of 129 administrators and 2371 teachers making a total of 2500 participants. Stratified proportionate sampling techniques was used to select 18 administrators and 322 teachers making a total of 340 respondents across the six education zones. Only 328 respondents returned the questionnaires making a return rate of 97%. . Two researcher-developed instruments were used for data collection: (i) the Conflict Management Assessment Questionnaire (CMAQ) and (ii) Teachers' Effectiveness Assessment Questionnaire (TEAQ). The instruments were pilot tested, and experts established their content validity, yielding content validity indexes of 0.89 for CMAQ and 0.87 for TEAQ. Reliability was determined using the test-retest method at two-weeks interval, with reliability coefficients of 0.84 for CMAQ and 0.87 for TEAQ. Data were analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation

(PPMC). Findings revealed significant and positive relationship between dialogue and teacher effectiveness while significant and negative relationship was established between coercion and teacher effectiveness. Part of the recommendations stated that school implement clear policies that discourage the use of coercive strategies such as excessive punishment, threat and authoritarian control in classroom management. Instead teachers should be encouraged to adopt supportive disciplinary approaches, positive reinforcement and mentoring system without resulting into coercion.

Keywords: Conflict Management Strategies, Teacher Effectiveness, Private Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Teacher effectiveness refers to a teacher's ability to positively impact students' learning outcomes and holistic development. Stronge (2017) defines teacher effectiveness as the extent to which a teacher can inspire academic achievement and foster a supportive learning environment. This encompasses both instructional expertise and interpersonal skills. The concept of teacher effectiveness is multifaceted, involving professional competencies, classroom management, and student engagement. According to Marzano (2017), effective teachers exhibit strong subject knowledge, clear communication skills, and the ability to motivate students. These traits enable teachers to create impactful learning experiences. A corollary of this definition is that effective teachers must possess the knowledge and skills needed to attain the goals, and must be able to use that knowledge and those skills appropriately if these goals are to be achieved. The possession of knowledge and skills falls under the heading of teacher competence (Altaf, 2012). In contrast, the use of knowledge and skills in the classroom is referred to as teacher performance. Thus, those who investigate and attempt to understand the teacher effectiveness must be able to link teacher competence and teacher performance with the accomplishment of teacher goals (that is teacher effectiveness) (Altaf, 2012).

Effective conflict management is essential for maintaining a peaceful and productive learning environment. Conflict management in schools involves the strategies and techniques used to prevent, resolve, or mitigate conflicts that arise among various stakeholders in the educational process. In the context of private secondary education, conflict management strategies aim to ensure that disputes do not disrupt the educational process but instead contribute to the growth and development of all parties involved. Effective conflict management fosters cooperation, mutual respect, and understanding, which are fundamental for achieving the goals of private secondary education. The concept of conflict management strategies encompasses a broad spectrum of approaches ranging from avoidance and accommodation to competition, compromise, and collaboration, often classified under the widely recognized Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode

Instrument (TKI) model (Rahim, 2023). Dialogue strategy is a process where groups in conflicts are brought together (face-to face) to express their views on the subject matter. The conflict parties share their feelings and fears and are open to listening to the other parties' needs, are willing to be changed by what they hear, and are open to the idea of being vulnerable (Oboegbulem and Onwurah, 2021). In dialogue, each party makes a serious effort to take the others' concerns into his or her own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up his or her identity, but each recognizes enough of the others' valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other. The goal of dialogue is to develop joint approaches to conflict resolution, as well as improve relationships, understanding, and trust between individuals or groups in conflict (Saunders, 2019).

Brock and Jimenez, (2022) noted that dialogue strategy plays a preventative role in conflict management by addressing issues early before they escalate. Proactive dialogue sessions enable teachers and administrators to identify and resolve minor misunderstandings, workload concerns, or resource needs promptly. This early intervention preserves teacher morale and reduces disruptions that can negatively affect teaching effectiveness. Despite its benefits, the implementation of dialogue strategy requires skillful facilitation and commitment from all parties involved. Challenges include potential power imbalances, reluctance to participate openly, and communication barriers. Private schools must invest in training teachers and leaders on effective dialogue techniques to maximize its impact on teacher effectiveness and school climate.

The coercion strategy, which involves the use of authority, power, or enforcement to resolve conflicts, has a complex and often negative relationship with teacher effectiveness. While coercion can provide quick resolution in situations requiring immediate compliance, overreliance on this strategy in schools often leads to teacher dissatisfaction, low morale, and resistance to administrative directives (Robbins & Judge, 2022). In private secondary schools, teachers subjected to coercive approaches may feel undervalued or constrained, which can reduce their motivation, engagement, and overall instructional performance. Consequently, although coercion may temporarily restore order, it does not foster a collaborative or supportive school climate, and prolonged use can undermine teacher effectiveness, highlighting the need to balance coercive measures with more participatory strategies such as dialogue, arbitration, and preventive approaches.

Johnson and Akande (2021), examine Dialogue as a Conflict Resolution Strategy and Its Impact on Teacher Effectiveness in Private Secondary Schools in Lagos State. A descriptive survey research design was used to examine how dialogue influences teacher effectiveness. The population consisted of 800 teachers from private secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Findings revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the use of dialogue as a conflict resolution strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools. Analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient revealed that teachers who reported frequent

engagement in open dialogue with school administrators and colleagues demonstrated higher levels of job satisfaction, reduced incidences of conflict, and improved classroom performance. Mwangi and Karanja (2022), examine The Role of Dialogue in Enhancing Teacher Performance in Private Secondary Schools in Nairobi. The study used mixed-method; researchers combined survey and interview methods to explore the effects of dialogue on teacher effectiveness. The population included 400 private secondary school teachers in Nairobi County. Results revealed a positive relationship between dialogue practices and improved teacher morale, teamwork, and classroom control. Teachers who participated in structured dialogue sessions reported feeling more respected and understood, which translated into greater commitment and instructional effectiveness.

Eze and Nwankwo (2021), examined the Impact of Coercive Conflict Management Strategy on Teacher Effectiveness in Private Secondary Schools in Enugu. A descriptive survey research design was used to assess how coercion as a conflict management strategy affects teacher effectiveness. Findings revealed a clear negative correlation between the use of coercive conflict management strategies and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Enugu. Teachers who experienced coercion such as threats, forceful directives, or punitive measures reported lower levels of job satisfaction, decreased motivation, and reduced enthusiasm for teaching. Based on these findings, the study concluded that coercive strategies are counterproductive and detrimental to sustaining a productive school environment. As a result, the study strongly recommended that school administrators in private secondary schools abandon coercive methods in favor of more constructive and inclusive conflict resolution techniques such as mediation, dialogue, and arbitration. Ojo (2023) investigated the Impact of Coercion Strategy Training on Teacher Effectiveness in Private Secondary Schools in Ibadan. A quasi-experimental research design was used. 180 teachers randomly assigned into experimental and control groups. The study revealed that training teachers in coercive conflict management strategies did not yield any significant improvement in their overall effectiveness when compared to those in the control group. Teachers exposed to coercion-based training reported feeling less autonomous and more constrained in their decision-making and instructional practices. This suggests that coercion may not only be ineffective but also potentially detrimental to teacher morale and performance.

In recent years, private secondary schools in Sokoto State have faced significant challenges in managing conflicts within the school environment, particularly among teachers, students, and administrative staff. Empirical studies conducted in Sokoto State have reported frequent cases of staff-management disputes, poor interpersonal relationships and communication breakdowns in private secondary schools, often arising from differences in teaching methodologies, inequitable workload distribution, delayed remuneration and unclear administrative directives. While conflict is an inevitable part of any educational system, its effective management is critical for maintaining a conducive learning environment. The identifiable problem arises when such conflicts are inadequately addressed or poorly managed, leading to persistent tension and disruptions in the

teaching and learning process. Consequently, teacher effectiveness which is central to students' academic achievement and overall school performance is adversely affected.

The purpose of this study is to examine conflict management strategies and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto state, the study therefore sought to:

1. Find out the relationship between dialogue strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State.
2. Determine the relationship between coercion strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State.

The following hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance in order to guide the study.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between dialogue strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between coercion strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria

Method

The study employed a correlational survey research design. A bivariate correlation help to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables and it is an appropriate study because it examine variables in their natural environment and does not include researcher impose treatments. Its purpose to examine the nature of the relationship between conflict management strategies and teacher effectiveness using questionnaires administered to a relatively large sample. The population for this study comprises of 129 administrators (principals and vice principal) and 2371 teachers in private senior secondary schools in the six education zones in Sokoto state. Stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to distribute the participants. 18 administrators and 322 teachers were proportionately selected across the six education zones, making a total of 340 respondents. Research advisor (2006) was used as a guide. Precisely 328 questionnaires out of 340 were returned representing a return rate of 97%. Two researcher developed instruments were used for data collection. The questionnaires were structured on four point likert rating scales hence it is simpler for respondents to understand. Instruments for data collection are: (i) Conflict Management Assessment Questionnaire (CMAQ) and (ii) Teachers Effectiveness Assessment Questionnaire (TEAQ).

The instruments were validated by the experts in educational management and measurement and evaluation in the Faculty of Education, Sokoto State University. Expert's correction, observations were effected. Thereafter the instruments were found usable. The reliability of the instruments

were determined using test-retest at 2 weeks interval. After the re-test, scores of the two tests were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) in order to arrive at reliability index. The reliability indexes are 0.84 and 0.87 was established for CMAQ and TEAQ respectively. The administration of the test was carried out in a school outside the sample area. Copies of the questionnaires were administered on the participants. Salient areas were explained to the respondents for clarity. Six research assistants were used. The completed instruments were collected on the spot. The data collected were analysed using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC).

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between dialogue strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing relationship between dialogue strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State

Variables	N	Mean	S.Deviation	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Dialogue Strategy	328	2.85	.972	.971**	.000	H ₀ Rejected
Teacher Effectiveness	328	2.84	.979			

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Level of significance (δ) = 0.05

The results in table 1 show a strong, positive and significant relationship between dialogue strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, with $r(328) = .971^{**}$, $p < .05$. This indicates a significant relationship between dialogue strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, as the p-value(.000) is below the .05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which proposed that there is no significant relationship between dialogue strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State was, rejected. The implication of this finding is that dialogue strategy serves as a critical managerial mechanism for enhancing teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between coercion strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing relationship between coercion strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State

Variables	N	Mean	S.Deviation	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Coercion Strategy	328	2.78	1.012	-.737**	.000	H ₀
Teacher Effectiveness	328	2.98	.945			Rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Level of significance (δ) = 0.05

The results in table 2 show negative and significant relationship between coercion strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, with $r(328) = -.737^{**}$, $p < .05$. This indicates a significant negative relationship between coercion strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, as the p-value (.000) is below the .05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H₀), which proposed that there is no significant relationship between coercion strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State was, rejected. The implication of this finding is that coercion strategy, despite its authoritative nature, has a statistically significant and negative association with teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State. The strong correlation indicates that the structured enforcement of rules, application of sanctions and firm administrative control may not contribute to improved compliance, discipline, and task performance among teachers. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that coercive measures, when applied, cannot influence teacher effectiveness within the organizational framework of private schools.

Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings of this study are as stated below;

1. There is a strong positive and significant relationship between dialogue strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria.
2. There is a negative and significant relationship between coercion strategy and teacher effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

Finding from table 1 shows a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between dialogue strategy and teachers' job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State. This indicates that dialogue strategy manifested through questioning techniques, feedback loops, collaborative discussions, and learner participation creates an enabling pedagogical environment where teachers are not merely transmitters of knowledge but facilitators of learning. This participatory approach improves clarity of instruction, strengthens classroom management, and promotes continuous assessment through real-time feedback. Consequently, teachers who

effectively employ dialogue are more likely to demonstrate higher competence in lesson delivery, student engagement, and adaptive teaching practices, all of which are core indicators of job effectiveness in contemporary educational settings.

This result is corroborated with the submission of Mwangi and Karaja (2022) that dialogic teaching transforms classroom dynamics by promoting purposeful interaction, which in turn strengthens teachers' professional performance, particularly in areas such as assessment, responsiveness, and pedagogical decision-making. These scholarly perspectives reinforce the present finding by demonstrating that dialogue is not merely a communication tool but a critical determinant of effective teaching practice, especially in structured learning environments like private secondary schools where performance expectations are often high.

Findings from table 2 revealed a negative and statistically significant relationship between coercion strategy and teachers' job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State suggests that reliance on forceful, punitive, or authoritarian approaches undermines optimal teaching performance. Coercion strategy characterized by threats, rigid control, excessive discipline, and fear-based compliance tends to create a tense classroom climate that discourages student participation and weakens teacher–student relationships. In such environments, teachers may struggle with effective classroom management, as compliance is often superficial and short-lived, leading to resistance, disengagement, or passive learning among students. Consequently, teachers' ability to deliver lessons effectively, assess students meaningfully, and maintain a supportive learning environment is significantly diminished, thereby lowering overall job effectiveness.

This outcome connotes with ideas of Owan (2018) that controlling and coercive teaching behaviors negatively affect motivation and performance, indicating that environments driven by pressure and control reduce both teacher effectiveness and student engagement. These scholarly perspectives support the present finding by demonstrating that coercion, rather than enhancing discipline or productivity, disrupts the pedagogical process and weakens the key components of effective teaching in secondary school settings.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that dialogue strategy adopted by teachers play a critical role in determining their job effectiveness in private secondary schools in Sokoto State. Specifically, the use of dialogue strategy significantly enhances teachers' effectiveness by promoting interactive teaching, improving student engagement, and fostering a supportive learning environment, while the use of coercion strategy has a detrimental effect, as it creates fear, reduces motivation, and weakens teacher–student relationships. Therefore, the study concludes that teachers who adopt participatory and dialogic approaches are more likely to achieve higher levels

of instructional effectiveness, whereas reliance on coercive methods undermines overall teaching performance and classroom outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Private secondary school administrators in Sokoto State should deliberately promote and institutionalize dialogue strategies to ensure issues are addressed collaboratively. This will enhance teachers' instructional delivery, improve student engagement, and ultimately increase overall job effectiveness, in line with the established positive impact of dialogue strategy.
2. School authorities should implement clear policies that discourage the use of coercive strategies such as excessive punishment, threats, and authoritarian control in classroom management. Instead, teachers should be encouraged to adopt supportive disciplinary approaches, positive reinforcement and mentoring systems should also be strengthened to help teachers manage classroom challenges without resorting to coercion. By minimizing coercive practices and replacing them with constructive engagement methods, schools can foster a more conducive learning environment, thereby improving teachers' effectiveness and aligning with the finding that coercion negatively impacts job performance.

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