CONFLICT LEVEL AND TEACHERS' PRODUCTIVITY: INTERROGATING THE ASSOCIATION IN THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Conflict level is a potent factor that predicts the dimension of teachers' productivity in the school system. Teachers' productivity can be influenced functionally or dysfunctionally, depending on the level at which conflict is operating in a school. Considering the dynamic nature of conflict level therefore, this study investigated the association between conflict level and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study sampled 1,523 teachers through a purposive sampling technique. A self-structured questionnaire entitled "Conflict Level and Teachers' Productivity Questionnaire" (CLTPQ) was used to gather information from teachers selected for the study. Data collected were analysed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significance. A multiple bar chart was used to represent the research question developed in the study. It was discovered that conflict level varies from one secondary school to another. Also, there was a significant relationship between conflict level and teachers' productivity (r = 0.080; P < 0.05) and that conflict level was found to make a significant relative contribution to teachers' productivity (β = -0.162, P < 0.05) in secondary schools. It was recommended that teachers and school administrators should be exposed to trainings in peace and conflict management in order to positively enhance their social relationships for optimum performance in secondary schools. Also, school administrators as well as teachers should strive to ensure that moderate or optimum conflict level is operating in their schools for the attainment of positive outcomes in order to enhance teachers' productivity.*

KEY WORDS: conflict, conflict level, teachers' productivity, public secondary school

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an inevitable element in human relations and organisational development. It is a common and constant factor in any organisation, whether formal or informal. McGee (2006) observed that even in the best work environments, organisational conflict is inevitable. The occurrence of conflict in organisations does not signify gross deficiency in the organizations' operational mechanisms, rather it is a sign that such organisations are alive and evolving. Although, conflict has the potency to functionally or dysfunctionally impact on organisations, depending on how it is managed. When conflict is constructively handled, it improves the quality of decisions, stimulates creativity and innovation, encourages interest and curiosity among group members, provides the medium through which problems can be aired and tensions released, and fosters an environment of self-evaluation and change (Robbins and Judge, 2007). On the other

hand, when conflict is mismanaged, it will result in increased absenteeism, grievances and reduced productivity (Lewin, 1987). It will reduce team performance and members' satisfaction because it produces tension and antagonism, and distracts people from their task performance (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003). The experience of functional or dysfunctional outcome is a function of a number of variables, which are the nature of the conflict, the parties concerned, and their orientations concerning conflict management strategies (Fabunmi and Alimba, 2010). These factors are equally significant in predicting conflict level, capable of determining the degree of the outcome that may emerge. Therefore, conflict level is a serious issue that can determine the dimension of functionality or destructiveness that a conflict can assume at a particular time.

The foregoing therefore brings to bear the fact that conflict has the potential to graduate from low to moderate levels and to the point where it can be too high to stimulate any functional impact on workers as well as the organisation. According to Cetin and Hacifazhoglu (2004), dysfunctional conflict or destructive conflicts may occur at very low or very high intensities. Further, Schermerhorn (2001) posited that too much conflict is distracting and will interfere with other more task-relevant activities. He added that when conflict is at the optimal level, satisfaction and apathy will be minimized. When conflict level increases above the desired, management will have to interfere in order to achieve the desired level (Abdullah A.S and AL-Shourah, 2015). Subsequently, when conflict level deescalates from the desired level, it is expected that the management should intervene to activate the expected level. These interventional modes fundamentally reveal the dynamic potential of conflict to assume any posture, in which it is necessary for management to ensure that balance is created in order to ensure stability in an organisation.

The school as a social organisation has the objective of transforming human beings. The school, being a social organisation therefore, it is justifiable that conflict will always be by the corners in the system. According to Dipaola and Hoy (2001), conflict is indeed on the daily menu of school administration. This is because of its heterogeneous identity, which involves housing people from diverse backgrounds in order to get them educated. In this regard, interdependence and interference often play out continuously in the course of interaction. Interdependence and interference are two major elements that are central to conflict occurrence. For instance, Fogler, Poole and Stutman (1997) considered conflict as the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving their goals. The degree of interdependence often determines the intensity of the conflict in any relationship. Coser and Rosenberg (1964) asserted that the closer a group is, the more intense the conflict. Thus, interdependence and interference can easily be stirred up at various stages of social engagement in school, whether it is during planning, decision-making, implementation, or evaluation stages, goal attainment, need and interest satisfaction. When this happens, conflict emerges. Therefore, conflict is bound to occur in any situation in which interdependent people express (manifest or latent) differences in satisfying their individual needs and interests, and they experience interference from one another in accomplishing these goals (Donohue and Kolt, 1992).

The school is a living case of a place where conflict is endemic; it can manifest at different stages of the system. When conflict occurs, it has the tendencies to induce either positive or negative outcome, depending on the level at which it is operating in a school. For instance, Booker (1990)

observed that high level of interpersonal conflict has been found to be negatively related to the organisational commitment of teachers. In the same vein, Hagel and Brown (2005) were of the opinion that certain level of conflict is beneficial as it serves as a powerful motivator to improve performance and satisfaction in the school. The level at which conflict is operating in a school will determine how safe and secure such a place will be for harmonious social engagement in order to enhance productivity. The point is that conflict level has the potential to predict teachers' productivity. At a high conflict level, the school climate will be characterised with protracted disharmony in school staff interpersonal relationship, increased indiscipline among students, disarmed school authorities, clogged channel of progressive communication and rendering institutions of learning ungovernable (Agbonna, 2009). This situation may lead to decline in teachers' productivity, resulting in poor teaching and learning process. At a low level, conflict will be superficial and may not be able to induce the needed force that will stimulate growth and development in the school. In this case, innovation and creativity may be implicated, leading to stagnation in the school. Such a situation will equally result in a decline in teachers' productivity. However, when conflict is operating at a moderate level, its intensity is at the optimum point, which will encourage creativity and innovation in an organisation. Consequently, at this point, there will be increased teachers productivity because the school environment will be characterised with novel inventions, harmony, ingenuity, resourcefulness, vision etc which will stimulate teachers to greater task performance.

In Adamawa State, the degree of conflict manifestations in schools, especially in secondary schools, is frightening and discouraging, such that that teachers and students are often adversely affected. However, conflict level varies from one school to another, because of the administrative capability of school leaders, the intactness of school rules and regulations and the attitudes and behaviours of school personnel. In schools where these factors are underplayed, conflict manifests in different forms and intensities. Opeloye (2006) pointed out that the causative factors of conflicts in secondary schools are: rumour mongering, domineering attitude of principals, communication breakdown, resources problem and lack of opportunities for promotion. These causes typically revealed three basic assumptions which are peculiar to secondary schools in relations to conflict incidence, which are:

(i)   different forms of conflict are often experienced in secondary schools in the state;
(ii)   conflict level varies from one secondary school to another; and
(iii)   the adverse impact of conflict in secondary schools are obvious due to the probability of mismanagement.

These conjectures are pointers that bring to fore the likelihood that teachers' productivity and students' performance in public examinations may be despicable. It is therefore axiomatic to argue that poor performance has bearing on low productivity of teachers in secondary schools. Consequently, low productivity of teachers is connected with several factors, but the level at which conflict is operating in the school climate is a major factor that has been recorded as having the capacity to distort teachers' job performance. For instance, Jonkman (2006) posited that the adverse effects of school conflict often manifest in low productivity of teachers and poor performance of student. This showed that there is an association between conflict level and

teachers' productivity. Based on the foregoing, this study investigated the correlation between conflict level and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Problem Statement

It is expected that teachers should be highly productive, but studies have shown that teachers' productivity is low in Nigeria (Oluchukwu, 2000; Obanya, 2004). In addition, certain studies also revealed frequent occurrences of conflict in secondary schools (Jonkman, 2006), which are attributable to the size of the school, school bureaucratic characteristics (such as the degree of specialisation), dissatisfied educators and principals' authoritarian outlook (Achoka, 1990). Equally, communication has been identified as a potent weapon in conflict causation. This is because communication behaviour often creates or reflects conflict (Hocker and Wilmot, 1995). Therefore, it is imperative to stress that when school conflict is ineffectively handled, it often affects teachers negatively, and consequently results in poor academic performance. Makaye and Ndofirepi (2012) attested to this fact that school conflicts often disturb the tone and climate of school, and ultimately impact negatively on the performance of both teachers and students. The negative effects of conflict often correlate with the level at which it is operating in a school. At a high level, school conflict will be highly destructive to teachers and consequently will make students to suffer the repercussion. Moderate or optimum conflict level will stimulate innovation and creativity in the school climate, thereby enhancing teachers' job performance and equally yielding positive impact on students' academic behaviour. In Adamawa State, secondary schools are constantly experiencing conflict. According to Fabunmi and Alimba (2010).

in Adamawa state, conflict features prominently among staff in secondary school. Secondary school teachers in the state experience various forms of conflicts, which often impede their efficiency and effectiveness. The log books of secondary schools revealed the existence of varieties of conflicts between principal and teacher, between teachers, teachers and students, the P.T.A and the school and even the host communities (p.207).

Fabunmi and Alimba (2010) posited that the issues that predispose secondary schools to conflict incidences include violation of school rules and regulations, problem of indiscipline, lateness to school, unclear definition of responsibilities among teachers, and principals' poor management behavior. These causes are a reflection of the fact that conflicts are usually mismanaged, and as a result, will escalate to become more intense in the system. When conflict escalates, it can result in devastating effects on the teachers and students. In most cases, the teachers and students are at the receiving end of such conflicts, particularly in terms of their productivity and performance. In view of this, study investigated the association between conflict level and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Adamawa State.

Research Question

The question that resonates through this study is: what is the level at which conflict is operating in secondary schools in Adamawa State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were raised to guide the study.

(i)   There is no significant relationship between conflict level and the teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Adamawa State.

(ii)   Conflict level does not make any significant relative contribution to teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Adamawa State.

Conceptual Clarification of Conflict
There are diverse definitions recurrently reflecting the fact that conflict is: (i) a state of incompatibility; (ii) an interaction of interdependent parties; and (iii) a bad omen or a positive phenomenon. As a state of incompatibility, conflict is considered as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (that is, individual, group, organisation and the like) (Rahim, 2002). Similarly, Darling and Fogliasso (1999) describe conflict as a situation in which the concerns of two or more individuals operating within the unit appear to be incompatible. Incompatibility presupposes that individuals or groups of people cannot coexist, cooperate, function or work together to achieve a particular goal. It can be associated with the existence of sharp differences in ideas, actions, interest, or goals of people in a system. When these differences are magnified beyond the acceptable limit between or among parties, conflict will ensue.

Putnam and Poole (1987) consider conflict as an interaction of interdependent people who perceive opposition of goals, aims, and values, and who see the other party as potentially interfering with the realisation of these goals. The consideration of conflict from the perspective of interaction of interdependent parties signifies that conflict cannot occur in isolation. People must interact based on the social forces binding them together. This may be as a result of family tides or belonging to the same social group such as school and so on. The social forces that bind people together will make them to be vulnerable to conflict. This will happen because of their individual's values, ideas, goals, needs and aspirations, which are differ from one to another. These elements will make them to experience opposition and interference in the course of pursuing their goals and interests, and will eventually result in conflict. It is important to equally stress that opposition and interference are the hallmark conflict initiation and escalation in social relations. This can easily be experienced in situations where issues that underline the pursuit of goals are conducted within the same social space. The understanding of conflict as a bad omen or a positive phenomenon is a demonstration of the fact that conflict is a neutral element that its end result is a function of how it is perceived and managed. When it is rightly perceived and properly handled, its outcome will be positive. On the other hand, it will end up as a bad omen, when it is wrongly perceived and handled. Thus, the way the outcome appears will make people to define it in that light. For instance, Hoelscher and Robert (2002) viewed conflict as the underlying power that stimulates innovation. Similarly, Pondy (1967) conceived conflict as a phenomenon that can produce positive outcomes by introducing different perspectives that produce innovative solution. These are some of the positive sides to the interpretations of conflict. The negative views about conflict as substantiated by Wall and Callister (1995) are that conflict occurs when an individual or a group feels negatively affected by another individual or group.

The consideration of conflict as a bad omen was motivated by the idea that conflict cannot bear anything good. Rather it will always be negative, harmful, damaging, frustrating, and destructive

in nature. It is in this light that Nwolise (2003) considered conflict as a clash, confrontation, battle or struggle. According to Alimba (2005), there are some salient issues that are germane to the descriptions of conflict. They are:

(i)   Conflict is a process. Conflict involves series of activities before it can be experienced by people. These series of activities also bring about the idea of dynamism as a feature of conflict.

(ii)   Conflict depends on interdependence to take place. People must be connected in one way or the other before they can experience conflict. Conflict does not occur in isolation; people must be connected by their goals, ideas, needs, or aspirations. The closer the forces bringing them together, the more the conflict.

(iii)   Conflict can be expressed in manifest or in latent form. When conflict is expressed in manifest form, people are aware of its existence and they can easily intervene in it. In its latent form however, its existence is hidden from the people, and the parties to the conflict will not want people to know about the existence of the conflict.

(iv)   Needs and interest are central to conflict occurrence. Needs and interests are the core issues at the heart conflict initiation. Needs are those things that are crucial to people, and should be satisfied as soon as the purchasing power is available. Interests, on the other hand, are mere desires. These elements especially needs are at the heart of conflict causation

(v)   Interference or opposition attracts conflict. Interference or opposition usually creates the pathway for the experience conflict, because it encourages antagonism especially when parties are pursuing their goals within the same social space.

It is noteworthy to state that when conflict occurs, its manifestation will vary depending on how it is perceived and managed. As it progresses, it will create room for its expression in different intensities, which will underscore the nature of the outcome that will be experience in an environment.

Understanding the Idea of Conflict Level

Conflict level is the intensity of conflict operating in an organisation. It is an expression of the dynamic nature of conflict. Conflict Barometer (2008) classified conflict intensities or levels into low, medium and high. At low level, conflict is considered superficial in the sense that it cannot induce the needed force required to make things happen in an organisation. When conflict is operating at moderate or medium level, it implies that its intensity is at the optimum point, where it can stimulate the right atmosphere needed to induce innovation and creativity for effective and efficient performance in an organisation. Thus, such (an optimal or appropriate) level of conflict will energise people in constructive directions and lead to maximum organisational performance (Peretomode and Peretomode, 2008). However, when the conflict level is too high, it will render an organisation highly unproductive, because disorderliness and confusion will dominate the system in which the conflict exists. According to Peretomode and Peretomode (2008), when the level of conflict is too high, dissatisfaction, lack of teamwork, turnover chaos and disruption may follow. Also, Cetin and Hacifazhoglu (2004) pointed out that at very low or very high intensities, dysfunctional conflict or destructive conflict occurs. At high conflict level, conflict can easily slide into violent conflict, causing devastating outcomes in an organisation. At a low conflict level, futility, recession and deficiency may be experienced in an organisation. Rahim (1986) asserted that little or no conflict in organisations may lead to stagnation, poor decisions, and ineffectiveness. Therefore, the intensity at which conflict is operating has the potential to define and influence the survival and development of an organisation. This signifies that conflict level can progress from

an insignificant point, to a significant and peak point where it can become a frustrating and disturbing force capable of causing destruction in relationship and decline in the work performance of people in organisations.

A Discourse on Teachers' Productivity

Teachers are important constituent part of school organisation. The availability of all other materials or resources without adequate teachers on ground would amount to nothing. This, perhaps, was the reason Fabunmi (2007) asserted that "teachers are the most important element in the school system. They are more important than the quality and quantity of equipment and material and degree of financing". Hallak (1990) posited out that the quality of the education system depends on teachers' quality. The question that becomes fundamental at this point is who is a teacher? A teacher is a person who has the registrable professional qualification which enables him/her to be appointed to teach at any appropriate level of recognised education in any nation and who has a sound mind and is mentally alert (NUT, 1994). According to Achimugu (2005), there are three schools of thought regarding who a teacher is. The first school of thought believes that a teacher is someone who consciously and deliberately shows others how to do things. By this definition, anybody who occupies a leadership position in any sphere of the society is a teacher. The second school of thought looks at a teacher as someone who imparts ideas, knowledge and skills in an organised classroom. Here, the teacher is just anybody (untrained or half-baked) who can handle chalk, stand before the learners and write some things down for the learners to copy into their notes. The third school of thought views the teacher as someone who is professionally qualified to impart knowledge and stimulates learning formally in a classroom situation. Here, a teacher is somebody grounded in his subject and who must necessarily possess basic teaching qualification that will enable him to be appointed to teach in institutions of learning (Achimugu, 2005). Based on this, a teacher is someone who transmits knowledge by systematically directing the teaching and learning process. Kochhar (2000) identified the duties of teachers in the school system as:

(i)   planning the curricular and co-curricular programme;
(ii)   organising the programme;
(iii)   supervising and guiding the pupils;
(iv)   maintenance of cumulative records and the like;
(v)   evaluating the achievement of the pupils;
(vi)   reporting; and
(vii)   maintaining relations with pupils, colleagues, principal, parents and community for effective education.

The foregoing established that the quality of education and the learning outcome of students rest heavily on the ability of teachers to perform their duties. Where these duties are adequately carried out to achieve set goals, such teachers are considered as productive. Therefore, teachers' productivity is what teachers control and actually do in the classroom such as teaching effectiveness and classroom performance (Akiri and Ugborugbo, 2008). It is the relationship between the total output of the teacher and the total resources input utilised in the production process (Eneasator, 1997). Goe, Bell and Little (2008) put forward a five-point definition of teachers' productivity as teachers having:

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(i)   high expectations for all students and help students learn, as measured by value-added or other test-based growth measures or by alternative measures.

(ii)   contributing to positive academic, attitudinal and social outcomes for students such as regular attendance on-time promotion to the next grade, on-time graduation, self-efficiency and cooperative behaviour.

(iii)   using diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities; monitor student progress formatively adapting instruction as needed; and evaluate learning using multiple sources of evidence.

(iv)   contributing to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civic-mindedness.

(v)   collaborating with other teachers, administrators, parents and education professionals to ensure student success, particularly the success of students with special needs and those at high risk for failure.

Therefore, a productive teacher is one who strives to implement the curriculum in such a way as to bring about productive learner (Sofoluwe, 2000). This implies that teachers' productivity is the ability of a teacher to master the curriculum, convert it into a teachable subject matter and impart it on the learners to acquire knowledge, change attitudes and develop skills acceptable to a society for self-development and societal improvement (Alimba, 2013; 2017). This definition reflects the alertness and the mastery of the specific domain of a teacher in order to contribute effectively to the positive development of a student for onward building of a society. Alabi (2000) maintained that teachers' productivity entails providing meaningful teaching and learning activities necessary to accomplish the goals of schools. The main goal of the school is geared toward personality development for positive transformation of a society. This goal can only be achieved when teachers are encouraged to discharge their responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

The Nexus between Conflict Level and Teachers' Productivity.

There is a relationship between conflict level and teachers' productivity. This is because the impact which conflict can exert is a function of the level at which it is operating in an organisation. For instance, Schermerhorn (2001) note that high level of conflict is distracting and interferes with other more task-relevant activities; too little conflict may promote complacency and the loss of creative, high performance edge. The point is that conflict level can adversely impact on the performance potentials of the workforce, and when this ensue, the survival and growth of an organisation can be jeopardised. Therefore, at any level of conflict in an organisation, the productivity of the workforce will be implicated. This in turn will lead to low level organisational performance and sometimes, even endangers the organisation's chances of survival". Thus, organisational productivity can be influenced by the level at which conflict is operating in an organisation. The dynamic relationship between conflict level and performance is illustrated below. Figure 1 showed the various levels which conflict can assume and their implications on performance.
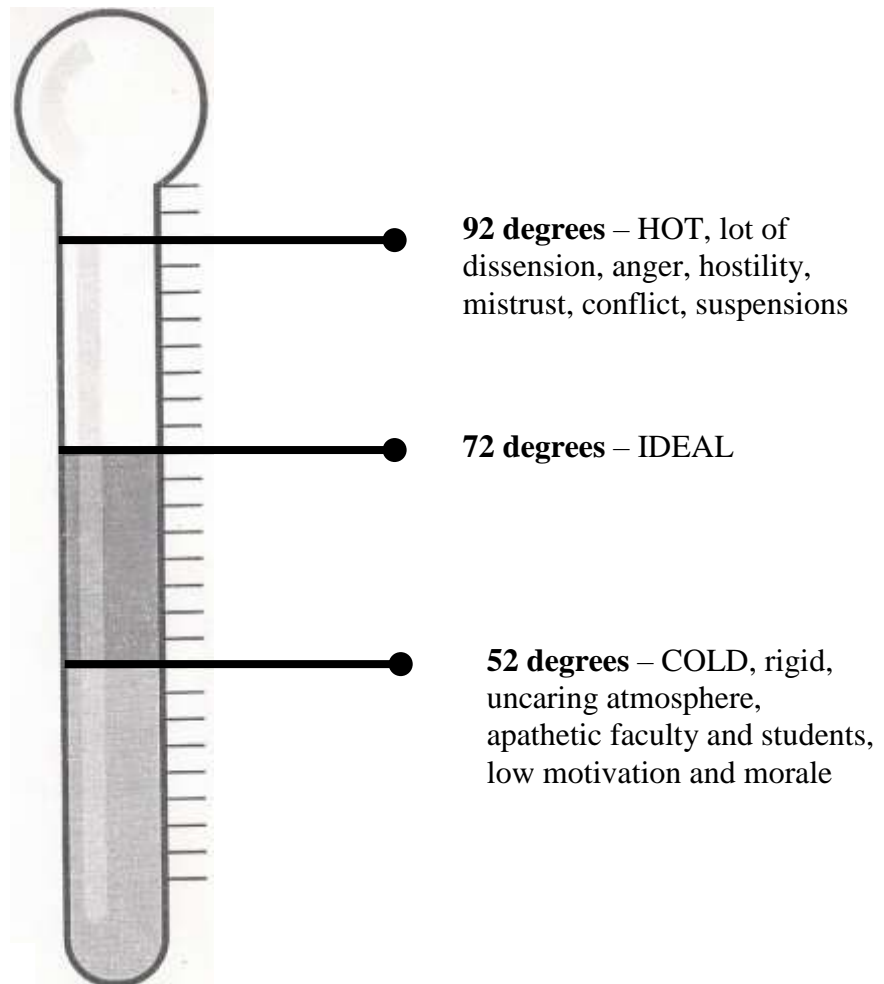
Figure 1: Conflict level and Performance
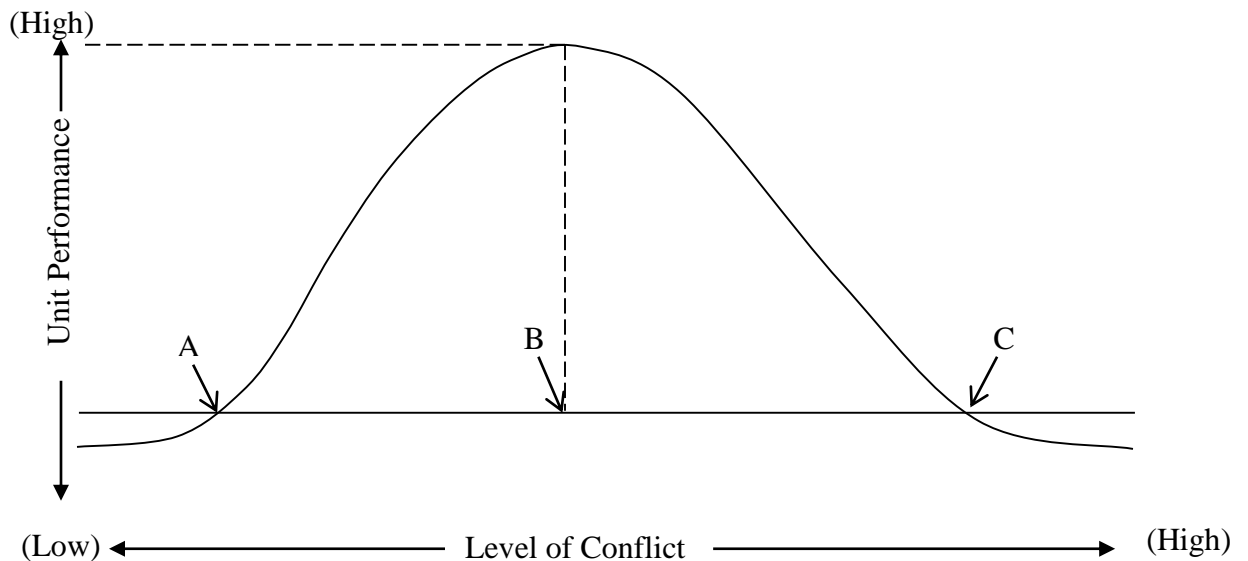
Situation	Level of Conflict	Type of Conflict	Unit's Internal Characteristics	Unit Performance Outcome
A	Low or None	Dysfunction	Apathetic stagnant Nonresponsive to change Lack of new ideas	Low
B	Optimal	Functional	Viable Self-critical Innovative	High
C	High	Dysfunctional	Disruptive Chaotic uncooperative	Low

Source: Robbins and Judge (2007).

Robbins and Judge (2007) indicated that conflict level can either be too high or too low. Either of the extreme hinders performance (that is, situation A and C). An optimal level (i.e situation B) is one at which there is enough conflict to prevent stagnation, stimulate creativity, allow tensions to be released and initiate the seeds for change, yet not so much as to be disruptive or to deter coordination of activities (Robbins and Judge, 2007). According to these scholars, inadequate or excessive level of conflict can hinder the effectiveness of a group or an organisation, resulting in reduced satisfaction of group members, increased absence and turnover rates and eventually lower productivity. Iravo (n.d) notes that for every organisation, an optimal level of conflict exists, which is considered highly functional as it helps to generate good performance. Thus, when conflict level is too high, performance suffers (Iravo, n.d). Security is an issue that is also associated with conflict level. A high conflict level will breed insecurity, which can jeopardise the work attitudes, commitment and performance of people. Boucaut (2003) asserts that for people to be able to perform their work to the best of their ability, they require ontological security or a feeling of trust

that they are safe in their working environment. This illustration is quite relevant in the operations of the school. The school as a social institution is not free from conflict, which is a poignant reminder of the fact that it is a common denominator in the system. Despite this, the level at which conflict is operating in schools vary in nature. Why it may be low in some schools, it may be high in some other schools and moderately or optimally operating in some other places. What accounts for the dynamic potential of conflict in schools are perceptional behaviours of staff, the nature of the conflict and the conflict management approach often adopted for mitigation.

These elements are essential parameters that determine how conflict manifests and progress in a school. The existing conflict level in a school is a prerequisite for determining how conducive the system will be, the nature of interpersonal relationship that will exist among staff, how secure it will be and the condition of teachers' productivity. Where optimal conflict level is evident, the school will experience positive changes which will positively impact on teachers and the entire system for good. Schools in which the conflict level is rather too high, dissension, anger, hostility, mistrust, insecurity will set in, and will result in dysfunctional effects on teachers and the school at large. A high conflict level will breed insecurity, and insecurity has the tendency to deter teachers' productivity, which will in turn affect the academic performance of students (Dee and Henkin 2001). Insecurity is a visible realistic tendency in a school climate riddled with high conflict level. Ikoya and Akinseinde (2009) observed that students appear to learn better in a school environment with minimum conflict. When the conflict level is high, the school climate will be heated up, making teachers' work commitment to decline. The illustration below showed how conflict level can impact on the conduciveness of the school climate and consequently on teachers' productivity.

Figure 2: Conflict level and School Climate

92 degrees – HOT, lot of dissension, anger, hostility, mistrust, conflict, suspensions

72 degrees – IDEAL

52 degrees – COLD, rigid, uncaring atmosphere, apathetic faculty and students, low motivation and morale

Source: Sue (1996).

Figure 2 revealed the use of a thermometer to illustrate the implications of the degree of hotness, ideal and coldness of conflict in an environment. When conflict is operating at 92 degrees, no meaningful result will be achieved in a place. At 92 degrees, the conflict level will be so high (i.e too hot) that teachers' productivity will be paralysed, learning will be distorted, and the school will be totally unconducive for any meaningful academic activity. At this conflict level, the school climate will be severely hot to the extent that it will be characterised with a "lot of dissension, anger, hostility, mistrust, conflict, suspension" (Sue, 1996). The degree of hotness will prevent school personnel, especially, teachers from effectively carry out their responsibilities. This will result in decline in teachers' productivity, and will create room for the manifestation of poor academic performance and low quality of education in a country. At 72 degrees, the conflict level is the ideal state for any school to operate efficiently to attain its set goals. At that conflict level, the school will radiate a conducive climate that will induce optimal performance. This conflict level is considered as the optimal level in which organisational conflicts are used as functional tools for enhancing performance. According to Iravo (n.d), for every organisation, an optimal level of conflict exists which is considered highly functional as it helps to generate good performance.

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Conflict, at this level, is characterised by mutual understanding, cooperation, and amicable resolution of conflict which will result in win-win outcome. A school climate characterised with these features will pave way for creativity and innovation, which are essential factors for better performance of teachers. At 52 degrees, the school climate will be too cold to stimulate any meaningful social engagement. At this conflict level, the school will be domesticated with "rigid, uncaring atmosphere, apathetic faculty and students, low motivation and morale" (Sue, 1996). In such a school climate, teachers will find it difficult to effectively execute their duties. This is because teachers' morale will be low and their commitment will be poor. This will pave way for decline in their productivity. Conflict level of this type will cause the school climate to be too cold to generate the amount of energy needed to induce innovation and creativity required to enhance productivity and performance in the system.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive survey research. According to Akinboye and Akinboye (1998), in using the descriptive survey research, the researcher will start inductively from observation and carefully studies the existing attributes of a particular event in real world. Therefore, to carefully conduct a methodological observation on conflict level and teachers' productivity in secondary schools, this design was used so that data will be systematically collected to test the hypotheses raised in the course of the study. The population of the study consists of 6,385 teachers sampled in the study areas, which is Adamawa State. The state has 21 local government areas and five educational zones, namely: Yola, Gombi, Ganye, Numan and Mubi. A total of 1,597 teachers were selected through purposive sampling technique from the educational zones in the state. The sampling technique used was based on experience and the respondents' area of operations. A questionnaire developed by the researcher entitled "Conflict Level and Teachers' Productivity Questionnaire" (CLTPQ) was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A dealt with the background information of the respondents, while section B elicited information on the issue of conflict level. Section C treated the issues of conflict level and teachers' productivity. Face and content validity were used to validate the research instrument. The validation was conducted by two faculty members, who are knowledgeable on the area under study. A test-re-test method was used to measure the reliability of the instrument. Thus, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to calculate the reliability of the instrument, which was 0.91, indicating that the instrument was of a high reliability index. The researcher, with the aid of two trained research assistants, directly administered the questionnaire to 1,597 respondents in secondary schools selected for sampling in the state. Thus, after one week, the copies of the questionnaire were retrieved from the teachers and a total of 1,523 questionnaire was returned, indicating that 95% of the teachers responded to the questionnaire. Data collected was analysed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis. A multiple bar chart was used to represent the research question developed in the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented as follows:

Research Question 1

What is the level at which conflict is operating in secondary schools in Adamawa State?
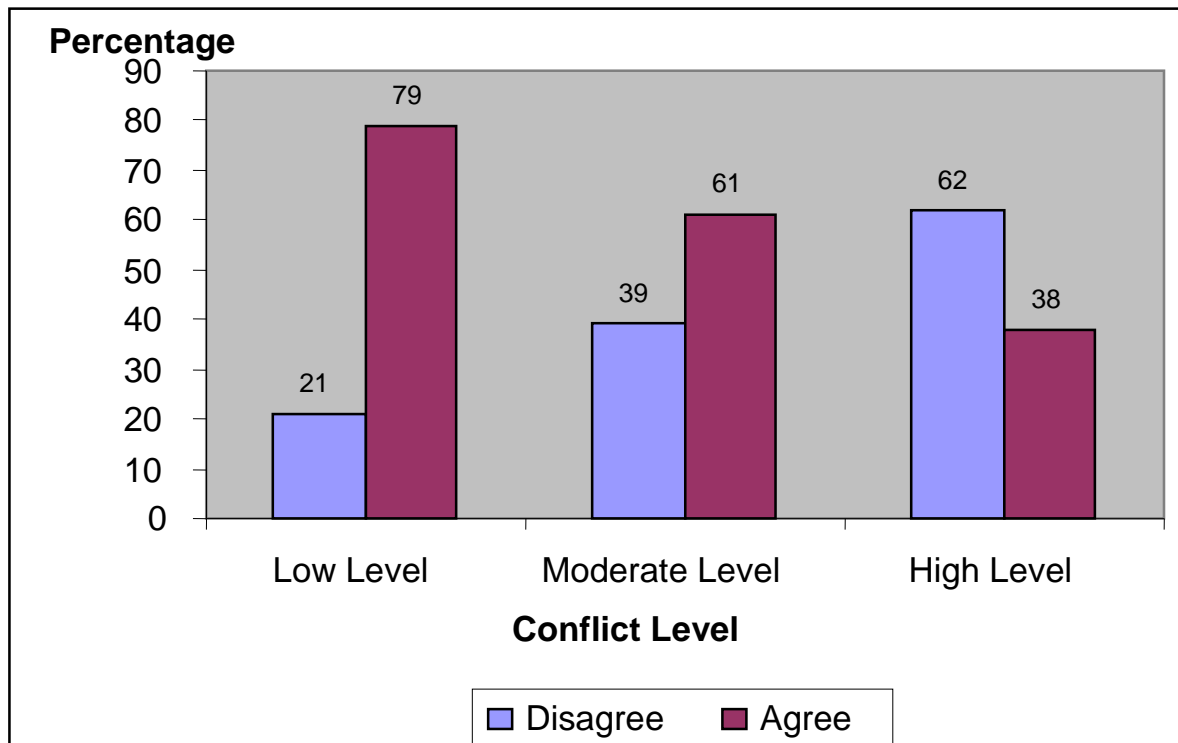

Figure 3: Conflict Level in Secondary Schools in Adamawa State

Figure 3 showed the conflict level operating in secondary schools in Adamawa state. It is clear from the multiple bar chart that the level at which conflict operates in secondary schools vary from one school to another. While conflict level was low in some schools, it was moderate and high in some other schools. For instance, 21% of the respondents disagreed that conflict was operating at a low level in their schools, while 79% of the respondents agreed that the conflict level was low in their schools. While 61% of the respondents agreed that conflict was operating at a moderate level in their schools, 39% of respondents disagreed with the idea that conflict was operating at a moderate level in their schools. A total of 62% of the respondents disagreed with the notion that conflict was operating at a high level in their schools, while 38% of the respondents agreed that conflict was operating at a high level in their schools. These illustrations are clear indication that the level at which conflict is operating in secondary schools range from low, moderate to high and this has implications on teachers' productivity.

Research Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between conflict level and teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Adamawa State.

Table 1 Conflict Level and Teachers' Productivity

Item	$\overline{X}$	SD	N	r	P	Remarks
Conflict Level	7.9249	2.0007				
			1523	0.080	0.002	Sig.
Teachers' Productivity	33.4547	5.2103				

Table 1 revealed the Pearson Correlation analysis of conflict level and teachers' productivity. The null hypothesis was rejected at (r = 0.080; P < 0.05). This showed that there was a significant relationship between conflict level and teachers' productivity. This is an attestation to the fact that conflict level has the potential to influence teachers' productivity in secondary schools.

Research Hypothesis 2

Conflict level does not make any significant relative contribution to teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Adamawa State.

Table 2: Relative contribution of Conflict communication on Teachers' Productivity

Model	Unstandardised Coefficient ß	Std. Error	Standardised Coefficient ß	t	Sig
(Constant)	221.440	0.791		27.107	0.000
Conflict level	-0.174	0.035	-0.162	-5.017	0.000

Table 2 showed a Multiple Regression Analysis of the relative contribution of conflict level on teachers' productivity. The result revealed that conflict level (ß = -0.162, P < 0.05) was found to be significantly related to teachers' productivity. This means that conflict level has the propensity to influence teachers' productivity either positively or negatively in secondary schools.

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DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Conflict level is the intensity at which conflict operates in an organisation. This is a reflection of the dynamic nature of conflict in the sense that it graduates from a low level to a more complex or difficult level, where it can attract negative consequences. This study discovered that the conflict level in secondary schools ranges from low, moderate to high. This means that in some secondary schools, the conflict level was low, while it is moderate or optimum level in some other secondary schools, and it operates at high level in some other secondary schools in the state. The hypothesis raised in favour of conflict level and teachers' productivity was rejected, indicating that there is significant relationship between conflict level and teachers' productivity. This implies that the level at which conflict is operating in schools can influence teachers' productivity. Therefore, teachers' productivity can be positively influenced in secondary schools where conflict level was at moderate level, while schools with a low and high conflict levels will experience negative impact on teachers' productivity. These findings are in agreement with the positions of Booker (1990), Hagel and Brown (2005), Akpan, Okey and Esirah (2006). Booker (1990) discovered that high level of interpersonal conflict is negatively related to the organisational commitment of teachers. In the same vein, Hagel and Brown (2005) posited that certain level of conflict is beneficial as it serves as a powerful motivator to improve performance and satisfaction. This implies that when conflict is operating at a moderate or optimum level, performance and satisfaction will rise. Akpan, Okey and Esirah (2006) indicated that there is increased productivity and school effectiveness in institutions with moderate level of organisational conflict. On the relative contribution of conflict level to teachers' productivity, it was discovered that conflict level was found to be significantly related to teachers' productivity. This implies that depending at the level at which conflict is operating in secondary school can positively or negative influence teachers' productivity. The assertions of Iravo (n.d), Schermerhon (2001) and Peretomode and Peretomode (2008) validated the findings of this study. Iravo (n.d) reported that when conflict level is too high, performance suffers. Schermerhorn (2001) posited that too much conflict is distracting and interferes with other more task-relevant activities; too little conflict may promote competency and the loss of creative, high performance edge. These findings revealed that conflict level has the potential to either affect teachers' productivity positively (that is, with a moderate conflict level) or negatively (that is, with a low and high levels of conflict) in the school.

CONCLUSION

Conflict has been found to be associated with sharp differences that often emanate from interpersonal or intergroup relationship, which can be based on ideas, actions, interest, or goals. When these differences are magnified beyond the acceptable limit between or among parties, conflict will emerge, and may escalate and becomes devastating, if not properly addressed. In the school, conflict is an inevitable element because of the heterogamous identity of the system. Therefore, being a constant phenomenon in the school system, conflict is a testimony to the fact that the system is alive and evolving. However, the problem is based on how it is contained to ensure that it operates within the acceptable margin for effective and efficient performance of the system. The outcomes in school systems depend on the level of conflict operating in a particular school. At low and high conflict levels, the school will experience negative outcomes, which will

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affect the teachers' productivity and consequently impact adversely on the learning outcomes of students. Also, when conflict is operating at a moderate or optimum level, positive outcomes will be experienced in the school, because the required energies needed to stimulate innovation and creativity are provided for operations. At such (optimal) level, teachers' productivity and students' academic performance will be enhanced, because of the conduciveness of the school climate to teaching and learning, which ultimately will improve the quality of education. At moderate or optimum conflict level, school environment will be positively galvanised to pave way for peace, mutual understanding, cooperation, and amicable resolution of conflict.

Based on the findings of the study, it is imperative to make the following recommendations:
(i)   Teachers and school administrators especially at the secondary school level should as a matter of compulsion be exposed to trainings in peace and conflict management in order to enhance their social relationships for optimum performance.
(ii)   School administrators as well as teachers should strive to ensure that moderate or optimum conflict level is allowed to operate in their schools for the attainment of positive outcomes.
(iii)   Early warning system should be mounted in schools to enable them determine the existing conflict level in order to understand what to do in terms of ensuring that appropriate conflict level exist in schools for increased performance.
(iv)   Conflict causative factors should be ascertained in order to know how to deal with them, so that conflict occurrences can be reduced to allow for moderation in the volume of conflict incidences in secondary schools.

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