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Abstract

The study focused on principals' application of conflict management strategies for effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu state. Four research questions guided the study while four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design for this study. The population for the study was 8,816 respondents – 295 principals and 8,521 teachers in the public secondary schools in Enugu State. The sample size of the study was 1,147 respondents which consisted of 295 principals and 852 teachers. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed structured questionnaire titled: “Principals’ application of Conflict Management Strategies for Effective Administration Questionnaire (PACMSEAQ)”. The instrument was validated by three research Experts. Two from the Department of Educational Management and one from Measurement and Evaluation unit of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education all in the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT). To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, the researcher made use of Cronbach Alpha statistic. The computation yielded 0.81 for cluster A, 0.83 for cluster B, 0.80 for cluster C and 0.81 for cluster D. The instrument had an overall reliability index of 0.81 which indicated that the instrument was reliable and, therefore was used for data collection in this study. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that principals apply avoiding ($x=2.52$, $SD=1.12$), confrontation ($x=2.72$, $SD=.99$), collaboration ($x=2.54$, $SD=1.12$), and conciliation ($x=2.67$, $SD=.88$) to a great extent as conflict management strategies for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended among others that the ministry of education should have formal guidelines on conflict management strategies apart from peace and conflict management.

Keywords: Principals, strategies, conflict management

Introduction

A school is designed to provide a conducive learning environment for effective teaching and learning process. In fact, school is one of the important institutions in human society. Education, over the years, has grown to become an integral part of human existence. According to Ofojebe and Nnebedum (2016), education is a vital tool for inculcation of the right values and skills necessary for the development of the people and society at large. Consequently, education has long been recognized as a veritable instrument supreme for effective family, community and national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria – FRN, 2013). Thus, education is a core mechanism for human capital development as well as the fundamental means for national development. However, this study is interested in the secondary level of education. Therefore, secondary education is a link between the primary and tertiary level of education. Similarly, Oshunniyi (2015), defined secondary education as the formal education given to children which bridges the gap between the primary and tertiary education. It is that level of education which children receive after primary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). An effective teaching process will be hard to actualize without proper administration. Hence, administration is a social process concerned with identifying, maintaining, motivating, controlling and unifying formally and informally organized human and material resources within an integrated system designed specifically to achieve predetermined objectives Unachukwu and Okorji (2016). Principals are those who are expected to perform administrative functions such as planning, organizing, supervising, staffing,

evaluating, coordinating, leadership and purchasing and maintenance of instructional materials, equipment and facilities (Uzoigwe 2017). The principals are the key players in secondary education and managers in secondary schools (Okeke-James, Igbokwe, Ogbo and Anyanwu, 2020). Bantu (2017), affirmed that in the Nigerian context, Principals are the overall head of secondary schools. According to Alabu, Kembo and Otara (2020), one of the roles of the principal is to mitigate the effect of conflicts being witnessed in schools.

Conflict is a disagreement between either two or more individuals, or even among group members in an organization. Wall and Calister in Manafa (2019), defined conflict as a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. Wallenstein in Yusuf and Ibrahim (2019), averred that conflict is a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources. According to Ugwuanyi (2015), possible areas of conflict includes: leadership style, communication, school policy, decision making, and delegation of duties as well as role definition/assignment. Conflict in secondary schools can range from relatively minor interpersonal disputes to more serious incidents like bullying, physical altercations, gang related violence, and other forms of disruptive behaviour. Research on the prevalence of conflict in secondary school has shown that it can be relatively common issue in some areas. Bullying for example, has been a significant concern in many countries, with a substantial number of students reporting being victims of bullying or witnessing it. Conflicts can arise between students, between students and teachers, or even among teachers and staff members (Nwofia, 2015). Consequent upon this, conflict management is a situation where the excesses of conflict are avoided and mitigated. According to Kalagbor and Nnokam (2015), it is a method incorporated to facilitate a positive or at least an agreeable outcome in order to reduce, eliminate or terminate all forms and types of conflicts. Conflict management is equally referred to as the long term handling of intractable disputes. It is the label for the variety of ways by which people handle grievances, standing up for what they consider to be right and against what they consider wrong (Nkwonta, 2015). A good principal must device good strategies of managing conflicts in the school.

The strategies of conflict management are essential in handling conflicts in secondary school and prominent among them include – competing, avoiding, collaborating, compromising, accommodating and mediation (Shahmohammadi, 2015). Demer and Adebayo in Yusuf and Ibrahim (2019), identified dialogue, mediation, negotiation, reconciliation, suppression and the use of force as conflict management strategies in organizations. In this study, the researcher will focus on the following conflict management strategies – avoidance, confrontation, collaborating and conciliation. The aforementioned conflict management strategies are perceived by the researcher to be the conflict management strategies in the education sector. In Enugu state, the researcher observed that the incessant conflicts between principals and teachers in secondary schools seem to become worrisome to the government and other stake holders in education. This appears to happen more in secondary school owned by the government which may be as a result of institutional and personal factors. These include things like status differences, communication, role ambiguities and expectations. The conflicts were often suppressed without serious explorations of effective conflict management which sometimes leads to escalation of conflicts and dysfunctional educational system. Based on the foregoing, the researcher is interested in ascertaining principal's application of conflict management strategies for effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu state.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which principals apply conflict management strategies for effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, the study is designed to determine:

1. The extent to which principals apply avoidance as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. The extent to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.
3. The extent to which principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.
4. The extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do principals apply avoidance as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State?
2. To what extent do principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary school in Enugu State?
3. To what extent do principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State?
4. To what extent do principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at .05 level of significance guided the study:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals and teachers apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.
- H₀₂:** Significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary school in Enugu State.
- H₀₄:** Significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Methods

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Enugu State, South Eastern Nigeria. The population was 8,816 respondents (295 principals and 8,521 teachers) in the public secondary schools in Enugu State under the control of PPSMB (Source; Post Primary School Management Board – PPSMB, Enugu State, 2025). The researcher used a sample size of 1,147 respondents which consisted of 295 principals and 852 teachers which is 10% of the population. The manageable size of the principals' population did not allow the researcher to draw a sample size from it, but the 10% of the teachers' population was drawn appropriately. The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed structured questionnaire titled "Principals' Application of Conflict Management Strategies for Effective Administration (PACMSEAQ)". The instrument had two sections, A and B. Section A was a bio-data of the respondents while section B, was on the information on principals' application of conflict management strategies for effective administration in secondary school. It had 51 items built in four clusters, cluster A had 13 items which focused on the principals' application of avoiding as a conflict management strategy. Cluster B, had 12 items which focused on principals' application of confrontation as conflict management strategy. Cluster C, had 11 items which focused on principals' application of collaborating as conflict management

strategy. Cluster D, had 15 items which focused on principals' application of conciliation as conflict management strategy. The researcher used a 4-point rating scale of Very Great Extent (VGE) – 4 points, Great Extent (GE) – 3points, Low Extent (LE) – 2points and Very Low Extent (VLE) – 1point. To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to three research experts – two from the Department of Educational Management and one from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education, all from the faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu. They validated the instrument in terms of clarity, adequacy and appropriateness with particular reference to the purpose of study, research question and hypotheses. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was trial tested on 18 principals and 22 teachers in Anambra State owned secondary schools. To determine the internal consistency of the instrument, the researcher used Cronbach alpha to compute the internal consistency. The computation yielded 0.81 for cluster A, 0.83 for cluster B, 0.80 for cluster C and 0.81 for cluster D. The instrument had an overall reliability index of 0.81 which indicated that the instrument is reliable. The researcher with the help of four research assistants administered the instrument to the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question One:

To what extent do principals apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviations of principals and teachers on the extent principals apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State

S/N	Items	Principals 283		Teachers 839		Overall=1122			
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	DEC.	
1	Saying very little during disagreements.	2.50	1.16	2.51	1.13	2.51	1.14	GE	
2	Leaving as soon as possible during arguments	2.55	1.17	2.54	1.13	2.54	1.13	GE	
3	Not exposing the disagreements they have with others	2.56	1.10	2.43	1.16	2.46	1.14	LE	
4	Respecting the opinions of others	2.40	1.09	2.59	1.13	2.54	1.12	GE	
5	Strengthening relationships with other staff	2.58	1.12	2.51	1.10	2.53	1.11	GE	
6	Communicating effectively	2.55	1.14	2.56	1.12	2.56	1.12	GE	
7	Reaching out for help during decision making	2.52	1.19	2.56	1.15	2.55	1.16	GE	
8	Creating team engagement	2.66	1.10	2.39	1.11	2.45	1.11	LE	
9	Treating every staff fairly	2.58	1.16	2.51	1.12	2.52	1.13	GE	
10	Withdrawing from discussions which may lead to conflicts	2.36	1.12	2.49	1.13	2.46	1.12	LE	
11	Writing out plan action on	2.63	1.11	2.57	1.11	2.59	1.10	GE	

12	daily basis Listening to the staff in order to know their challenges	2.47	1.15	2.50	1.14	2.50	1.14	GE
13	Changing a conversation that might lead to conflict	2.42	1.15	2.51	1.08	2.49	1.10	LE
Cluster Mean/SD		2.52	1.14	2.51	1.12	2.52	1.12	GE

Table 1 above shows the mean and standard deviations of the respondents on the extent to which principals apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. The principals' mean ranged from 2.36-2.66, while teachers' mean score ranged from 2.39-2.59 respectively. Their cluster means were 2.52 and 2.51 with standard deviations of 1.14 and 1.12 respectively. On the overall, the respondents' mean ranged from 2.45 to 2.59 with cluster mean of 2.52 and standard deviation of 1.12 respectively. The standard deviations of the respondents show that they are not unanimous in their responses. The outcome signifies that principals apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State to a great extent. However, the standard deviations of the respondents showed that there was no homogeneity in their responses.

Research Question Two: To what extent do Principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviations of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State

Items		Principals 283		Teachers 839		Overall=1122		DEC.
S/N	Principals apply confrontation conflict management strategy by:	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	
14	Constituting committee to investigate conflicting issues in school	2.86	.76	3.07	.83	2.98	.81	GE
15	Using hasty decisions in the management of teachers' conflict	3.04	.78	3.16	.81	3.11	.80	GE
16	Gathering information about conflict issues	2.55	1.11	2.49	1.10	2.51	1.10	GE
17	Having face to face meeting with both parties	2.53	1.09	2.46	1.12	2.48	1.11	LE
18	Coercing parties involved to apologize to each other	2.56	1.08	2.51	1.13	2.52	1.12	GE
19	Analyzing information relating to conflict in school	2.50	1.09	2.52	1.11	2.52	1.10	GE
20	Rending counseling services to conflicting parties	2.52	1.12	2.48	1.11	2.49	1.11	LE
21	Identifying points of agreement	2.61	1.12	2.49	1.13	2.52	1.13	GE
22	Diagnosing conflict at the	2.63	1.13	2.53	1.12	2.56	1.12	GE

23	emerging stage Using of threats to manage conflict in school	2.95	.80	3.02	.83	3.00	.82	GE
24	Identifying points of disagreement	2.92	.80	3.05	.82	3.01	.82	GE
25	Organizing meeting for opposing parties to negotiate and reach an agreement	3.00	.84	2.96	.81	2.97	.82	GE
Cluster Mean/SD		2.72	.98	2.73	.99	2.72	.99	GE

Table 2 above shows the mean and the standard deviations of the respondents on the extents to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. The principals mean ranged from 2.50-3.04, while teachers had their mean scores ranged from 2.46-3.16 respectively. Their cluster means were 2.72 and 2.73 with standard deviations of 0.98 and 0.99 respectively. On the overall, the respondents' mean ranged from 2.48 to 3.11 with cluster mean of 2.72 and standard deviation of .99 respectively. The closeness of the standard deviations demonstrates that the respondents were homogenous in their responses. The outcome shows that principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State to a great extent. However, the standard deviations of the respondents showed that there was homogeneity in their responses.

Research Question 3: To what extent do principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviations of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply collaborative as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary school in Enugu State

Items		Principals 283		Teachers 839		Overall=1122		
S/N	Principals apply collaboration conflict management strategy by:	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	DEC.
26	Collaborating with other teachers to come up with decisions acceptable to all	2.53	1.13	2.54	1.15	2.53	1.14	GE
27	Involving all parties in the dispute	2.53	1.09	2.59	1.13	2.56	1.11	GE
28	Being committed to settle the problem	2.58	1.15	2.44	1.09	2.51	1.12	GE
29	Showing complete willingness to exercise high level of emotional control	2.66	1.13	2.58	1.08	2.62	1.10	GE
30	Listening attentively to understand the plights of the staff	2.52	1.19	2.60	1.15	2.56	1.16	GE
31	Involving all parties in the dispute to feel valued	2.50	1.12	2.57	1.10	2.54	1.11	GE
32	Being willing to satisfy each other's need	2.51	1.11	2.47	1.12	2.49	1.11	LE
33	Fostering empathy among the	2.56	1.09	2.46	1.14	2.51	1.12	GE

	parties involved								
34	Fostering mutual respect	2.51	1.12	2.53	1.15	2.52	1.13	GE	
35	Giving those involved the shared responsibility to resolve the problem	2.52	1.15	2.65	1.12	2.59	1.13	GE	
36	Working with others in the school to achieve a peaceful school environment	2.62	1.13	2.42	1.13	2.52	1.13	GE	
Cluster Mean/SD		2.55	1.13	2.53	1.13	2.54	1.12	GE	

Table 3 above shows the mean and standard deviations of the respondents on the extent to which principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. The principals' mean ranged from 2.50-2.66, while teachers had their mean scores ranged from 2.42-2.65 respectively. Their cluster means were 2.55 and 2.53 with standard deviations of 1.13 and 1.13 respectively. On the overall, the respondents' mean ranged from 2.49 to 2.62 with cluster mean of 2.54 and standard deviation of 1.12 respectively. The scattered nature of the standard deviation indicates disagreement in their responses. The outcome shows that principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State to a great extent. However, the standard deviations of the respondents showed that there was not homogeneity in their responses.

Research Question 4: To what extent do principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State

Items		Principals 283		Teachers 839		Overall=1122			
S/N	Principals apply conciliation conflict management strategy by:	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	DEC.	
37	Inviting other stakeholders when dealing with any form of conflict	2.58	.82	2.57	.84	2.58	.83	GE	
38	Encouraging both parties to see conflict as a win issue	2.55	.78	2.57	.80	2.57	.80	GE	
39	Investigating a teacher's issue with others in order to find acceptable solution to everyone	3.01	.82	2.98	.82	2.99	.82	GE	
40	Making teachers to be moderately satisfied irrespective of who wins or loses in any conflict	2.61	.82	2.58	.82	2.59	.82	GE	
41	Permitting each group to make satisfactory suggestions to solving the problem at stake	2.55	.80	2.53	.82	2.54	.81	GE	
42	Recommending proper	2.84	.78	2.92	.80	2.87	.79	GE	

	demarcation of line of duty for solving conflict								
43	Respecting the views of both parties	2.68	.83	2.67	.81	2.68	.82	GE	
44	Not allowing the issues on ground to get complicated	2.50	.83	2.51	.82	2.51	.82	GE	
45	Encouraging teachers to make concessions as a way to resolve their conflicts in school	2.55	.80	2.53	.82	2.55	.81	GE	
46	Encouraging teachers to cooperate with each other	3.07	.84	3.04	.82	3.04	.83	GE	
47	Inviting both parties to help settle conflicts in school	2.58	.85	2.57	.85	2.58	.85	GE	
48	Allowing teachers and students to meet privately for settlement of their conflict	2.50	.83	2.49	.82	2.50	.83	GE	
49	Using peaceful dialogue involving the disputing persons to resolve such conflict	2.58	.82	2.52	.84	2.55	.83	GE	
50	Instructing parties involved in conflict to have a forgiving spirit	3.02	.81	3.01	.82	3.01	.82	GE	
51	Encouraging each party to ignore the conflicting issues for peace to reign in the school	2.57	.89	2.55	.86	2.56	.88	GE	
Cluster Mean/SD		2.68	.82	2.67	.82	2.67	.82	GE	

Table 4 above shows the mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. The Principals' mean ranged from 2.50-3.07, while teachers had their mean scores ranged from 2.49-3.04 respectively. Their cluster means were 2.68 and 2.67 with standard deviations of .82 and .82 respectively. On the overall, the respondents' mean ranged from 2.50 to 3.04 with cluster mean of 2.67 and standard deviation of .82 respectively. The closeness of the standard deviations of the respondents shows unanimity in their responses. The outcome shows that principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State to a great extent. However, the standard deviations of the respondents showed that there was homogeneity in their responses.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply avoidance as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis of the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	P-value	Decision
Principals	283	2.52	1.14	1120	.513	H01 not rejected
Teachers	839	2.51	1.12			

Data on Table 5 show the extent to which principals apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. At 1120 degree of freedom, the p-value was .513 which is greater than 0.05 set for this study. The null hypotheses was, therefore, not rejected which shows that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in enugu state.

H₀₂: Significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in enugu state

Table 6: Summary of t-test analysis of the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	P-value	Decision
Principals	283	2.72	.98	1120	.066	H ₀₂ not rejected
Teachers	839	2.73	.99			

Data on Table 6 show the extent to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. At 1120 degree of freedom, the p-value was .066 which is greater than 0.05 set for this study. The null hypotheses was, therefore, not rejected which shows that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 7: Summary of t-test analysis of the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply collaborative as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	P-value	Decision
Principals	283	2.55	1.13	1120	.101	H ₀₃ not rejected
Teachers	839	2.53	1.13			

Data on Table 7 show the extent to which principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. At 1120 degree of freedom, the p-value was .101 which is greater than 0.05 set for this study. The null hypotheses was, therefore, not rejected which shows that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.

H₀₄: Significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State

Table 8: Summary of t-test analysis of the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	P-value	Decision
Principal	283	2.68	.82	1120	.511	H04 not rejected
Teachers	839	2.67	.82			

Data on Table 8 show the extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. At 1120 degree of freedom, the p-value was .511 which is greater than 0.05 set for this study. The null hypotheses was, therefore, not rejected which shows that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that principals apply avoiding as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State to a great extent. The evidence from the study indicated that principals apply avoidance as conflict management strategy by saying very little during disagreements, leaving as soon as possible during arguments, listening to the staff in order to know their challenges, writing out a plan of action on daily basis, treating every staff fairly. Further finding revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply avoidance as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. Its implication is that the null hypothesis is statistically significant. The outcome agrees with Edo and Omunakwe (2021), who observed that principals apply avoidance as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary school to a great extent. It is also in line with Uwaezuoke and Obiekwe (2021) who reported that principals employ the avoidance principle of conflict management by posting conflicting parties to different areas to avoid clashes. The present research agrees with the finding because avoidance conflict management strategy can be an active method of team building and will provide a common identity and a sense of unity amongst staff.

The finding of the study revealed that principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State to a great extent. The evidence from the finding revealed that principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy by constituting committee to investigate conflicting issues in school, using hasty decisions in the management of teachers' conflict, gathering information about conflict issues, coercing parties involved to apologize to each other, analyzing information relating to conflict in schools among others. Further finding revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State. The finding is in line with Moriarty (2015), who reported that principals apply confrontation conflict management strategy because it is critical in educational administration. The finding is also in line with Wekhain (2015), who posited that principals apply confrontation conflict management strategy in the administration of secondary schools. The present researcher agrees with the finding of the study because confrontation conflict management strategy will make staff adhere to the norms and principles of the school.

The finding of the study revealed that principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State to a great extent. The evidence from the finding shows that principals apply collaborating as conflict management strategy by collaboration with other teachers to come up with decisions acceptable to all, involving all parties in the dispute, being committed to settle the problem, showing complete willingness to exercise high level of emotional control, listening attentively to understand the plights of the staff. Further finding revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary school in Enugu State. This finding is in accordance with Muindi, Mwanja and Metet (2017), who observed that most of the principals advanced their conflict management strategy by collaborating with others to make performance of their schools a success since collaboration as a conflict management strategy significantly influences students' performance in secondary schools. The finding is also in line with Edo and Omunakwe (2021), who posited that principals apply collaborating as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools to a great extent. The present researcher agrees with the finding because the adoption of collaborating strategy in managing conflict has the potential of creating better results and higher commitment in individuals than teams using non-integrative conflict management approach.

The finding of the study revealed that principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration in secondary schools in Enugu State to a great extent. The evidence from the finding shows that principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy by inviting other stakeholders when dealing with any form of conflict, encouraging both parties to see conflict as a win issue, investigating a teacher's issue with others in order to find acceptable solution to everyone, making teachers to be moderately satisfied irrespective of who wins or loses in any conflict, permitting each group to make satisfactory suggestions to salving the problems at stake, recommending proper demarcation of line of duty for solving conflicts, respecting the views of both parties among others. Further finding revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent to which principals apply conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration of secondary schools in Enugu State. The finding is in accordance with Anashie and Kulo (2015), who found that secondary school administrators applied conciliation in resolving conflicts in their schools. The finding is equally in line with Shed (2015), who reported that conciliation conflict management strategy is effective in the administration of secondary schools.

Conclusion

In view of the findings of this study, it is clear that principals apply avoiding, confrontation, collaboration and conciliation to a great extent as conflict management strategies for effective administration in secondary school in Enugu State. Conflict is a destructive phenomenon in schools. This explains why school principals should adopt appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts arising in schools. When conflict is not appropriately resolved, it affects teaching and learning, and by extension, the students' performance in both internal and external examinations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations.

1. Principals should be encouraged to sustain the use of avoidance as conflict management strategy for effective administration of secondary schools.

2. Principals should always foster open and honest communication between the parties involved in order to sustain confrontation as conflict management strategy for effective administration of secondary schools.
3. Principals should strive to sustain a positive school environment that promotes respect, empathy and positive relationships among all stakeholders in order to sustain the use of collaboration as conflict management strategy for effective administration of secondary schools.
4. Principals should be encouraged to sustain the use of conciliation as conflict management strategy for effective administration of secondary schools.

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