

Conflict Management Strategies Adopted By Principals In Administration Of Secondary Schools In Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study ascertained conflict management strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State of Nigeria . Four research questions guided the study and four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 31 principals in the 31 public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State. All the 31 principals were used for the study due to small and manageable size of the population of the study. A-researcher-developed instrument titled ‘Principals Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (PCMSQ)’ was used for data collection. The instrument was validated and the reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach alpha and it yielded reliability co-efficients of 0.83, 0.72, 0.74 and 0.79 for clusters I, II, III and IV respectively and the overall coefficient of the entire instrument was 0.77. The researcher and seven research assistants collected data for the study. A 97% return rate was recorded. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that the dominating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; dictate the solution to conflict in school, neglect the right of conflicting parties in taking actions toward resolving conflict, use threats to resolve solution and instruct conflicting parties on what to do without consideration of their views. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Government should make provision for re-training of principals in the areas in application of compromising so as to help them update their skills and knowledge needed for managing conflict. Conclusions were drawn and suggestions for further studies were made.*

Keywords: *Conflict, Conflict Management, Effective School Administration, Integrating Strategies, Dominating Strategies, Avoidance Strategies and Compromising Strategies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an instrument for improving and developing one's potentials and skills, and in the process contributes to sustained well-being of the individual. This enables the individual contribute to the development of his or her community. Mimar (2012) pointed out, that schools as important component of the education system, provide instruction and personality formation which enables economic progress and community development. There are different levels of education institution in Nigeria; among which is the secondary level which serves as a bridge between the primary

school and higher institution. The principal is responsible for the administration of secondary school.

School administration has been defined by different scholars in varying ways. In the views of Okorji and Unachukwu (2014), school administration is a social process concerned with identifying, motivating, controlling and unifying formally and informally organized human and material resources with a school. In the same vein, Iloh, Nwaham, Igbinedion and Ogogor (2016) defined school administration as the process of organizing and utilizing the available human and material resources for the attainment of educational goals. In the context of this study, school

administration is the planning organizing and controlling the available resource in order to achieve set objectives of school. There are conditions of incompatibility or disagreement between two or more parties in the course of school administration which could cause conflict.

There are many definitions of conflict. Conflict is described by Adeyemi and Ademilua (2012), as all forms of opposition, disagreement, friction between two or more parties and it manifests in the forms of arguments, protests, demonstration, aggression and other destructive behaviours. In the same vein, Mboya, Kiplagat and Yego (2017) defined conflict as a dispute, opposition or disagreements between individuals or groups of people. Mboya et al added that conflict occurs when people take opposing stands concerning issues and this can be expressed verbally or through actions. This indicates that conflict occurs when one party suggestion and interest is being opposed by another party. The researcher defined conflict as the disagreement or opposition between two or more parties arising from difference in value, interest and role preferences.

Conflict is inevitable in school because the principal, staff and students in secondary school have different ideologies, culture, value and role preferences. In other words, conflicts have become part and parcel of organizations including secondary schools and all other levels of educational institutions because individuals have varying ideas about issues, they have different backgrounds and their experiences are different. Arguing in the same line, Akinnubi, Oyeniran, Fashiku and Durosaro (2012) pointed out that it is obvious that conflict is inevitable, because it develops as a result of dealing with people's lives, jobs, students, pride, self-concept, ego and sense of mission or purpose. Mboya, Kiplagat and Yego (2017) stressed that as conflicts are inevitable, it is believed that there will always be disagreements among school administrators, teachers and students, but the disputes ought not to be left to get out of hand.

Conflicts may exist when students violate the school rules, students not doing manual work, students not respecting teachers, students engaging in vices like theft, fights, bullying or not attending lessons; teachers not respecting the principal or not completing curriculum, the principal's style of leadership demeaning teachers and disregarding students, among others (Mboya, Kiplagat & Yego, 2017). These conflicts have negative effects on the school administration; lowering teachers' morale, students' discipline and also hampering the general interpersonal relationships in an institution of learning (Ghaffar, 2008). Bano, Ashraf and Sumita (2013) stressed that conflicts are not always bad. The concern is how they are managed. When conflicts are constructively managed, they add value to the organization as opposed to when they are poorly managed; they turn destructive (Mboya, Kiplagat & Yego, 2017). Thus, conflicts need to be effectively managed for the proper functioning of any individual, group or organization (school). It is essential that principals adopt various conflict management strategies to prevent stress, unnecessary fatigue and tensions. Akinnubi, Oyeniran, Fashiku and Durosaro (2012) asserted that conflict can cause so much damage to the school if they are not well managed; hence the importance of conflict management strategies to schools administrators.

Several scholars have identified various conflict management strategies. These are integrating, dominating, avoidance, obliging and compromising (Adhiambo & Enose, 2011; Folger, Poole & Stutman cited in Akinnubi, Oyeniran, Fashiku & Durosaro, 2012; Kalagbor & Nnokam, 2015; Kilman, 2015, Sasa, Mateja & Joze, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the conflict management strategies that were adopted are integrating, dominating, avoidance, accommodation and compromising. This justification for investigating the areas is as result of the fact that disagreements or conflict among school administration, teachers and students is bound to exist in school and these strategies are needed to handle the conflict in a way to create conducive learning environment.

Integrating conflict management strategies involve openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach a solution acceptable to both parties. Arguing in the same line, Kalagbor and Nnokam (2015) asserted that integrating strategy focuses on gathering and organizing information; at the same time, it encourages creative thinking and welcomes diverse perspectives. Kalagbor and Nnokam added that this strategy enable parties involve in conflict to pool all their information together, put their differences on the table and examine them along with any data that might contribute to a resolution. When principals adopt this strategy, they tend to be problem-centred rather than ego-centred which brings out transparency and honest in handling the conflict. It is a win-win situation which the both parties stand to gain. Integrating strategies encompasses high use of good communication networks, concern for others and an environment for discussion for exchange of information for resolving the conflict. There is paucity of information to resolve the conflict, principals may apply dominating strategies.

Dominating strategy is used by the school principal to resolve the conflict by dictating what the subordinates will do (Kalagbor & Nnokam, 2015). The results of this strategy benefit one party, because behaviour to get one's position is forced. In this strategy, one party wins while the other suffers from the humiliation of losing. Kartal, Yirci and Ozdemir (2016) stressed that in the dominating strategies, administrators or individuals avoid other people's desires, expectations and needs so as to protect their own interest and attain their own goals. In this case, principals use their authority as head of school to reach decision with respect to resolving conflict without consideration of parties' views or opinions. Hellriegel and Slocum (2010) pointed out that this strategy is used in cases of high emergency where quick action is needed to make uncommon decisions, where action must be taken in the interest of institutional survival or effectiveness; or in cases where one person seeks to suppress others and quick actions need to be taken for protection of the interest of the institution. However, some principals may choose to adopt avoid managing the conflict instead of adopting dominating strategy which is characterized by use of force to resolve conflict.

Avoidance strategy is applied by principal who ignores conflicting issues or sometimes pretend as if there is no conflict in school. It is intentional withdrawing from the resolving conflict situations. In the view of Akuffo (2015),

avoiding strategy is where parties to conflict sometimes pretend as if there is no conflict, stay away or withdraw from the substance of the conflict. In the same vein, Kartal, Yirci and Ozdemir (2016) stressed out this strategy is related to regression, dodging responsibility, sidestepping or no see, hear and talking the problem. However, under certain conditions, avoidance may not be the most appropriate ways of handling conflict as it may worsen or cause some damages in school. Crossfield and Bourne (2018) pointed out that this strategy may appear unappealing to teachers who may believe that the administrator is insensitive and thus the application of compromising strategies.

Compromising strategies are applied in a situation where each party sacrifices something to reach an amicable solution. Principal who applies compromising strategy encourages conflicting parties to give up on certain things to come to common acceptable decision. Krietner and Kinicki (2012) considered this style as the give-and-take approach involving moderate concern for each party. It involves negotiation and a high degree of flexibility. In this strategy, principal encourage conflicting parties to downplay difference in order to settle the problems. Jamil (2015) stressed that compromising strategies reflect moderate concern for all and is associated with finding a middle ground based on a common solution that addresses everyone's interest. In the school system compromise is more effective when issues are complex and parties in conflict look for middle ground, and willing to exchange concessions. The male or female principals could serve as the mediator in managing the conflict.

There have been contradictory reports on research findings regarding the conflict management strategies adopted by male and female principals in school administration. For instance, Asemamaw and Narayana (2014) reported that gender on one hand had a significant impact on the compromising and integrating conflict management strategies preference of a manager, meanwhile, these difference was not found for avoiding, dominating and obliging conflict management strategies. On the other hand, Babajide (2013) revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female managers' conflict management strategies preference. A similar study conducted by Premchandani (2014) indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female management conflict management strategies. Although, those controversial findings were not reported in relation to the area of this study, this suggests the relevance of gender as a variable that needs to be further explored in the present study.

There may not be single strategy that can be deemed best for use by male and female principals but the key to proper conflict management is to choose and execute the strategy that fits best in the situation at hand. Although, application of different conflict management strategies may lead to either desirable or undesirable outcome. Adhiambo and Enose (2011) stressed that effective conflict management strategy may result in desirable outcome such as smooth management, enhanced discipline, and effective management of time, team spirit, effective use of resources, achievement of goals, good relationships and great value by stakeholders. However, Adhiambo and Enose added that when ineffective conflict management strategy is used, undesirable outcome such as

strikes, demonstrations, destruction of property, poor performance, emotional stress, misallocation of resources, absence and frustration may arise thus making the situation worse. Absenteeism, misallocation of resources and destruction of school property in Enugu Education Zone seem to indicate the existence of conflict. There seems to be cases of students not obeying school rules, engaging in vices like theft, fights, bullying, teachers' irregularity and punctuality to school and disrespecting the principal among others. This unsatisfactory state of affair makes it imperative to undertake this study to determine the conflict management strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

There seems to be occurrences of conflicts in secondary schools; simple issues as dislikening of a colleague, gossips, lateness, to more complex ones as role incompatibility, inferiority or superiority complex or leadership styles seems to be a source of conflict in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. More worrisome is that sometimes students engage in vices like theft, fights, bullying, absenteeism and disrespecting of principal's and teachers among others.

These forms of conflicts have the potential of advancing to more sophisticated vices as time progresses. However, this seems to affect staff morale and feelings, decreases job effectiveness among staff, have direct effect on students' attitude towards their academic work which ultimately affect their achievement. The principals have to adopt conflict management strategies for putting them in check so that they do not unnecessarily cause physical, psychological or emotional exertions. It is in the view of the above that the researcher investigated the conflict management strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the conflict management strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State. Specifically, this study sought to find out:

- ✓ Integrating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ Dominating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ Avoidance strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ Compromising strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study.

- ✓ What are the integrating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ What are the dominating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ What are the avoidance strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ What are the compromising strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

HYPOTHESES

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

- ✓ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the integrating strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the dominating strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the avoidance strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
- ✓ There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the compromising strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

II. METHOD

Descriptive survey research design was utilized for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is the design which aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner the characteristic features or facts about a given population. The study was carried out in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State using public secondary schools. The population of the study comprised 31 principals in the 31 public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State. The population of the study was not sampled due to the relatively manageable size and manageable size of the population of the study. Thus, all the 31 principals in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State were used for the study. The researchers developed instrument titled “Principals’ Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (PCMSQ)” was used for data collection. The instrument has two sections namely: A and B. Section A seeks to elicit respondents’ background information of respondents such as gender. The section B has four clusters which contained a total of 27 items structured on a four point rating

scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted at 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The instrument was subjected to face validation. To ascertain this, the researcher presented the title, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses with a copy of the questionnaire to three experts who are lecturers; two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy, and one in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The researchers requested that the experts should examine and scrutinize the items in terms of content, relevance, suitability, clarity and coverage of the dimensions of the study. Their suggestions were used to draft the final edition of the questionnaire. Cronbach alpha was used for the reliability test and it yielded co-efficient values of 0.83, 0.72, 0.74 and 0.79 for cluster, I, II III and IV were respectively and the overall coefficient was 0.77.

The researchers, together with five research assistants who are secondary school teachers in public secondary schools, administered copies of the questionnaire directly to the respondents. A total of 31 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 30 copies were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating 97% percent return. At the end of the exercise, copies of the questionnaire retrieved were used for data analysis. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions. In answering the research questions in this study, mean item rating that fell below 2.50 was taken as disagreement and any mean rating of 2.50 or above was taken to indicate agreement. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test. In testing the null hypotheses, if t-calculated is equal to or greater than t-critical at 0.05 level of significance and the appropriate degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was rejected, but if otherwise, it was not rejected.

III. RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the integrating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State?

S / N	ITEMS I adopt the underlisted integrating strategies in school administration;	Male Principals (n = 17)			Female Principals (n = 13)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Investigate conflicting issues before any resolution is made	2.65	1.07	Agree	2.81	1.11	Agree
2	Clarify differences rather than accommodating different points of view in resolving conflict	2.45	1.18	Disagree	2.40	1.20	Disagree
3	Ensures fair solution in conflict situation	2.72	1.23	Agree	2.60	1.16	Agree
4	Consults others in finding solutions to areas of conflict	2.54	1.13	Agree	2.53	1.08	Agree
5	Encourage parties in the conflict to come up with alternative solutions and choose the most suitable one	2.71	1.22	Agree	2.69	1.14	Agree
6	Constitute committee to handle conflicting issues in school	2.62	1.15	Agree	2.58	1.10	Agree
7	Strives for a win-win situation in conflict management	2.55	1.08	Agree	2.51	1.23	Agree
Mean of means		2.61	1.15	Agree	2.59	1.15	Agree

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation scores of the Integrating Strategies adopted by Principals in Administration of Secondary Schools

The result of data analysis presented on Table 1 revealed that all the items except item 2 have mean ratings above the cut off mean score of 2.50 in respect to both the male and female principals' responses indicating agreement with the items as the integrating strategies they adopt in school administration. This implies that the integrating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; investigate conflicting issues before any resolution is made, ensures fair solution in conflict situation, consults others in finding solutions to areas of conflict, encourage parties in the conflict to come up with alternative solutions and choose the most suitable one, constitute committee to handle conflicting issues in school and strives for a win-win situation in conflict management.

The pooled standard deviation scores which stood at 1.15 and 1.15 for male and female principals respectively indicated that their responses are close to the mean, implying that the respondents are homogenous in their responses amongst cluster. The mean of means scores of 2.61 and 2.59 for male and female principals respectively which is above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicates that principals adopt integrating strategies in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What are the dominating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State?

S / N	ITEMS	Male Principals (n = 17)			Female Principals (n = 13)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
8	Dictate the solution to conflict in school	2.65	1.09	Agree	2.57	1.18	Agree
9	Neglect the right of conflicting parties in taking actions toward resolving conflict	2.51	1.24	Agree	2.67	1.12	Agree
10	Use threats to resolve solution	2.54	1.15	Agree	2.58	1.24	Agree
11	Use force to handle disagreement among personnel in school	2.65	1.05	Agree	2.42	1.03	Disagree
12	Take actions without necessary observing due process in resolving conflict	2.40	1.10	Disagree	2.49	1.04	Disagree
13	Take side in a conflict situation	2.42	1.33	Disagree	2.43	1.18	Disagree
14	Instruct conflicting parties on what to do without consideration of the views	2.58	1.06	Agree	2.69	1.13	Agree
Mean of means		2.54	1.15	Agree	2.55	1.13	Agree

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation scores of the Dominating Strategies adopted by Principals in Administration of Secondary Schools

On Table 2, the mean ratings of both male and female principals for items 12, 14, 8, 9, 10, and 14 are above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as the dominating strategies adopted by principals. This shows that the dominating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; dictate the solution to conflict in school,

neglect the right of conflicting parties in taking actions toward resolving conflict, use threats to resolve solution and instruct conflicting parties on what to do without consideration of the views. Male and female principals mean ratings for items 12 and 13 are below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating their disagreement with the items as the dominating strategies adopted by principals. On the other hand, the mean ratings of male principals for item 11 is above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the item as the dominating strategies adopted by principals, while that of the female principals for the item is below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the item. This implies that male principals agree that their dominating strategies includes; use force to handle disagreement among personnel in school, while female principals disagreed with the male principals. The standard deviation scores for both male and female principals which range 1.03 - 1.18 shows similarity in their mean responses in each cluster. The mean of means scores of 2.54 and 2.55 for male and female principals respectively which is above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicates that principals adopt dominating strategies in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What are the avoidance strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State?

S / N	ITEMS	Male Principals (n = 17)			Female Principals (n = 13)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
15	Withdraw in the process of finding solution to conflict in school	2.46	1.13	Disagree	2.44	1.12	Disagree
16	Sometimes pretend as if there is no conflict	2.65	1.02	Agree	2.62	1.09	Agree
17	Ignores conflicting issues with the hope that would not become destructive	2.57	1.10	Agree	2.73	1.04	Agree
18	Step side for conflicting parties to resolve their issues	2.48	1.13	Disagree	2.64	1.18	Agree
19	Postpone conflict for better time in tactical way	2.72	1.06	Agree	2.77	1.17	Agree
20	Set aside minor conflicting issues in school due to pressing administrative tasks	2.52	1.13	Agree	2.41	1.08	Disagree
21	Overlook conflict with the hope that it will go away	2.66	1.03	Agree	2.70	1.18	Agree
Mean of means		2.58	1.09	Agree	2.62	1.12	Agree

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation scores of the avoidance Strategies adopted by Principals in Administration of Secondary Schools

As shown on Table 3, mean scores of both male and female principals for items 20, 16, 17, 19 and 21 are above the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as the avoidance strategies adopted by principals. This indicates that the avoidance strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; sometimes pretend as if there is no conflict, ignores conflicting issues with the hope that would not become destructive, postpone conflict for better time in tactical way and overlook conflict with the hope that it will go away.

Mean ratings of both male and female principals for item 15 is below the cut off mean score of 2.50 indicating

disagreement with the item as the avoidance strategies adopted by principals. This implies that the two respondents' are in disagreement that withdrawing in the process of finding solution to conflict in school is parts of the avoidance strategies adopted by principals. On the other hand, the mean ratings of male principals for item 18 is below the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating disagreement with the item as the avoidance strategies adopted by principals, while that of the female principals for the item is above 2.50 indicating disagreement with the item. The mean ratings of male principals for item 20 is above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicating agreement with the item as the avoidance strategies adopted by principals, while that of the female principals for the item is below 2.50 indicating disagreement with the items. The pooled standard deviation scores which stood at 1.09 and 1.12 for male and female principals respectively indicated that their responses are close to the mean, implying that the respondents are homogenous in their responses amongst cluster. The mean of means scores of 2.58 and 2.62 for male and female principals respectively which is above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicates that principals adopt avoidance strategies in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: What are the compromising strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State?

S/ N	ITEMS	Male Principals (n = 17)			Female Principals (n = 13)		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
22	Act as a mediator in resolving conflict	2.56	1.20	Agree	2.63	1.10	Agree
23	Consider each party's views in resolving conflict	2.54	1.16	Agree	2.59	1.17	Agree
24	Encourage conflicting parties to make concessions as a way to resolve their conflicts in the school	2.74	1.24	Agree	2.68	1.14	Agree
25	Encourage staff to be satisfy without the outcome of conflict resolution irrespective of who wins or losses	2.83	1.10	Agree	2.87	1.15	Agree
26	Make suggestions that could lead to mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts	2.63	1.10	Agree	2.66	1.07	Agree
27	Appeal to one party to accept the blame	2.40	1.08	Disagree	2.45	1.14	Disagree
Mean of means		2.62	1.15	Agree	2.65	1.13	Agree

Table 4: Mean ratings and standard deviation scores of the Compromising Strategies adopted by Principals in Administration of Secondary Schools

The result as shown on Table 4 showed that both male and female principals mean scores for all items with exception of item 27 are above 2.50 indicating agreement with the items as the compromising strategies adopted by principals. This shows that the compromising strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; act as a mediator in resolving conflict, consider each party's views in resolving conflict, encourage conflicting parties to make concessions as a way to resolve their conflicts in the school, encourage staff to be satisfy without the outcome of conflict resolution irrespective of who wins or losses and make suggestions that could lead to

mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts. The standard deviation scores of male and female principals which stood at the range 1.08-1.20 indicated that the male and female principals mean scores are similar. Thus, the degrees to which mean ratings of both male and female principals vary to each item are low. The mean of means scores of 2.62 and 2.65 for male and female principals respectively which is above the cut off mean of 2.50 indicates that principals adopt compromising strategies in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State.

TESTING THE NULL HYPOTHESES

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the integrating strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df	∞	Remarks
Male	17	2.61	1.15	-0.04	1.96	28	0.05	Not Significant
Female	13	2.59	1.15					

Table 5: t-test of the mean ratings of the integrating strategies adopted by male and female principals in school administration

Table 5 indicated that at 0.05 significant level and 28 degree of freedom, the calculated t value of -0.04 is less than the critical t value of 1.96. The difference in male and female principals mean ratings is not significant. The null hypothesis one is therefore not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the integrating strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the dominating strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df	∞	Remarks
Male	17	2.54	1.15	-0.02	1.96	28	0.05	Not Significant
Female	13	2.55	1.13					

Table 6: t-test of the mean ratings of the dominating strategies adopted by male and female principals in school administration

Result presented on Table 6 indicated that at 0.05 significant level and 28 degree of freedom, the calculated t value of -0.02 is less than the critical t value of 1.96. The difference in male and female principals mean ratings is not significant. The null hypothesis one is therefore not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the dominating strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the avoidance strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df	∞	Remarks
Male	17	2.58	1.09	-0.09	1.96	28	0.05	Not Significant
Female	13	2.62	1.12					

Table 7: *t*-test of the mean ratings of the avoidance strategies adopted by male and female principals in school administration

As shown on Table 7 indicated that at 0.05 significant level and 28 degree of freedom, the calculated *t* value of -0.09 is less than the critical *t* value of 1.96. The difference in male and female principals mean ratings is not significant. The null hypothesis one is therefore not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the avoidance strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

Ho₄: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the compromising strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df	α	Remarks
Male	17	2.62	1.15	-0.07	1.96	28	0.05	Not Significant
Female	13	2.65	1.13					

Table 8: *t*-test of the mean ratings of the compromising strategies adopted by male and female principals in school administration

Data presented on Table 8 indicated that at 0.05 significant level and 28 degree of freedom, the calculated *t* value of -0.07 is less than the critical *t* value of 1.96. The difference in male and female principals mean ratings is not significant. The null hypothesis one is therefore not significant. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the compromising strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It was found out that the integrating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; investigate conflicting issues before any resolution is made, ensures fair solution in conflict situation, consults others in finding solutions to areas of conflict, encourage parties in the conflict to come up with alternative solutions and choose the most suitable one, constitute committee to handle conflicting issues in school and strives for a win-win situation in conflict management. This is supported by the finding of Kalagbor and Nnokam (2015) which revealed that principals use the integrating strategies by conducting an investigating on causes of conflict, analyzing the information for the investigation, ensuring fair hearing and striving for the win-win situation. The similarity in findings could be attributed to geographical as the two studies were conducted in Nigeria in which similar laws guide management of conflict in school. Integrating strategies enable the principal to gather information, determine the alternatives and evaluations, and acting on the chosen decision to resolve conflict.

The finding of the study also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the integrating strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State. This is in disagreement with the

finding of Jamil (2015) who reported that there was no predictive relationship between gender and utilization of integrating conflict management strategies. This contradicts the finding of Asemamaw and Narayana (2014) which reported that gender had a significant impact on the integrating conflict management strategies preference of a manager. This contradiction could be attributed to difference in geographical location.

The result of the study revealed that dominating strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; dictate the solution to conflict in school, neglect the right of conflicting parties in taking actions toward resolving conflict, use threats to resolve solution and instruct conflicting parties on what to do without consideration of the views. This is line with the finding of Fareo and Jajua (2018) which reported that dominating strategies adopted by administrators include; forcing conflicting to accept the solution to conflict, using of threat as means of settling conflict and making final decision to resolve conflict. The possible explanation for this agreement might be that in the same country and year. Observable changes might have not occurred in the same year. This finding suggests that principals could push conflicting parties view aside and impose the solution to the problem.

It was also reported that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the dominating strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State. This is in disagreement with the finding of Kiprono (2014) who reported that there were statistically significant differences in levels of conflict resolution of different gender. The difference in geographical location indicating that different respondents participated in the study could account for the disagreement in findings.

It was reported that the avoidance strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; sometimes pretend as if there is no conflict, ignores conflicting issues with the hope that would not become destructive, postpone conflict for better time in tactical way and overlook conflict with the hope that it will go away. This corroborates the finding of Adhiambo and Enose (2011) found out that avoidance strategies adopted by principals include; pretending as if there is no conflict, staying away from the substance of the conflict and dodging responsibility of managing conflict. School administrators apply avoidance strategies by dodging making important decision to resolve the conflict until the pressure is on, and in some cases resolve the cases at the last minute. In avoidance strategy, principals pretend as if there are no conflict situation schools. Avoidance conflict management strategies may not be a healthy approach to resolving conflict. Although, taking time to weigh the available options is a good idea, but avoiding resolving the conflict could result to negative outcome in the long run.

The result of the study also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the avoidance strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State. This is in agreement with the finding of Babajide (2013) which revealed that there was no

significant difference between male and female managers conflict management strategies preference. The agreement could be attributed to similar years of training and job experience among male and female principals which could influence their use of avoidance conflict management strategies.

The finding of the study revealed that the compromising strategies adopted by principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State include; act as a mediator in resolving conflict, consider each party's views in resolving conflict, encourage conflicting parties to make concessions as a way to resolve their conflicts in the school, encourage staff to be satisfy without the outcome of conflict resolution irrespective of who wins or losses and make suggestions that could lead to mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts. This is in agreement with the finding of Kalagbor and Nnokam (2015) which revealed that the compromising strategies more frequently used by principals include; encouraging conflict parties give out something in order to resolve their differences, mediating between conflicting parties and rendering advice that could lead to mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts. The two studies were conducted in the same country in which similar policy is applied in managing conflict and the may account for the agreement in findings. The compromising strategies adopted by principals call for both sides of a conflict to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable solution. Principals tend to adopt compromising strategies in a situation conflict parties stand to lose something in order to resolve the conflict.

It was also found out that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the compromising strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State. This is disagreement with the finding of Asemamaw and Narayana (2014) which reported that gender had a significant impact on the compromising conflict management strategies preference of a manager. The difference in findings could be attributed to difference in geographically location.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that principals adopt conflict management strategies in school administration in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State. Their conflict management strategies adopted in school administration include; integrating, dominating, avoidance and compromising strategies. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the compromising strategies adopted by male and female principals in administration of secondary schools in Enugu Education Zones of Enugu State.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- ✓ The Ministry should reach out to principals by organizing public lectures on the dominating strategies in handle some conflict situations at the shortest possible time.
- ✓ Government should make provision for re-training of principals in the areas in application of compromising so as to help them update their skills and knowledge needed for managing conflict.
- ✓ Government should embark on sensitization of principals on the application of avoidance through the media. Enlightenment should be given on the dangers of avoiding conflict management.

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