

PRINCIPALS' CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS' COMMITMENT TO WORK AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UPPER BASIC SCHOOLS IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

By

Onuh, Alfa Matthew PhD

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education,
University of Abuja, Nigeria
onuhmatthew@ymail.com

Abstract

This study examined the perceived influence of principals' conflict management strategies on teachers' commitment to work and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. The study was anchored on three theoretical frameworks: the Conflict Management Theory (Max Weber, 1906), the Side-Bet Theory of Commitment (Becker, 1960), and the Theory of Academic Performance (Don Elger, 2007). A correlational survey and ex post facto research design were adopted for the study. Eleven research objectives, eleven research questions, and ten hypotheses guided the investigation. The population comprised 1,837 principals and 22,464 teachers from 1,837 Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select the sample of principals, schools, and teachers. Data were collected using the Perceived Influence of Principals' Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (PIPCMSQ), the Teachers' Commitment to Work Questionnaire (TCTWQ), and documented students' academic performance results spanning the 2014/2015 to 2023/2024 academic sessions. The instruments were validated, while reliability testing yielded coefficients of 0.72 for PIPCMSQ and 0.77 for TCTWQ. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while simple linear regression was employed to test hypotheses one to nine, and multiple regression analysis was used to test hypothesis ten. Findings revealed that principals in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria practiced avoidance, collaborative, negotiating, compromising, and competing conflict management strategies to a high extent. The results further showed a significant relationship between principals' conflict management strategies, teachers' commitment to work, and students' academic performance. The study concluded that effective conflict management strategies adopted by principals significantly enhance teachers' commitment, which in turn contributes to improved students' academic performance. It was therefore recommended that principals in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria should sustain and

strengthen effective conflict management practices to foster teacher commitment and enhance students' academic outcomes.

Keywords: Conflict Management Strategies; Teachers' Commitment to Work; Students' Academic Performance; School Leadership; Upper Basic Schools; North Central Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

It was perceived by the researcher during his teaching practice years ago that, there have been incessant complains and comments from staff, students and parents about principal's illegal collection of levies, principals delegating duties meant for senior teachers to junior teachers, principals tempering with staff privacy, communication without feedback and illegal collection of money from parents. Various accusations and complaints have also been made of cases of teachers and students involvement in vices such as fighting, lateness to school, absenteeism, disobedient to principals and teachers, loitering about during school hours, poor control of students, absenteeism, involvement in examination malpractice, leaving school before closing time, poor attendance to class and engaging into one business or the other during school hours, open quarrels between principals and their teachers, among teachers and among students and teachers.

The researcher observed that Upper Basic Schools principals in North central Nigeria has engaged on diversified approaches on general school administration which invariably breeds conflicts which lead to non-commitment of teachers to work and students' poor academic performance in Upper Basic schools in North Central Nigeria. It is on account of this, that this study sought to find answer to the question: How do perceived influence of principals' conflict management strategies, teachers' commitment to work influences students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central, Nigeria?

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate perceived influence of principals' conflict management strategies, teachers' commitment to work and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study were to

- 1) ascertain the extent to which principals adopt compromising conflict management strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria;
- 2) ascertain the extent to which principals use competing conflict management strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria;

- 3) determine the level of teachers' commitment to lesson preparation and presentation in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria;
- 4) ascertain the level of teachers' commitment to classroom management in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria;
- 5) examine the level of teachers' commitment to students' evaluation and feedback in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria;
- 6) investigate the level of teachers' commitment to the use of instructional materials in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria;
- 7) find out the trend in students' academic performance from 2014/2015 to 2023/2024 academic sessions in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. To what extent do principals' adoption of compromising conflict management strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?
2. To what extent do principals use competing conflict management strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?
3. What is the level of teachers' commitment to lesson preparation and presentation in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?
4. What is the level of teachers' commitment to classroom management in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?
5. What is the level of teachers' commitment to students' evaluation and feedback in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?
6. What is the level of teachers' commitment to the use of instructional materials in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?
7. What is the trend in students' academic performance from 2014/2015 to 2023/2024 academic sessions in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?

1.5 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H01: There is no significant relationship between principals' competing conflict management strategy and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools I North Central Nigeria

H02: There is no significant relationship between teachers' lesson preparation and presentation and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

H03: There is no significant relationship between teachers' classroom management and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

H04: There is no significant relationship between teachers' evaluation of students and feedback and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

H05: There is no significant relationship between teachers' use of instructional materials and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

H050: There is no significant inter-relationship among principals' conflict management strategies, teachers' commitment to work and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

2.0 Method

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational survey and ex post facto research design. The correlational survey design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to determine the nature and strength of relationships among principals' conflict management strategies, teachers' commitment to work, and students' academic performance. According to Cheprasov (2018), a correlational survey design seeks to establish the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them.

The ex post facto design was also relevant since students' academic performance data already existed and could not be manipulated by the researcher. In this study, principals' conflict management strategies and teachers' commitment to work served as the independent variables, while students' academic performance was the dependent variable. It was assumed that variations in students' academic performance depended on the conflict management strategies adopted by principals and the level of teachers' commitment to work in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 1,837 principals and 22,464 teachers in 1,837 Upper Basic Schools across the seven states of North Central Nigeria, namely Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

Table 1 presents the distribution of Upper Basic Schools, principals, and teachers in the study area.

(Table retained as presented in the original work)

-Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for schools and principals was determined using 10% of the population, as suggested by Allen (2017), who noted that a 10% sample is adequate when the population is manageable. The sample size for teachers was determined using Research Advisor (2006) at a 95% confidence level

Consequently, the sample consisted of 41 principals and 357 teachers drawn from 41 Upper Basic Schools across nine Educational Zones in three states (Kogi, Nasarawa, and Niger States) in North Central Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the study. First, purposive sampling was used to select Kogi, Nasarawa, and Niger States due to their historical, administrative, and educational similarities within the region. Second, stratified sampling was employed to cluster Upper Basic Schools according to Educational Zones, after which three Educational Zones were randomly selected from each of the three states.

Third, proportionate sampling technique was used to allocate the sample according to the population of schools and teachers in each state. Finally, simple random sampling through balloting was used to select principals and teachers from the sampled schools to ensure fair representation and even distribution of respondents.

Table 2 shows the sample size distribution of schools, principals, and teachers.

(Table retained as presented in the original work)

Instrumentation

Three researcher-developed instruments were used for data collection:

1. Perceived Influence of Principals' Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (PIPCMSQ)

This instrument was administered to teachers and consisted of 30 items divided into five sections. Items in Section A were rated on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree

(2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Sections B to E were rated using a 4-point extent scale of High Extent (4), Moderate Extent (3), Low Extent (2), and Very Low Extent (1).

2. Teachers' Commitment to Work Questionnaire (TCWQ)

This instrument was administered to principals and contained 20 items organized into four sections. Responses were rated on a 4-point scale of High Level (4), Moderate Level (3), Low Level (2), and Very Low Level (1).

3. Students' Academic Performance Proforma

This checklist was used to collect students' Upper Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results over a 10-year period (2014/2015–2023/2024 academic sessions) Academic performance was categorized using a -point rating scale as follows:

- Five credits including Mathematics and English Language = 4
- Five credits with either Mathematics or English Language = 3
- Five credits without Mathematics and English Language = 2
- Less than five credits = 1

The decision rule for performance interpretation was:

- 3.50–4.00 = Very good performance
- 2.50–3.49 = Good performance
- 1.50–2.49 = Poor performance
- 0.00–1.49 = Very poor performance

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The face and content validity of the PIPCMSQ and TCWQ were established by the researcher's supervisors and two senior lecturers in the Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. Their assessments focused on clarity, relevance, appropriateness, and adequacy of the items. Suggested corrections were incorporated into the final versions of the instruments. The Students' Academic Performance Proforma did not require validation as it was based on standardized examination results.

To determine reliability, a pilot study was conducted using 2 principals and 20 teachers from two Upper Basic Schools in FCT, Abuja, which were excluded from the main study. The split-half method was employed, and data were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). Reliability coefficients of 0.72 for PIPCMSQ and 0.77 for TCWQ were obtained, indicating that the instruments were reliable for the study. This conforms with Olayola

(2007), who stated that reliability coefficients of 0.50 and above are acceptable for educational research.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Head of the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. This letter was presented to the State Secondary School Education Boards, which granted permission for data collection. Copies of the approval letters were submitted to the principals of the sampled schools.

The researcher, with the assistance of trained research assistants, administered the questionnaires using the on-the-spot delivery and retrieval method to ensure a high response rate. Respondents who could not complete the questionnaires immediately were given two days to do so. The Students' Academic Performance Proforma was used to extract BECE results for the period of 2014/2015 to 2023/2024 academic sessions.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Simple linear regression analysis was employed to test hypotheses one to nine, while multiple regression analysis was used to test hypothesis ten at a 0.05 level of significance. For decision-making on research questions, a mean score of 2.50 and above indicated agreement, while a mean score below 2.50 indicated disagreement. Standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity of respondents' responses. For hypothesis testing, a null hypothesis was rejected if the calculated value was equal to or greater than the critical value; otherwise, it was accepted.

3.0 Result

Research Question 1: To what extent do principals adopt compromising conflict management strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Scores on the Extent of Adoption of Compromising Conflict Management Strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

N = 357

S/N	Compromising	HE	ME	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	Decision
21	Principal offers flexible time-off arrangement, particularly in response to teacher's personal or family needs.	271	86	0	0	3.20	0.40	High Extent
22	Principal ensures that teachers are given opportunities for development despite their busy schedules	288	69	0	0	3.81	0.40	High Extent
23	Principal are not fair in allocating responsibility to teachers based on qualification	288	69	0	0	3.81	0.40	High Extent
24	Principal do not implement activities based on school plans	178	135	44	0	3.38	0.90	High Extent
25.	Principal do not create a culture of collaboration where teachers feel their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.	288	69	0	0	3.81	0.40	High Extent
						3.60	0.50	High Extent

Sectional Mean

Table 1 showed the mean scores on the extent to which principals use compromising conflict management strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It was observed from the table that a sectional mean score of 3.60 was obtained (greater than 2.50 mid-point). This showed that principals use compromising conflict management strategy to a high extent in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

Research Question 2: To what extent do principals use competing conflict management strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Scores on the extent of Use of Competing Conflict Management Strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

N = 357

S/N	Competing	HE	ME	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	Decision
26	Principal prioritizes finding a solution that benefits all parties involved.	288	69	0	0	0.81	0.40	High Extent
27	Principal has developed a culture for conflict management in the school.	288	69	0	0	3.81	0.40	High Extent
28	Principal prioritizes reducing costs and minimizing disruptions	178	35	144	0	3.04	1.17	High Extent
29	Principal adopts a unique approach to conflict management that makes the school outstanding from others.	253	69	135	0	2.92	.96	High Extent
30	Principals' demonstrates strong leadership instilling confidence among teachers.	253	104	0	0	3.71	0.46	High extent
Sectional Mean						2.86	0.68	High Extent

Table 2 showed the mean scores on the extent to which principals use competing conflict management strategy in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It was observed from the table that a sectional mean score of 2.86 was obtained (greater than 2.50 mid-point). This showed that principals use competing conflict management strategy to a high extent in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

Research Question 3: What is the level of teachers' commitment to lesson preparation and presentation in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Scores on the Level of Teachers' Commitment to Lesson Preparation and Presentation in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. N= 41

S/N		VHL	ML	LL	VLL	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Teachers plan their lessons well to deliver subject content appropriately	12	26	3	0	3.22	0.57	High Level
2	Teachers prepare adequate notes on the subject matter for students	15	22	4	0	3.27	0.63	High Level
3	Teachers prepare instructional material that are relevant to the subject matter	10	27	3	1	3.12	0.64	Low Level
4	Teachers present lessons with adequate literature in subject matter for students	21	10	6	4	3.17	1.02	High Level
5	Teachers diversifying their teaching methods that is appropriate for the subject matter	6	29	3	3	2.85	0.91	High Level
Sectional Mean					3.13	0.69		High Extent

Table 3 showed the mean scores on the extent to which teachers' commitment to lesson preparation and presentation in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It was observed from the table that a sectional mean score of 3.13 was obtained (greater than 2.50 mid-point). This showed that there is high level of teachers' commitment to lesson preparation and presentation in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Question 4: What is the level of teachers' commitment to class room management in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean Scores on the Level of Teachers' Commitment to Classroom Management in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

N = 41

S/N	Items	VHL	ML	LL	VLL	Mean	SD	Decision
6	Teachers enforce classroom discipline among students	6	29	3	3	2.93	0.72	High Level
7	Teachers ensure that students' seats are well arranged to avoid distraction during lesson periods	6	24	6	5	2.76	0.86	High Level
8	Teachers ensure regular use of class register to monitor students' attendance.	6	29	3	3	2.93	0.72	High Level
9	Teachers make provision for adequate and workable timetable for classroom activities	26	6	6	3	3.34	0.99	High Level
10	Teachers regularly document class work activities in subject diaries and continuous assessment sheets	20	10	6	5	3.12	1.10	High Level
Sectional Mean						3.02	0.88	High Level

Table 4 showed the mean scores on the level of teachers' commitment to classroom management in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It was observed from the table that a sectional mean score of 3.02 was obtained (greater than 2.50 mid-point). This showed that there is high level of teachers' commitment to classroom management in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

Research Question 5: What is the level of teachers' commitment to students' evaluation and feedback in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 5: Mean Scores on the Level of Teachers' Commitment to Students' Evaluation and Feedback in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

N = 41

S/N	Teachers' Commitment to Students Evaluation and Feedback	V HL	ML	LL	VLL	Mean	SD	Decision
11	Teachers provides feedback for students on their assignments and assessment	6	29	3	3	2.93	0.72	High Level
12	Teachers evaluation methods are fair and unbiased	12	26	3	0	3.22	0.57	High Level
13	Teacher uses results of students evaluation to inform teaching practices	15	22	4	0	2.76	1.22	High Level
14	Teacher is committed to continuously improving evaluation and feedback practices to improve students' learning	10	27	3	1	3.27	0.66	High Level
Sectional Mean					3.05	0.79		High Level

Table 5 showed the mean scores on the level of teachers' commitment to students' evaluation and feedback in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It was observed from the table that a sectional mean score of 3.05 was obtained (greater than 2.50 mid-point). This showed that there is high level of teachers' commitment to students' evaluation and feedback in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Question 6: What is the level of teachers' commitment to the use of instructional materials in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 6: Mean Scores on the Level of Teachers' Commitment to the Use of Instructional Materials in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

N = 41

S/N	Teachers' Commitment to the Use of Instructional Materials	VHL	ML	LL	VLL	Mean	SD	Decision
15	Teacher is regularly committed to the use of instructional materials in teaching practices	21	10	6	4	3.12	0.64	High Level
16	Teacher participates in professional development activities to improve use of instructional materials	11	16	11	3	3.17	1.02	Very Level
17	Teacher selects instructional materials that align with the curriculum and learning objectives	6	29	3	3	2.85	0.91	High Level
18	Teacher is committed to overcoming the challenges faced in using instructional materials effectively	6	24	6	5	3.17	0.99	High Level
19	Teachers make use of instructional materials	6	29	3	3	2.93	0.72	High level

such as television and computers,

20	Teachers make use of real objects to explain subject matter	26	6	6	3	2.93	0.72	High level
	Sectional Mean					3.03	0.82	High Level

Table 6 showed the mean scores on the level of teachers' commitment to the use of instructional materials in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It was observed from the table that a sectional mean score of 3.03 was obtained (greater than 2.50 mid-point). This showed that there is high level of teachers' commitment to the use of instructional materials in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Question 7: To what is the trend in students' academic performance from 2014/2015 to 2023/2024 academic sessions in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 7: Trend in Students' Academic Performance from 2014/2015 to 2023/2024 Academic Sessions in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

Year	No. of candidates	4	3	2	1	Mean	SD	Decision
2014/2015	10680	6976	2112	920	672	3.44	0.92	Good Performance
2015/2016	6656	4162	1001	843	650	3.30	0.87	Good Performance
2016/2017	7331	3507	1824	1644	356	3.16	0.82	Good Performance
2017/2018	11926	7904	701	822	2499	3.18	0.83	Good Performance
2018/2019	11227	6214	2113	1122	1778	2.58	0.71	Fair Performance
2019/2020	12533	6746	2114	1103	2570	3.04	0.79	Good Performance

2020/2021	12855	7310	2130	1112	2303	3.12	0.81	Good Performance
2021/2022	9929	6593	1014	1225	1097	3.22	0.84	Good Performance
2022/2023	8940	3898	2223	1192	1627	2.94	0.76	Good Performance
2023/2024	12799	7398	2812	1112	1477	3.26	0.86	Good Performance
Total	104876	60708	18044	11095	15029			
Percentage	100	57.89%	17.21%	10.58%	14.32%			

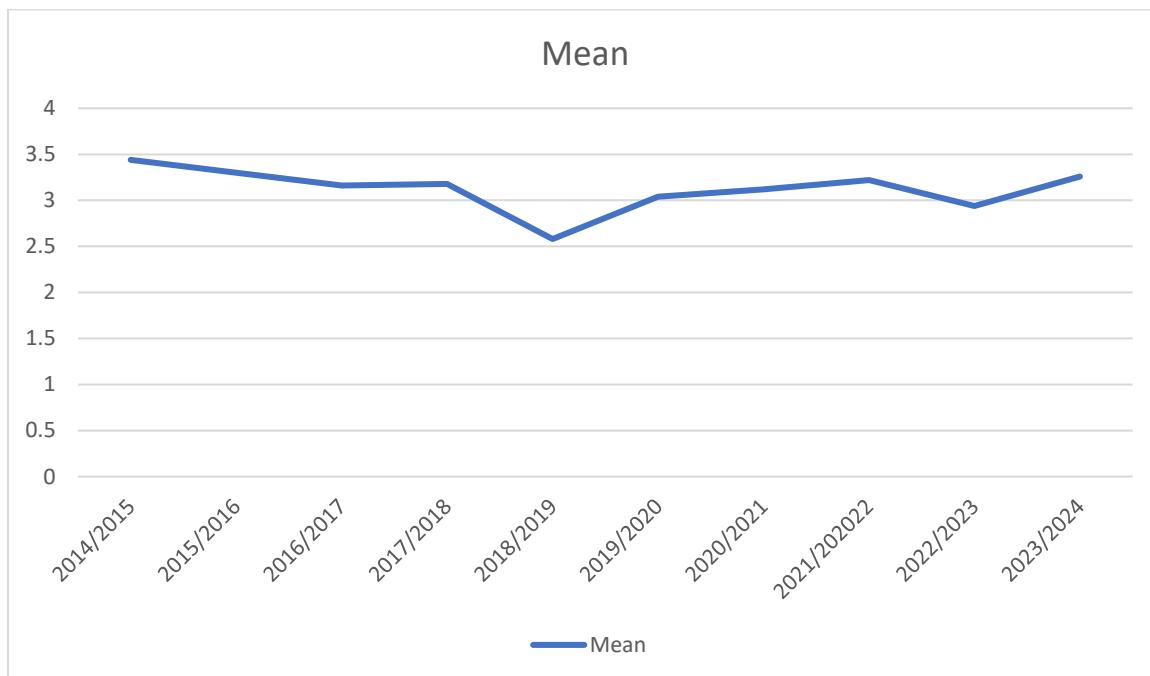


Figure 1: Trend in Students' Academic Performance from 2014/2015 to 2023/2024

Table 13 and figure 1 above indicated the trend in students' performance in upper basic schools

in the North Central Nigeria from 2014/2015 to 2023/2024 academic sessions. Results showed that during the 2014/2015 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 3.44 and standard deviation of 0.92.

As for the 2015/2016 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 3.30 and standard deviation of 0.87.

During the 2016/2017 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 3.16 and standard deviation of 0.82.

During the 2017/2018 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 3.18 and standard deviation of 0.83.

During the 2018/2019 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was moderately high with a mean of 2.58 and standard deviation of 0.71.

As for the 2019/2020 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 3.04 and standard deviation of 0.70.

During the 2020/2021 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 3.12 and standard deviation of 0.81.

During the 2021/2022 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 3.22 and standard deviation of 0.84.

As for the 2022/2023 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 2.94 and standard deviation of 0.76.

Finally, during the 2023/2024 sessions, majority of the students passed and the performance was high with a mean of 3.26 and standard deviation of 0.86.

3.1 Discussion of Findings

Principals use compromising conflict management strategy to a high extent in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It indicated there was a significant relationship between principals' competing conflict management strategies and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. This findings is in agreement with those of Ayandele, Ogosim and Andem (2022) which showed significant relationship between conflict management strategies such as competing and the performance of tertiary institutions in South-South Nigeria. Findings on the current and previous findings are similar based on the fact that adopting competing strategy in conflict management may hamper the achievement of learners especially if one of the conflicting party is favoured against another. This explains why Saiti (2015) states that school circumstances in pragmatic terms can be uncertain; school associates,

especially principals, should comprehend the underlying foundations of any resistance. Furthermore, such resistance should be challenged adequately in a suitable method to establish a conducive educational environment.

It indicated that principals use competing conflict management strategy to a high extent in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. However, indicated there was a significant relationship between less on plan preparation. Findings of the study is similar to that of Bolarinwa et al (2020) revealed that the level of secondary school student academic performance was relatively moderate; there was significant relationship between teachers' preparedness for lesson and secondary school student academic performance. Hence, the study showed that teachers' preparedness for lesson had influence on secondary school student academic performance. Findings from the previous and current studies are similar due to the fact that lesson plan preparation is an essential aspect of teaching which is required for improved academic achievement.

It indicated there was high level of teachers' commitment to lesson preparation and presentation in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' classroom management and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. Similar Findings from the study of Hakimana (2016) showed there is significant effect of classroom management on students' learning and academic achievement in public secondary schools in the Nanaygabe District. Similarly, findings from the study of Omoruyi and Aigbediom (2015) indicated significant of classroom management strategies on students' academic performance in a subset of public senior secondary schools in the Bwari Area Council in Abuja. The reasons in the similarity of the previous studies and current study is because effective management of classrooms during instructional delivery enhances students learning outcomes in terms of students' academic achievement.

It indicated there was high level of teachers' commitment to classroom management in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. However, it indicated there was a significant relationship between teachers' evaluation of students and feedback and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. Findings from the study of Hamza and Maharma (2022) showed significant relationship between teachers' feedback and students' academic achievement in Jordan. Furthermore, findings from the study of Erin (2016) which examined teacher evaluation ratings and students' academic achievement in Chicago Metropolitan. Findings from the study showed significant relationship between teacher evaluation ratings and students' academic achievement in Chicago Metropolitan. Sadia, Darakhshan, and Zaeeda, (2024) investigated the effect of lesson planning on the performance of elementary school students. Findings from their study showed there was a significant effect of lesson planning on the performance of elementary school students.

It showed there was high level of teachers' commitment to students' evaluation and feedback in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It indicated there was a significant relationship between instructional materials and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. Similarly, Oladejo et al (2011) conducted a study on the effect of using standardized and improvised instructional materials on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Physics Students in Oyo State, Nigeria. Findings from the study showed there was significant effect of using standardized and improvised instructional materials on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Physics Students in Oyo State, Nigeria. in the same vein , the study of Arumuru and Oghenevwogaga (2024) which explored the impact of instructional resources on academic achievement: a study of library and information science postgraduates in Nigeria indicated that there was significant impact of instructional resources on academic achievement. Hence, the mobilization of instructional materials by teachers for effective teaching is crucial in ascertaining the level of students' academic achievement in school

It indicated there was high level of teachers' commitment to the use of instructional materials in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. It indicated there was a significant inter-relationship among principals' conflict management strategies, teachers' commitment to work and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. Similarly, Manga (2023) examined school principals' conflict management strategies as a determinant of teachers' job effectiveness in Catholic Secondary Schools in the Wouri Division, Littoral Region of Cameroon and findings indicated from the study that principals' conflict management strategies affect teachers' job effectiveness in Catholic Secondary Schools in the Wouri Division, Littoral Region of Cameroon. In further agreement to the current study, Lukeman (2023) investigated conflict management and teachers job performance in selected senior secondary schools in Kogi State and findings from the study indicated there was significant relationship between conflict management and teachers job performance in selected senior secondary schools in Kogi State. Thus based on the similarities of the previous and current, the strategies adopted by principals in managing conflicts in upper basic secondary schools in the North Central Zone is crucial in ascertaining the work commitment of teachers and to a large extent determines students' academic performance

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that Principals use compromising conflict management strategy to a high extent in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was a significant relationship between principals' compromising conflict management strategies and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. Principals adopt competing conflict management strategy to a high extent in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was a significant relationship between principals' competing conflict management strategies and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was high

level of teachers' commitment to lesson preparation and presentation in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was a significant relationship between lesson preparation and presentation and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was high level of teachers' commitment to classroom management in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was a significant relationship between teachers' classroom management and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was high level of teachers' commitment to students' evaluation and feedback in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was a significant relationship between teachers' evaluation of students and feedback on academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was high level of teachers' commitment to the use of instructional materials in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was a significant relationship between teachers' use of instructional materials and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria, The trend in students' academic performance was high from 2014/2015 to 2023/2024 academic sessions in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria. There was a significant inter-relationship among principals' conflict management strategies, teachers' commitment to work and students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) The use of competing conflict management strategy should be reviewed as it works towards achieving individual or personality objectives at the expense of others and capable of undermining teacher work commitment and improving students' academic performance.
- 2) There should be periodic supervision of teachers regarding lesson plan preparation and presentation in order to enhance students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria.
- 3) Teachers should be trained periodically through workshops in order to equip them on how they can effectively manage classrooms and enhance students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria.
- 4) There should be periodic teachers' evaluation of students and feedback on academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria.
- 5) Instructional materials should be adequately provided for teachers in order to enhance students' academic performance in Upper Basic Schools in North Central Nigeria,
- 6) Principals' should carefully and cautiously employ the use of conflict management strategies that can help improve teacher commitment to work and improve students' academic performance.

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