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DIFFERENCES IN DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UDI EDUCATION ZONE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated differences in demographic variables on conflict management styles of special education sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi education. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study was fifty four sports administrators and three sports co-ordinators in Udi Education Zone. All the fifty seven (57) subjects were used for the study. A close ended questionnaire was used for data collection. Frequency and percentages were used to answer the research questions while Chi-square was used to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. It was found out that gender and marital status make no difference in the conflict management styles of sports administrators in Udi Education Zone. The findings showed that gender and marital status make no significant differences in conflict management styles of sports administrators in Udi Education Zone. It was recommended among others that Government should provide adequate resources such as necessary sports facilities and equipment, qualified physical education teachers and other necessary conditions in school sports to avoid frequent conflict emanating from such inadequacies.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflict is as old as mankind and a general phenomenon to be encountered at all level of human relationship. Conflict is a common occurrence of life which does not arise in a social vacuum but within people and among people in an organization. It can occur within a person, between individuals or groups or organizations. According to Oputa (2003) society is closely bound up with conflict. Within a society we find a mass of struggles and oppositions everywhere and at every level. This is to say that all social organization including sports have conflict potentials since collection of people with diverse personalities are involved. Conflict is perceived by many scholars in different ways. In the words of Akinwomi (2005), the word conflict has its root in the Latin word "Conflicts" meaning striking together. According to Imhabekhai and Owen-Ibie (2000) conflict is the interaction or an expressed struggle between two independent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce or limited resources and interference from the other party in achieving their goals. In this study conflict is defined as any form of disagreement

which disrupts the goals of secondary school sports Sport according to Yanda (2007) could be defined as organized, institutionalized, competitive games governed by rules and regulations. According to Omolawon (2013) sports is described as those physical activities engaged in during recreation or competition which have direct effects on the mental, emotional, organic, and social development of an individual In this study, sports can be defined as activities undertaken in the form of athletics; recreational or competitive, organized by sports administrator. Special Education Sports administrator is defined in this study as a professional or non-professional person, a staff of the school, who has the right and responsibility to organize sports for the members of the school (Ajuiwe, 1987). This is however the function of game master/mistress and physical educators in secondary schools. Hence, sports administrator is used interchangeably with game masters/mistresses or physical educators in this study. Ojeme (2007) asserted that strong emotion and tensions are common features of sports and maintained that these may breed conflict among contestants, officials, organizers and supporters during sports administration. Administration according to Anyanlaja (2006) is seen as functions and responsibilities essential to the achievement of established goals through associated efforts.

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When this is applied to sports in schools it may be referred to as school sports administration. School sports administration according to Fasan (2000) involves the process of coordinating planned actions, programmes and activities of school sports including the personnel with the sole aim of accomplishing the goals of the programme. In this study, school sports administration is defined as a process of planning, organizing, coordinating and evaluating activities and resources in intramural sport in secondary schools. Intramural sports according to National Association for Spots and Physical Education (2001) refer to sports competition that are organized within an institution for voluntary participation by all the students irrespective of age, gender, ability level among others. This can be achieved through proper management.

Management according to Adesina (1990) is the effective organization and mobilization of human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in the system. In school situation it is the duty of the sports administrator to organize sports for students and staff in the school, share duties among other staff members during sports, schedule activities, allocate available materials and so on. In the process of carrying out these duties conflict may erupt. Since conflict cannot be eliminated completely in any organization including sports in secondary schools, even in Udi education zone, there is therefore the need for conflict management. Mhehe (1997) stated that conflict management entails the ability to handle everyday situations that involve differences in opinion. Conflict management is the process by which approaches and techniques are introduced in an organization to control conflicts (Mukoro & Mukoro, 2006). Conflict management styles according to Rahim (2002) are a result of one's concern for accomplishing one's goal and one's concern about the other party accomplishing his or her goal. Based on these dimensions, research provides five common styles of managing conflict which include, Integrating (Collaborating), Obliging (Accommodating), Dominating (Competing), Avoiding and Compromising.

Integrating involves working together through conflict differences and solving problems so that everyone wins. Obliging involves minimizing or suppressing real or perceived differences while focusing on the others' views of the situation. Dominating involves the use of coerciveness and other forms of power to dominate other people or groups in order to pressurize them in accepting one's own view of the situation. When avoiding, a party fails to satisfy his or her own concern as well as the concern of the other party. Lastly, Compromising involves give- and- take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision (Rahim, 2002). These styles are used differently by individuals. This difference in approach might be due to a variety of factors such as culture, personalities, type of conflict and demographics of those involved (Kozan, 1997). However researches show that multiple variables make some differences on preferred conflict management style of administrators (Pinto & Ferrer, 2002; Poloski & Sontor, 2009). Other researches show that conflict management in relation to demographic variables has been overlooked. (McKenna and Recharadson, 1995 & Cetin and Hacifazlioglu, 2004). They maintained that demographic variables studied have mostly involved gender and have yielded inconsistent results. Based

on different findings related with conflict management and demographic variables, this study therefore aims to investigate whether the conflict management styles of sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi Education zone differ according to gender and marital status

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. what are the gender differences in conflict management styles of special education sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi Education Zone?
2. what differences do marital status make in the conflict management styles of special education sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi Education Zone?

Hypotheses

The following Hypotheses are formulated to guide the study and they will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles of male and female special education sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi Education Zone.
2. There is no significant difference in conflict management styles of special education sports administrators according to marital status.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design for this study was the descriptive survey. According to Ali (2006), descriptive survey is mainly concerned with describing events as they are, without any manipulation of what caused the event or what is being observed. The population for the study comprise of fifty-four (54) special education sports administrator who are also the physical educators from the fifty-one secondary schools in Udi Education Zone. (Sports Unit, Enugu State Post-Primary School Management Board, 2012). The study also involved three (3) key informants who included the zonal sports coordinator and the two (2) sports unit coordinators in Udi and Ezeagu LGAs respectively, making a total population of fifty seven (57) subjects. All the fifty-four sports administrators and the three (3) sports coordinators were used in this study. This is in line with the assertion by Udo (2004) that if the population under investigation is small, it is appropriate to use the entire population. A close-ended questionnaire was the instrument used in this study. The instrument was named Conflict Management Styles of Sports Administrators Questionnaire (COMSSAQ). The face validity of the instrument was established by three experts in the Department of Health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, the split half method was used. The instrument was administered to twenty secondary schools sports administrators in Obollo Education Zone. The correlation coefficient of the instrument was established using Pearson product moment (r). The questionnaire had reliability coefficient of .89 and was considered reliable for use in the present study. This is based on the suggestion by Okpala and

Table 1. Percentage adoption of Conflict Management Styles by Special Education Sport Administrators based on Gender (n = 57)

S/N	Items	Responses			
		M(N = 49)		F(N = 8)	
		F	%	F	%
	Collaborating Style				
5	try to investigate an issue with the other party to find out solution acceptable to both parties.	14	26.6	6	75.0
6	try to reconcile their differences and look for a solution where everyone is satisfied.	15	30.6	6	75.0
7	try to preserve long lasting relationship with parties in conflict.	17	34.7	5	62.5
8	try to identify the underlying concern of all parties in conflict and to find alternative which meets both sets of concerns.	17	34.7	6	75.0
9	try to show openness to each party and create a conducive environment for exchange of information.	13	26.5	6	75.0
	Cluster Percentage (%)		30.62		72.5
	Accommodating Style				
10	try to satisfy the wish of the other party in conflict	12	24.5	4	50.0
11	always accept the wishes of the other party and overlook the differences in order to maintain harmony.	12	24.5	4	50.0
12	try to soothe the other person's feeling in order to preserve relationship.	11	22.4	4	50.0
13	always yield to the other person's point of view.	11	22.4	4	50.0
14	try to give up my own wants to meet the other party's desires.	9	18.4	4	50.0
	Cluster Percentage (%)		22.44		50.0
	Competing Style				
15	try to argue my case with others	35	71.4	4	50.0
16	using formal authority in order to assert my position with others.	34	69.4	3	37.5
17	make sure of winning through any possible means irrespective of who is right or wrong.	17	34.7	5	62.5
18	desire to satisfy my own interest.	34	69.4	4	50.0
19	Force others to accept my own point of view.	34	69.4	3	37.5
	Cluster Percentage (%)		62.9		47.5
	Avoidance Style				
20	always withdraw from conflict situation with the hope that disagreement will eventually disappear.	15	30.6	0	0.0
21	Always postpone an issue until later or better time.	14	28.6	1	12.5
22	always pretend as though there was no conflict in order not to be involved.	14	28.6	2	25.0
23	try to avoid unpleasantness to myself.	16	32.7	2	25.0
24	always choose a solution where neither of the parties wins.	14	28.6	2	25.0
	Cluster Percentage (%)		29.8		17.5
	Compromising Style				
25	negotiate with the other party so that compromise may be reached.	25	51.0	5	62.5
26	open to any bargaining process that leads to a compromise	31	63.3	4	50.0
27	try to find a fair combination of gain and losses for both parties.	28	59.2	5	62.5
28	seek for a middle ground in solving conflict where both parties would give something in order to take something.	21	42.9	5	62.5
29	always go for a solution where both parties give up something to reach a mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties.	16	32.7	5	62.5
	Cluster Percentage (%)		49.8		60.0

ogbazi (1994) that if the correlation co-efficient is up to .60 and above, the instrument should be considered reliable for use. The sports coordinator introduced the researchers to the sports administrators during one of their zonal meetings and at the same time solicited for their cooperation. The researchers personally administered the copies of questionnaire to the sports administrators of the schools and collected them back immediately in order to ensure high return rate. Fifty seven (57) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the subjects and there was a return rate of 100%. The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to compute and analyze the data. Frequency and percentages were used to answer the various research questions. The cumulative percentages were calculated and used in taking decisions on the research questions. The Chi-square statistic was employed to test the various hypotheses in this study at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that greater number of the female special education sports administrators try to investigate an issue with the other party to find out solution acceptable to both parties (males = 26.6% < female = 75.0%), try to reconcile their

differences and look for solution where everyone is satisfied (male = 30.6 < female = 75.0%), try to preserve long lasting relationship with parties in conflict (male = 34.7 < female = 62.5%), and try to identify the underlying concern of all parties in conflict and find alternative which meets both sets of concern. The table also shows that greater number of the female than the males try to show openness to each party and create a conducive environment for exchange of information (male = 26.6% < female = 75.0%). Table 1 again shows that majority of the female sports administrators try to satisfy the wish of the other party in conflict; and always accept the wishes of the other party and overlook the differences in order to maintain harmony (male = 24.5% < female = 50.0%) respectively; majority of the females also indicated that they try to soothe the other person's feeling in order to preserve relationship; and always yield to the other person's point of view (male = 22.4% < female = 50.0%) respectively. Greater number of the females also admitted that they try to give up their own wants to meet the other party's desire (male = 18.4% < female = 50.0%). The table also show that higher percentages of male (71.4%) than female (50.0%) sports administrators try to argue their case with others while majority of the males use formal authority in order to assert their position with others; and force others to accept their own point of view (male = 69.4% > female = 37.5%) respectively.

Table 2. Percentage adoption of Conflict Management Styles by Special Education Sport Administrators based on Marital Status (n = 57)

S/N	Items	Responses			
		Collaborating Style		Married (N = 36)	
		Single(N = 21)		Married (N = 36)	
		F	%	F	%
5	try to investigate an issue with the other party to find out solution acceptable to both parties.	11	52.4	9	25.0
6	try to reconcile their differences and look for a solution where everyone is satisfied.	12	57.1	9	25.0
7	try to preserve long lasting relationship with parties in conflict.	12	57.1	10	27.8
8	try to identify the underlying concern of all parties in conflict and to find alternative which meets both sets of concerns.	12	57.1	11	30.6
9	try to show openness to each party and create a conducive environment for exchange of information.	9	42.9	7	19.4
	Cluster Percentage (%)		53.32		25.56
	Accommodating Style				
10	try to satisfy the wish of the other party in conflict	8	38.1	8	22.2
11	always accept the wishes of the other party and overlook the differences in order to maintain harmony.	10	47.6	5	13.9
12	try to soothe the other persons feeling in order to preserve relationship.	7	33.3	8	22.2
13	Always yield to the other person's point of view.	10	47.6	3	8.3
14	try to give up my own wants to meet the other party' desires.	12	57.1	27	75.0
	Cluster Percentage (%)		44.7		28.3
	Competing Style				
15	try to argue my case with others	11	52.4	26	72.2
16	using formal authority in order to assert my position with others.	11	52.4	26	72.2
17	make sure of winning through any possible means irrespective of who is right or wrong.	13	61.9	25	69.4
18	desire to satisfy my own interest.	13	61.9	24	66.9
19	force others to accept my own point of view.	4	19.0	11	30.6
	Cluster Percentage (%)		49.5		62.3
	Avoidance Style				
20	always withdraw from conflict situation with the hope that disagreement will eventually disappear.	6	28.6	9	25.0
21	always postpone an issue until later or better time.	5	23.8	11	30.6
22	always pretend as though there was no conflict in order not to be involved.	9	42.9	9	25.0
23	try to avoid unpleasantness to myself.	3	14.3	13	36.1
24	always choose a solution where neither of the parties wins.	12	57.1	18	50.0
	Cluster Percentage (%)		33.3		33.3
	Compromising Style				
25	Negotiate with the other party so that compromise may be reached.	11	52.4	24	66.7
26	open to any bargaining process that leads to a compromise	11	52.4	26	72.2
27	try to find a fair combination of gain and losses for both parties.	12	57.1	22	61.1
28	seek for a middle ground in solving conflict where both parties would give something in order to take something.	8	38.1	18	50.0
29	Always go for a solution where both parties give up something to reach a mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties.	7	33.3	14	38.9
	Cluster Percentage (%)		46.7		57.8

It is also shown in the table the slightly higher proportion of the male sports administrators than the females desire to satisfy their own interest (male = 69.4% > female = 50.0%) while majority of the females indicated that they make sure of winning through any possible means irrespective of who is right or wrong (male = 34.7% < female = 62.5%). Data in Table 1 also show that less than one third of the sports administrators indicated that they always withdraw from conflict with the hope that disagreement will eventually disappear (male = 30.6, female = 0.00%), always postpone an issue until later or better time (male = 28.6%, female = 12.5%), and always pretend as though there was no conflict in order not to be involved (male = 28.6, female = 25.06). less than one third on them also indicated that they try to avoid unpleasantness to themselves (male = 32.7%, female = 25.0%), and always choose a solution where neither of the parties wins (male = 28.6%, female = 25.0%). Table 3 again shows that higher number of female sports administrators than the male indicated that they negotiate with the other party so that compromise may be reached (male = 51.0% < females = 62.55), try to find a fair combination of gain and losses for both parties (male = 59.2% < female = 62.55) and seek for a middle ground in solving conflict where both parties would give something in order to

take something (male = 42.9% < female = 62.5%) the table also shows that majority of the female always go for a solution where both parties give-up something to reach a mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfies both parties (male = 32.7% < female = 62.5%). It is evident in the table that higher number of the male sports administrators than the female are open to any bargaining process that leads to a compromise (male = 63.3% > females = 50.0%). From the above, it could be seen that with cluster percentages 72.5%, 50%, and 60%, greater number of the female sports administrators adopt collaborating, accommodating, and compromising conflict management styles respectively while greater number of the male adopt competing style with cluster percentage of 62.9%. Table 2 above shows that majority of the respondents who are single indicated that they try to investigate an issue with the other party to find out solution acceptable to both parties (single = 52.4% > married 25.0%), try to reconcile their differences and look for a solution where everyone is satisfied, preserve long lasting relationship with parties in conflict as well as try to identify the underlying concern of all parties in conflict and find alternative which meets both sets of concern (single = 57.1% > married 25.0%, 27.8% and 30.6%) respectively. The table also shows that a greater number of the

respondents who are single than the married show openness to each party and create a conducive environment for exchange of information (single =42.9 > married = 19.4%). Data in the table revealed that slightly higher numbers of the sports administrators who are single than those who are married indicated that they try to satisfy the wish of the other party in conflict (single = 38.1% > married =22.2%), always accept the wishes of the other party and overlook the differences in order to maintain harmony (single= 47.6%> married= 13.9%) as well as try to soothe the other person's feeling in order to preserve relationship (single = 33.3%> married =22.2%). Again majority of them, who are single indicated that they always yield to the other party's point of view. (Single = 47.6% > married 8.3%). However the table shows that higher number of the respondent who are married than the single try to give up own wants to meet the other party's desire (single = 57.1%< married 75.0%).The table again indicates that higher number of the sports administrators who are married than the single indicated that they try to argue their cases with others; and use formal authority in order to assert their position with others (single = 52.% < married 72.2% respectively).

The table also show that majority of the respondents who are married indicated that they make sure of winning through any possible means irrespective of who is right or wrong; and desire to satisfy own interest (single 61.9 < married = 69.4% and 66.9% respectively). It is evident in the table that minority of the respondents force others to accept their own point of view (single= 19.0%, married = 30.6%). The table further indicated that minority of the sports administrators who are single and those who are married always withdraw from conflict situation with the hope that disagreement will eventually, disappear (single =28.6%, married =25.0%), majority of the single pretend as though there was no conflict so as not be involved (single 42.9%> married 25.0%), and always choose a solution where neither of the parties wins (single 57.1%> married =50.0%). It is evident in the table that few of the respondents always postpone issue until later or better time (single = 23.8 %, married 30.6%) as well as try to avoid unpleasantness to themselves (single 14.3% < married = 36.1%).

Data in table 2 further revealed that slightly higher number of the sports administrators who are married than those who are single indicated that they negotiate with the other party so that compromise may be reached (single = 52.4% < married =66.7%), open to any bargaining process that leads to a compromise (single = 52.4 < married =72.2%) and try to find a fair combination of gain and losses for both parties (single 57.1% < married 61.1%). The table also revealed that majority of the respondents who are married indicated that they seek for middle ground in solving conflict where both parties would give something in order to take something (single = 38.1% < married =50.0%), while few of them go for a solution where both parties give up something to reach a mutually acceptable solution which partially satisfy both parties (single = 33.3% < married= 38.9%). It can be seen from the table that with cluster percentage 53.3%, 44.7, 49.5 and 46.7 respectively, the sports administrators who are single adopt collaborating, accommodating, competing and compromising styles while the married mainly adopt competitive and compromising with cluster percentage of 62.3 and 57.8 respectively.

Table 3. Summary of Chi-square value testing the Null Hypothesis of no significant difference in conflict management styles and gender of special education sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi Education Zone

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	p-value
Chi-Square	13.965 ^a	12	.303

χ^2 cal = 13.965, P = .303 > .05

Data in Table 3 indicated a calculated χ^2 value of 13.965 at 12 degree of freedom with a p-value of .303. Since the p-value is greater than .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in conflict management styles and gender of sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi Education Zone is therefore not rejected. This implies that the adoption of conflict management styles by sports administrator were the same irrespective of gender.

Table 4. Summary of Chi-Square Value testing the Null Hypothesis of no Significant difference in Conflict Management Styles and Marital Status of Special Education Sports Administrators in Secondary Schools in Udi Education Zone

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	P-value
Chi-Square	9.980 ^a	12	.618

χ^2 cal = 9.980, P = .618 > .05

Data in Table 4 indicated a calculated χ^2 value of 9.980 at 12 degree of freedom with a p-value of .618. Since the p-value is greater than .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference in conflict management styles and marital status of sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi Education Zone is therefore not rejected. This implies that the styles adopted by single and married sports administrators were the same.

DISCUSSION

The findings in table 1 of this study showed that majority of both male and female special education sports administrators adopt competing and compromising styles and do not adopt avoidance style. This finding is interesting because the society seeing women as weaker sex feels that the conflict management styles of male and female will differ. This finding is not in consonance with Gibs and Lack (1994), Lay (1994), and Soreson and Hawkins (1995) that female administrators tend to use interpersonal; compromising method while males tend to use more aggressive competitive and confronting method when handling conflict. The variation of this finding with the previous ones may be as a result of differences in the professions of the subjects. The finding also show that majority of female administrators adopt collaborating and accommodating styles than males. This finding is in agreement with Rahim (1983) who suggest that female have more cooperative attitude than males in handling conflict situation. This finding is not expected and surprising because it contradicts with personal observation and experience of the researcher, of the present study, who observed that in secondary schools in Udi zone, male and female sports administrators use majority of the styles equally in similar situations. This finding has however cleared the

public debate as whether or not women and men have different conflict management styles. Findings in table 2 showed that majority of single and married sports administrators adopt competing and compromising styles and do not adopt avoidance style. This is not expected and consequently surprising because Poloski and Sontor (2009) found that there is the tendency of Married people using more corporative conflict management styles than unmarried people. The implication of this finding is that majority of both single and married sports administrators do not differ in the adoption of most of the styles. The variation may be attributed to their individual personalities. This will however clear the public that marriage does not change the sports administrators' approach to conflict management. People should therefore be encouraged to apply appropriate styles without sentiments.

The findings in table 3 showed that there was no significant difference in conflict management styles of male and female sports administrators. This finding is in disagreement with Rahim (1983) who reported that females have a more cooperative attitude to conflict handling than male. Also the finding is in contradiction with Soreson and Hawkins (1995) that male administrators tend to use more aggressive, competitive, confronting and assertive strategies than females. The variation of this finding with that of previous studies could be as a result of differences in their profession or other variables. However efforts should be made to encourage both male and female sports administrators to apply same approach in handling similar conflict situations. The findings of the tested hypothesis in table 4 indicated that there is no significant difference in conflict management style of sport administrators as regards marital status. The result showed that the single and married sports administrator do not differ in their adoption of the styles. This result is however not in agreement with Poloski and Sontor (2009) who suggested that there is the tendency of married people using more cooperative conflict management styles than unmarried. The variation in the findings may be as a result of differences in individual personality of the subjects. The public should therefore be cleared concerning this issue among sports administrators.

Summary and Conclusion

The study investigated differences in demographic variables on conflict management styles of special education sports administrators in secondary schools in Udi education. The variables studied were gender and marital status. Based on the findings, it was concluded that gender and marital status make no significant differences in conflict management styles of sports administrators in Udi Education Zone.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Conflict management should be introduced as a course in the department of Health and Physical Education of Nigerian Universities to train the special education sports administrators or physical educators on the various ways to handle conflict in sports setting.
2. There should be workshops and seminars organized for the special education sports administrators in various

secondary schools, to train them on the best use of these conflict management styles.

3. Government should provide adequate resources such as necessary sports facilities and equipment, qualified physical education teachers and other necessary conditions in school sports to avoid frequent conflict emanating from such inadequacies.

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