

## **Conflict Manifestations and Management in Secondary Schools in Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** *The study investigated conflict manifestations in secondary schools in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Three research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive research design to gather detailed information from the field. The target population comprised 221 principals and 3290 teachers totaling 3511 in public secondary school in Ebonyi State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 550 respondents from the three education zones of the State. An instrument titled: Conflict Manifestation in Secondary Schools (CMSS) questionnaire was developed by the researchers for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using mean (x) score statistics and standard deviation to answer the three research questions while t-test statistics were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using the statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The findings revealed great manifestations of psychological, philosophical and socio-cultural related conflicts in secondary schools as a disturbing encounter to school administration and management. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals' use of conflict manifestation styles with regard to gender and school location. The study concluded that principals timely application of reconciliation, compromise and mediation strategies might stem the tide of frequent conflict manifestations in schools.*

**Keywords:** *Conflict, Management, Psychological, Philosophical and Socio-Cultural manifestations*

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### **I. Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

In school organization, the task of providing effective leadership and peaceful set environment is dependent on personality traits and disposition of the school principal. This often comes into play through the leader's general attitude, behavior and character and the way he reacts to issues and situation in the school. School principals are often confronted with some challenges and difficulties which often and sometimes lead to conflicts which invariably affect school administration and programme either adversely or otherwise.

Conflict in this context is an opposition or competition between two or more forces arising either from the pursuit of incompatible goals or clash of rival opinion (Chaturved, 2006). Conflict is also seen as a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another (Wall and Robert, 2011). Conflict in this direction is a social problem that may result in disagreement, controversy, opposition and resistance between one person and another or group of persons in an organization as it affects the will or goals of each party. For Griffin, (1997) conflict is more observable and potentially noticed in formal bureaucratic setting than the less formal bureaucracy. Griffin (1990) reported that conflict consist of level of potentialities, dispositions and manifestations.

As a manifestation, it means that conflict has the capability of appearing in different dimensions and situations. Conflict manifestations are the different ways in which disagreements and disputes appear in an organization. Conflict shows up in many ways such as disputes, competitions, low morale, sabotage, and withholding of information (Nwite, 2007). The manifestation in school system may be psychological, philosophical and socio-cultural which by extension may be inter-personal, intra-personal, ethnocentric and group types among others (Griffin, 1997).

According to Rummel(1997), psychological conflict manifestation is concerned with a person's mind and thought. Psychologically induced conflicts are manifested through acts of aggression, temperament and needs. It may occur due to administrator's decision making which may spark off induced psychological conflict emanating from behaviour dispositions not well managed by the school administrator. Philosophically; conflicts relate to nature of existence, knowledge and thought, or how people should live. Philosophically manifested

conflict relate to determinism, inevitabilities, through show of similarity or dissimilarities, pressure and the tendency to see conflict as a process as well as disagreements in norms, beliefs, values, and tradition (Rummel, 1997). He further stressed that Socio-cultural conflict manifestation revolve around ways people relate to each other and allow their beliefs and custom to rule them. He equally stressed that its perspective of conflict manifestation is influenced by inter-personal relationship or the ways people do things or relate to beliefs and customs. Culture is a subtle but pervasive force, complex and multilayered and can affect individual's value and ethics, attitudes, assumptions and expectations, which relates to state of solidarity, antagonism or concordance of norms. Therefore, the issue is how to accommodate the socio-cultural, philosophical and psychological differences for the success of the school organization.

When conflict occurs, there is need for plans to avert the situation, but these plans may not be good enough to settle differences in the work place. Yet unresolved conflict in the work place can result to feelings of dissatisfaction, unhappiness, hopelessness, depression, and other emotions. It can result to behaviours such as physical or emotional withdrawal, resignation from jobs, and dissolution of personal relationship, aggression and even violence.

Hence, there need for conflict management mechanism to help resolve conflicts situations in school organization. It is pertinent to point out that, an environment where conflict is timely managed in school facilitates, learning process, this contributes to the achievement of educational goals (Sapru, 2009).

Conflict management is a process by which organizations like school deal with events that threatens the organization, its stakeholders, and the general public (Behfar, 2008). Conflict management in this context is a process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures by working with and through the parties involved (Gaya 2012, and Miller 2003). According to them it covers the entire area of handling conflict positively at different stages; including those efforts made to prevent conflict, by being proactive. It is expected that the deep rooted source of conflict are addressed and resolved and behavior is no longer violent nor attitude hostile (Miall, and Woodhouse, 1999; and Tosi, Rizzo and Carrol 2006). Various styles in conflict management include accommodation, compromise, collaboration, competition, withdrawal or avoidance may be applied in conflict resolution (Burton, 1990, George and James 1996, Hilgert and Leonard 1998; Hobarn 2000, Bateman and Snell 2002, Ohio Commission 2004, Ochinya 2012, and Heitler, 2012).

Accommodation style relates to a situation when the principal as the organizational leader reacts to conflict by co-operation in favour of one party not being assertive about his own interest, it is unassertive when the administrator uses co-operation to give in to subordinates demand. Compromise styles according to Okai (2008), is a mid-way approach to conflict management where parities in dispute win some and lose some of their demands, involving a moderate attention on both parties concerned. It is a balance between the needs of the organization and those of the individuals. The approach to negotiation, involves the process of looking for a middle play ground that will favour all members. Collaboration style in conflict management places emphasis on corporative assertion in order to protect both parties interest, this is a problem solving approach (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001). This approach helps to find integrative solutions in which everyone wins. The competitive style relates to the use of force in which parties insist on an outright win or lose situation with the possibility of one party forcing or dominating the other. This style exhibits a strong focus on one's goal, and little or no concern for other person's goal. Lastly, the avoidance or withdrawal conflict management style according to Ohio Commission 2004, stated that conflicts sometime arises as a result of leaders disregard for a brewing conflict situation by over- looking or pretending that any conflict exists. This style involves either ignoring the problem by doing nothing or by playing down on the disagreement. This is perhaps for instance in the school system, principals as human beings show different actions at different times and at different situations. Therefore, the principal is at a vintage position to influence high academic achievement in secondary schools and to bring about coherence among staff and students as well as members of the community. He is therefore credited with the opportunity to create a culture that will engender peace and harmony within and outside the school system. Okon (2008), states that school culture cannot be earned without effective leadership which culminates in improved academic performance.

Despite the numerous evidences above indicating several factors that make the principal to be effective, there are sufficient reasons suggesting that some principals may fall short of some leadership qualities that make them successful. Some principals feel that school conflicts are normal and should be encouraged by tackling those head long. Others think that conflict is perpetuated only by detractors and such detractors should be removed from the school or be made to suffer the consequences of their actions. Dana (2000) feel that conflict is a monster that should be totally eradicated so that it does not cause any disruption of school activities.

## **II. Review of Related Literature**

The concern of this section is to review some related and available empirical studies on school conflict and management.

Edem (2002) investigated personnel conflicts and administrative behaviour of secondary school principals in Calabar education Zone in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study demonstrated that; personnel conflict influence principal's leadership style; personnel conflict is significantly, negatively related to principals' relationship with teacher. Personnel conflict significantly influence principals' relationship with students. Edem, concluded that since personnel conflict is endemic in the school, principals should learn to apply the principles of accommodation and endeavour to apply novel and varied strategies in conflict management.

Umoren (2001) had analyzed "Comparative analysis of conflict management strategies among Primary and Post-primary school administrators in Uyo Senatorial District of Nigeria. He had a sample size of 80 secondary schools and 120 primary schools, 70 female and 130 males. Simple percentage was used to compare administrators' preference of conflict management strategies. The findings by Umoren showed that most administrators (male and female) preferred to adopt avoidance strategy to conflict management with a record of 94.0 % followed by smoothing 19.0 %, persuasion 16.0 %, authoritative command 11.0 %, deterrence 2.0 %, bargaining/ compromise was 1.0 % while problem solving was 1.5%. The study suggested that administrators should learn to use other strategies instead of concentrating more on the avoidance strategy. The study compared conflict management options and tried to identify the most preferred option used by school administrators.

Oti (2007) carried out an appraisal of principal's conflict management procedures in secondary schools administrations in South East-zone of Nigeria. Oti used proportionate stratified random sampling technique to select the sample of 1,120 from a population of 8,039 teachers. The finding showed that the conflict management procedures frequently used by school principals were dialogue, arbitration and neglect. Secondly, principals conflict management procedures which are perceived effective by teachers are dialogue and negotiation.

The interest to engage in this study is intensified by the manifestation of conflicts in Secondary schools in Nigeria which has become a source of worry and concern to the researchers, government and the public. Therefore, since principals are at the seat of administration, management and accountability in the secondary schools, it is pertinent to study conflict manifestations and management in secondary schools in order to contribute ideas towards improving the secondary school system, devoid of conflict manifestations through careful and proper management of such conflict when it occurs.

Okon (2008) conducted a study on the influence of demographic variable on conflict resolution options of secondary school principals. A sample size of two hundred and sixty school were drawn for the study. He found out that the choice of conflict resolution is not significantly influenced by principals' years of experience and principals' gender does not significantly influence their choice of conflict resolution options. Accordingly, irrespective of gender, educational qualification, school location and years of experience, school principals should be orientated by schools' board on conflict resolution options and the need to be flexible on conflict management and principals should motivate staff to stay in peace in the school environment so that the aims and goals of education will be achieved.

Tseng (2007) studied Taiwan girls in an American school on cross-cultural conflict. The study revealed that; students' statuses are determined to a large extent by ability to read fluently which is traceable to social class factor and cultural inhibitions. More importantly, peers should not discriminate against themselves on grounds of colour, status, social or cultural amongst themselves in school environment.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **1. Human Relations Theories**

The Human Relations Theory was pioneered by Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933). Others associates who contributed to the theory include; Elton Mayo (1953), Felix Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939), Lewin, Lippit and White (1938) and Yauch (1949). As a social philosopher, she was concerned with the problem workers encounter in some organizations, and therefore concluded that such problems can only be minimized when there is co-operation among the workers. Therefore, she emphasized co-operation as the basis of organizational effectiveness.

The central idea in this theory is that human factor is important in the achievement of organizational goals, thus it was assumed that workers will achieve better if personal welfare was taken into consideration. This theory also assumed that it is only when individuals are treated humanely that they can have the motivation to participate actively in the achievement of organizational goals. With the human relations theory, the focus is on people and how they interact. It is believed that the basic problem of any organization, whether it is an educational system or even a family is building and maintenance of good relationship among various groups of

people within the organization. Also good human relations promote healthy organizational environment and enhances workers' productivity.

The human relations theory also relates to the present study because it will help the principals and teachers to build a dynamic inter-personal relationship with regard to psychological philosophical and socio-cultural dimensions as this will promote healthy school environment and productivity and minimize conflict in school schools.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Absence of peace in any given organization is capable of generating unimaginable level of conflicts within and outside that organization (school), which could invariably affect the growth and development of the school as an organization. The realization of educational goals and objectives of any organization can only be achieved and measured through a congenial school environment, where all in the system work together to achieve these goals(Nwite 2007). The spate of conflict manifestations among staff and students of secondary schools today is capable of affecting educational growth and development in Nigeria across the nation. Cases of conflicts in public secondary schools resulting to destruction of school properties across the State is unprecedented and alarming. Teachers or students have on one occasion or the other been placed on suspension from duty as a result of school conflicts. In one of the secondary schools in an Education Zone, a teacher suffered defeat and molestation in school conflict some years ago. The consequences of such ugly scenario in the educational system can be disastrous to the organization and its general output.

Conflicts manifest is of various dimensions. It could be psychological, philosophical or even socio-cultural related. The styles used by school principals to manage these conflicts as well as the prevalence of these management styles also need to be explored. Conflict could manifest psychologically when issues such as needs of staff and students are denied or neglected. It could be philosophical, when it affects the moral attitude of staff and students, of their value system, justice and respect for one another is violated. Also, conflicts could manifest socio-culturally when teachers or students of different socio-cultural background clash over an incompatible interest in school. In managing conflicts, various styles such as avoidance, collaboration, compromise, competition and accommodation could be applied depending on conflict situations while the influence of work experience could be of advantage in managing conflicts situations in schools.

Therefore, in order to find a way out to the emerging problems of conflicts in our educational system in Nigeria which is capable of destroying the system, if not checked, the present study investigated conflict manifestations and management in secondary schools.

## **III. Methodology**

The aim of this research was to investigate conflict manifestations and its management in secondary schools and make some remarks in conflict resolutions. To collect data for this research, a descriptive research design with a questionnaire titled: Conflict manifestation and management in secondary schools (CMMISS)" was used. The sample of this study consists of 550 respondents. The breakdown showed that 221 (60%) public school principals and 329 (10%) teachers were selected through stratified proportionate sampling technique from the three education zones studied in Ebonyi State, Abakaliki Education Zone 120 (11%); Afikpo education zone 110 (10%) Onueke 99 (9%) (source: Secondary Education Board (SEB) 2018.

### *Analyses and Findings*

To collect data related to conflict manifestations (psychological, philosophical and socio-cultural conflicts) a descriptive survey design was adopted using researchers' designed questionnaire titled "Conflict manifestation and management in secondary school (CMMISS)". The questionnaire sought information on demographic data, psychological, philosophical and socio-cultural related conflict manifestations in school administration. It consists of 40-item structured questions to answer the three research questions using 4 points scale of Very Great Extent (VGE); Great Extent (GE); Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was administered to the selected sample using three research assistants. The statistical analysis was conducted using Covariance Matrix version. The research questions were answered using mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (SD) while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance were used to analyze and interpret the data.

### **Findings**

Table 1: show the response to answers given to *research question 1:*

1: *To what extent do psychological related conflicts manifest in public secondary schools?*

Result on table 1 show that item 6 (failure to distribute resource accordingly to rank with ( $\bar{x}=2.70$ )) and item 8 (teachers often embark on work to rule with  $\bar{x}=2.77$ ), these items indicates high level of psychological conflict manifestation in schools. The table also indicates that items 5 and 7 (disruption of lesson= $2.43$ ) and bullying of

junior students ( $\bar{x}=2.31$ ) indicate low extent of psychological manifestation of conflict in schools. The grand mean of 2.60 as contained therein further supports the fact that psychological-related conflicts to a great extent, manifest in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

**Table 1:** Mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent to which psychological-related conflicts manifest in government secondary schools.

S/N	Items	Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Teachers react against students anytime they treat them with contempt.	2.67	0.90	GE
2	Students with high temperament often engage in fighting each other.	2.61	0.85	GE
3	Teachers react aggressively against principals when their needs are not met.	2.56	0.74	GE
4	Staff often engage in quarrels with the principal when they feel not protected by school rules.	2.56	0.81	GE
5	School lessons have often been disrupted by the teachers as a result of improper allocation of resources among them.	2.43	0.74	LE
6	Failure to distribute resources according to rank among staff by the principal have always led to brutalities and hatred among teachers	2.70	0.62	GE
7	Senior students often bully the junior ones to show supremacy which often have been retaliated by the bold ones.	2.31	0.68	LE
8	Teachers often embark on work to rule action if their salaries are not paid for their upkeep.	2.77	0.90	GE
9	Teachers normally refuse directives or assignments from principals when they are not motivated.	2.65	0.88	GE
10	Adult students often challenge their teachers if they are corrected before their younger ones.	2.58	0.90	GE
	<b>Grand mean value =</b>		<b>2.60</b>	

*Key: VGE = Very Great Extent, GE = Great Extent, LE = Little Extent, VLE = Very Little Extent*

*Source: Research Survey Data 2019*

Table 2. Presents the responses given to *research question 2:*

*2. To what extent do philosophical-related conflict manifest in public secondary schools?*

Table 2 on Philosophical related conflicts manifestations, shows that, all the nine items of serial numbers 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, except items 11 ( $\bar{x}=2.28$ ) and 15 ( $\bar{x}=2.43$ ) have mean scores that are greater than the criterion mean value of 2.50 set for the study. The result indicate that the respondents responded in favour of eight items with particular reference to item serial number 20 ( $\bar{x}=3.15$ ) the table show that teachers' unfair treatment towards their students often to a very great extent leads to students conflicts against their teachers.

**Table 2:** Mean responses of principals and teachers on the extent to which philosophical-related conflicts manifest in secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

S/N	Items	Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation	Decision
11	Teachers disobey principals believing that they do not deserve special respect before them	2.28	0.79	LE
12	Students flout schools regulations in the sense that they need freedom	2.72	0.89	GE
13	Teachers often refuse assignments from their principals if they are not treated with human dignity	2.73	0.92	GE
14	Students do cause violence in the school against the established order	2.68	0.90	GE
15	Students in many occasions insist that their behaviours are always right and should be condoned by schools authority.	2.42	0.88	LE
16	Teachers often resist decisions taken in the school if it cannot check students behavior	2.65	0.90	GE
17	Teachers insist that as adults they should be allowed to take some decisions even contrary to the will of the management	2.86	1.12	GE
18	Teachers like to oppose their principals believing that such actions could lead to goal achievement	2.81	0.97	GE
19	Conflict often arise among staff and students if the interest of the students are short changed with those of their teachers	2.85	1.10	GE
20	Teachers unfair treatment towards their students often leads to students conflicts against their teachers	3.15	0.73	VGE
	<b>Grand Mean value =</b>		<b>2.71</b>	

Key: VGE = Very Great Extent, GE = Great Extent, LE = Little Extent, VLE = Very Little Extent

Source: Research Survey Data, 2019

Table 3. presents the responses given to research question 3  
3. To what extent do socio- cultural related conflicts manifest in secondary schools?

Results of table 3 on Scio-cultural related conflict manifestations, reveals low extent for item serial number 21 ( $x=2.22$ ), with mean score less than the benchmark of 2.50. As observed also on table 3, the mean scores of 9 items of serial numbers 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 are all higher than the criterion mean of 2.50 while the mean of item of serial number 22( $x=3.48$ ) indicates that lack of social activities in the school promotes socio-cultural conflict to a very great extent in school. However, a grand mean of 2.80 as seen on the table clearly signifies that majority of respondents are of the view that socio- cultural related conflicts manifest to great extent in secondary schools.

Despite the findings on items 5 and 7 (table 1); 11 and 15(table 2); and 21 (table 3) with low extent means ( $\bar{x}$ )are less positive, all other items in each cluster were found to be positively associated with psychological, philosophical and socio-cultural conflict manifestations in secondary Schools.

**Table 3:** Mean responses of principal and teachers on the extent to which socio- cultural related conflicts manifest in secondary schools

S/N	ITEMS:	Mean $\bar{x}$	Standard Deviation	Decision
21	Staff often gang up with PTA against a non-indigenous principal	2.22	0.79	LE
22	Lack of social activities in the school promotes conflict	3.48	0.77	VGE
23	Undue interferences into students' activities by school authorities often brings them in conflicts.	2.55	0.80	GE
24	Students from various social background cause problems in the school when the school authority do not understand their different background.	2.72	0.88	GE
25	Cultural activities in the schools often clash with academic programmes of the school.	2.55	0.80	GE
26	Community interference into the school activities usually brings conflict	2.88	0.93	GE
27	Indigenous teachers do not adhere to school rules	2.72	0.86	GE
28	Dressing pattern of the teachers affect the control of discipline in the school	2.88	0.93	GE
29	Indigenous students usually disagree with school authorities	2.50	0.80	GE
30	Conflict arise among individuals who value cheating in examination and the principal who value hard work	3.46	0.76	VGE
<b>Grand Mean value =</b>		<b>2.80</b>		

Key: VGE = Very Great Extent, GE = Great Extent, LE = Little Extent, VLE = Very Little Extent

Source: Research Survey Data, 2019

Result on table 4 showed t-test of significance, it revealed that there was no significant difference in the meaning rates of principals and teachers on the independent variables tested at 0.05(P<0.05) level of difference. The t-critical value of 1.96 is greater than t-calculated value in all the items 1-30. The result was upheld.

Table 4: Present Mean Ratings of Respondents on Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on conflict manifestation in secondary schools

**Table 4:** t-test of significance in the responses of principals and teachers on conflict manifestations in secondary schools.

Items	Status of Respondents	N	Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	t-cal	t-crt	Alpha	Df	Decision
1	Principal	223	3.43	0.74	0.13	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.42	0.73					
2	Principal	223	3.71	0.59	0.12	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.70	0.62					
3	Principal	223	2.28	0.67	0.80	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.32	0.69					
4	Principal	223	2.77	0.89	0.10	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.77	0.90					
5	Principal	223	2.60	0.89	1.04	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.68	0.88					

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6	Principal	223	2.60	0.10	0.34	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.57	0.90					
7	Principal	223	3.30	0.82	0.37	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.20	0.85					
8	Principal	223	3.17	0.85	0.11	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.16	0.86					
9	Principal	223	2.71	0.92	0.45	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.70	0.92					
10	Principal	223	2.67	0.91	0.37	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.70	0.89					
11	Principal	223	3.43	0.88	0.35	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.40	0.88					
12	Principal	223	2.60	0.90	0.35	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.57	0.91					
13	Principal	223	3.10	0.87	0.07	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.01	0.86					
14	Principal	223	2.52	0.95	0.04	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.53	0.97					
15	Principal	223	2.85	1.12	0.08	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.86	1.11					
16	Principal	223	2.80	0.98	0.09	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.81	0.97					
17	Principal	223	2.76	0.78	0.64	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.80	0.80					
18	Principal	223	3.15	0.72	0.07	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.14	0.73					
19	Principal	223	3.26	0.80	0.90	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.20	0.81					
20	Principal	223	3.48	0.78	0.03	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	3.48	0.77					
21	Principal	223	2.50	0.78	1.04	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.58	0.81					
22	Principal	223	2.70	0.88	0.17	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.72	0.89					
23	Principal	223	2.79	0.95	0.24	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.77	0.94					
24	Principal	223	2.92	0.92	0.74	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.86	0.94					
25	Principal	223	2.28	1.08	0.05	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.29	1.07					
26	Principal	223	3.38	1.13	0.11	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.37	1.12					
27	Principal	223	2.40	1.15	0.51	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.46	1.17					
28	Principal	223	2.94	0.92	0.52	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.90	0.91					
29	Principal	223	2.82	1.01	0.37	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.85	1.02					
30	Principal	223	2.85	0.90	0.02	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
	Teacher	327	2.85	0.86					

*Source: Research Survey Data, 2019*

*t-test statistics*

Table 5 indicate that the t-calculated in all the items (31-40) each is less than the t-critical of 1.96. Therefore, principals' application of accommodation, avoidance, compromise, and at times the use of intimidation are most useful management styles in conflict resolution in the school system.

**Table 5:** Mean ratings of principals and teachers on Ho<sub>1</sub>: *There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on conflict management strategies used in public secondary schools.*

**Table 5:** t-test of significant difference in the responses of principals and teachers on conflict management styles in secondary schools.

<b>Ite ms</b>	<b>Management Styles/strategies</b>	<b>Status of respondents</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean <math>\bar{x}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-cal</b>	<b>t-crit</b>	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Decision</b>
31	Compromise	Principal	223	2.91	1.17	0.37	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
		Teacher	327	2.94	1.14					
32	Accommodation	Principal	223	3.03	0.89	0.31	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
		Teacher	327	3.01	0.86					
33	Collaboration	Principal	223	2.47	1.09	0.13	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted
		Teacher	327	2.46	1.10					
34	Avoidance	Principal	223	3.09	0.88	0.41	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted

		Teacher	327	3.06	0.89						
35	Competition	Principal	223	2.84	0.88	0.14	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted	
		Teacher	327	2.83	0.91						
36	Negotiation	Principal	223	2.61	0.91	0.35	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted	
		Teacher	327	2.64	0.92						
37	Arbitration	Principal	223	2.88	0.81	0.29	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted	
		Teacher	327	2.86	0.85						
38	Mediation and intervention.	Principal	223	2.87	0.88	0.50	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted	
		Teacher	327	2.90	0.89						
39	Reconciliation	Principal	223	2.65	1.01	0.60	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted	
		Teacher	327	2.70	0.97						
40	Force/intimidation	Principal	223	3.24	0.93	0.12	1.96	0.05	548	Accepted	
		Teacher	327	3.23	0.94						

*Source: Research Survey Data 2019*

#### IV. Discussion of Findings

This chapter discusses the findings of the study on the three research questions and two null hypotheses with particular reference to the three dimensions of conflicts related and management styles: (i) psychological (ii) philosophical and (iii) socio-cultural conflict manifestations. Additionally, t-test analysis of prevalence of conflicts and management styles were analyzed. The findings on table one showed that psychological related conflicts manifested to a great extent in secondary schools and was typical in the following ways: teachers react against students any time they treat them (students) with disdain, students with high temperament often engage in fighting each other, teachers react aggressively against principals when their needs are not met, failure to distribute resources according to rank among staff by principals these have always led to brutalities and hatred among teachers; teachers often embark on work to rule action, if their salaries are not paid on time or delayed conflict is ensued, teachers normally refuse to take directives from principals when they are not motivated and that adult students often challenge their teachers if they are corrected before their younger ones, teachers complain that promises of increment of salary by government are not always met, hence they express their feelings which manifest to conflicts and perhaps because of disappointments and refusal of government to keep promises. These acts from the findings of the study have led to conflicts manifestations in secondary schools. The finding is consistent with Okon (2008) who found that there are internal and external causes of conflicts and further mentioned that management styles as well or attitude could cause conflicts which may be due to non-payment or delay of salary or non-payment of fringe benefits amongst others. He further identified that conflict might emanate from fighting, bullying of younger students by the older ones, abuse and refusal to obey rules and regulations. The findings in this work agreed with the above but were opposed to the fact that school lessons have often been disrupted by the teachers as a result of improper allocation of resources among them as well as the position that senior students often bully the junior ones to show supremacy as identified in items 5 and 7 respectively of the study where each of the items were rated low extent or below 2.50 which is the criterion benchmark. Olowu (2005) also agreed with the findings of this work when he found out that misunderstanding, personality clashes, lack of co-operation, frustration, irritability, can bring about conflicts. This study therefore showed that both staff and student have had several situations of disagreement linked to misunderstanding, personality clash, frustration as well as irritability that make teachers react against principals any time they are treated with contempt, staff that often engage in quarrels with the principal when they feel not protected by school rules as well as students with high temperament that often engage in fighting each other, teachers refused to make directives from principals when they are not motivated as well as the fact that teachers often embark on work to rule action if their salaries are not paid for their up keep. These actions are in agreement with this research findings.

The result of the findings on table 2 revealed that philosophical related conflicts that manifest in schools include: students flout schools regulations in the sense that they need freedom, teachers often refuse to take directive from their principals if they were not treated with human dignity. That is to say, teachers see the principals' position as ordinary and therefore do not respect the principals. It was also observed that teachers often resist decisions taken in the school in their absence. Obi, (2004) is in agreement with the findings of this work and pointed out that conflicts manifestations are due to difference in ones orientations and goals, differences in status and competition. In secondary schools in Ebonyi State, it was further discovered that students believe that their goals are different from school goals. They feel that the school is a place to show status perhaps as young persons, they should be allowed to explore their world. This is also in agreement with Grassie (1999); De Bono (1995); and Okon 2008) who discovered that there are elements of conflicts which emanate from courageous decision making controversies. They found out that people in organizations have different personalities and compartments and therefore have different ideological, philosophical and goal differences that affect their approaches to issues. In relation to the findings of this study both staff and students' exhibit different ideologies, philosophies and goals that run counter to school goals programme.



The finding of this study is also in congruence with Oboegbulem&Onwurah (2011) and Edem (2002) who identified that personality conflicts are rampant in school organization. Conflicts are manifested through behaviour dispositions; their tendency to behave in a particular way or individual's expectations and predictions of outcomes which may occur due to personal beliefs and customs.

The result of the findings on table 3 showed that socio-cultural manifested conflicts indicated that communities intrude into school matters; lack of social activities in the school promotes conflict manifestation, undue interferences into school and students activities by school PTA often bring conflict in the school, cultural activities in schools often clash with academic programmes brings about conflicts. In the same vein, indigenous students from the study is observed to usually disagree with school authorities as well as the fact that conflict often arise among individuals who value cheating in examination and the principal who value hard work, and furthermore that provocative dressing pattern of some teachers leads to conflicts in the sense that such dressing pattern could lead to difficulties in controlling student which has ripple effects on their social behaviour. The study showed a mean of 2.80 which is far above the criterion mean, indicating that there is a high degree of socio- culturally manifested conflicts in the secondary schools. However, the respondents disagreed that staff often gang up with Parent Teachers Association (PTA) against a non-indigenous principal. In an agreement with the findings of the study Okon (2008) and Tsang (2007) in their separate findings discovered that discrimination is practiced in schools against non-indigenous principals because of ethnic discrimination. The study partly agreed with the fact that communities interfere into school activities but disagreed with the issue of staff often gang and fight against non-indigenous principals. Rummel (1997) had earlier discovered that socio-cultural conflict manifestations are characterized by the understanding that conflict may result from co-operation and differentiation and as a result of non-segmented pressures or lack of external treats. Ejiogu, (1990; Rawney and Taras, 2008) confirmed the findings of this work when he stated that some staff in the school system fight against changes and usually plan to resist change by all means. He disclosed that some staff are anti-authority and ordinarily hate the school system. Such persons fight against organizational planned change and feel bad and disgusted when they are required to conform to changes or routine practices.

## **V. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This research investigated Conflict Manifestations and Management in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. The study was classified into three aspects of conflicts: Psychological, Philosophical and Socio-cultural. It also examined management styles adopted in Conflict Management with particular attention to the prevalence rate in the management styles as used by secondary school principals. The paper argued that at the public secondary school level, principal are at the seat of administration, good administration is the most basic method of conflict prevention identified as the best method of conflict management. Others are compromise, collaboration, avoidance, mediation and reconciliation. From the findings of the work, it was noted that conflict manifested to great extent in secondary school in Ebonyi State Nigeria.

The findings of this have some educational implications in secondary school education system. Conflicts manifest in various dimension such as psychological related especially when teachers refuse to take directives from their principals; philosophical related: teachers opposing their principals openly; and socio-cultural related-cultural activities often clash with academic programmes of the school.

Under these situations conflict is bound to manifest which tend to disrupt school programmes or administration. To avert frequent cases of conflict manifestations in school administration, principals should strive to create synergy that will bring about peaceful school environment. Additionally, principals should apply appropriate management styles such as compromise, collaboration, avoidance, negotiation, arbitration and intervention, depending on the magnitude of conflict and cases of conflicts.

The paper also recommends that Federal and State Ministries of education should introduce conflict studies to form part of secondary school curriculum. These if adopted will reduce cases of conflicts as principals, teachers and students might learn to stem the tide of frequent cases of conflict.

The limitations of this study revolve around sample size of the study. There is need to enlarge the sample accommodating public and private secondary school principals and teachers. The result of the study cannot be generalized to all secondary schools in Nigeria since it covered only public secondary schools. Further research studies should include all the government (public and private school administrators) principals and teachers in secondary education.

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