

# Assessment of Application of Conflict Management Techniques in Public Secondary Schools Administration in IKOM Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study investigated the application of conflict management techniques in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, focusing on teachers, principals, and school supervisors. **Method:** Guided by three objectives, research questions, and hypotheses, the research adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 1,630 respondents and a sample of 959 participants, comprising 299 teachers, 36 principals, and 30 supervisors. Data were collected electronically through a validated questionnaire, which achieved a reliability index of 0.79 using Cronbach's Alpha. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used for bio-data analysis, while One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tested the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. **Results:** Findings revealed that all three null hypotheses were retained, indicating no statistically significant differences in the application of conflict management techniques across the respondent groups. **Novelty:** The study contributes to the discourse on conflict management in Nigerian secondary schools by highlighting the importance of teachers as role models and moral guides, emphasizing the need for equitable treatment of students, accessibility for guidance, and engaging pedagogical practices to foster harmonious school environments.

## INTRODUCTION

Conflict in any organization is inevitable, as a conflict-free organization has never existed, and believing otherwise is unrealistic [1], [2], [3]. The total absence of conflict would imply suppression and stagnation, as conflict naturally arises from group interaction due to differences in background, perceptions, attitudes, and value systems [4]. Schools, as social organizations, are not immune to conflict-related factors. They have become increasingly complex to manage due to the diversity of students' and teachers' abilities, interests, and expectations in an ever-changing society [5]. Secondary schools often experience interpersonal conflicts among teachers, between teachers and principals, students and peers, or even intergroup disputes between male and female staff [6]. These conflicts may begin as simple expressions of dissatisfaction and escalate into crises through chains of reactions. Conflict management, therefore, becomes essential in ensuring harmony and productivity. [3] describe conflict management as the practice of addressing disputes rationally, fairly, and effectively to create conditions for mutual understanding and collective problem-solving. By managing conflicts appropriately, organizations can enhance learning, improve group performance, and achieve greater effectiveness.

In Nigerian secondary schools, principals play a central role as administrators responsible for managing conflicts while working toward the goals of secondary education. Their daily activities are geared toward fulfilling the objectives of secondary school education, which holds a strategic position in shaping students' academic and professional futures. According to [7], conflicts negatively affect organizational goals if poorly managed, leading to stress, hostility, and inefficiency. However, effective leaders understand that conflict is unavoidable and, rather than wishing it away, seek to harness it for organizational improvement. As [8] notes, the diversity of individuals' backgrounds, ideologies, and value systems makes conflict inevitable; what matters most is the leader's ability to manage disputes when they arise. Properly handled, conflict can stimulate new ideas, innovations, and better decision-making within schools. Without organizational conflict, challenges would be minimal, and school systems would risk stagnation. Consequently, effective conflict management is essential for achieving school organizational goals and fostering a conducive learning environment. Against this backdrop, this research assesses the application of conflict management techniques in public secondary schools within the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In every secondary school, where individuals possess different backgrounds, ideologies, levels of understanding, and value systems, conflict is inevitable; hence, the ability of school administrators to handle such conflicts effectively is critical. Administrators are expected to be good conflict managers by applying diverse techniques to resolve disputes, as neglected or poorly managed conflicts may escalate and disrupt the smooth administration of schools, hindering the achievement of educational aims and objectives. However, many school administrators have been accused of taking decisions without proper consultation with relevant stakeholders, leading to rejection, open confrontation, and sometimes violent resistance from students and teachers [9]. Decisions made without involving those affected often suffer poor implementation by staff and, in extreme cases, provoke riots that result in property damage or even loss of lives. Furthermore, some secondary school staff have been accused of gross irresponsibility, including habitual lateness, absenteeism, negligence of duty, and anti-social acts such as fighting, assault, blackmailing the administration, and stealing school property. Certain student riots and demonstrations have even been linked to instigation by staff members (Onwurah). Often, the administrators' approaches in addressing such behaviors lead to further conflicts, confrontations, and disruptions of effective teaching and learning. Consequently, this study assessed the application of conflict management techniques in secondary school administration in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were raised to guide the study:

1. Assess the application of accommodation technique between teachers and students in Public Secondary Schools;

2. Determine the application of catharsis technique among students in Public Secondary Schools;
3. Examine the application of collaboration technique between teachers and Ministry of Education in Secondary Schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were asked to guide the study:

1. To what extent does application of accommodation technique contribute to resolving conflict between teachers and students in secondary schools?
2. To what extent does application of catharsis technique contribute to resolving conflict among students in secondary schools?
3. To what extent does application of collaboration technique contribute to resolving between teachers and Ministry of Education in Secondary Schools?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean opinions of teachers, principals and Ministry of Education officials on the application of accommodation technique between teachers and students in secondary schools.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean opinions of respondents on the application of catharsis technique among students in secondary schools.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean opinions of respondents on the application of collaboration technique between teachers and Ministry of Education in Secondary.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept of School Conflict**

Conflict occurs in all human societies but varies in degree and form, as some societies experience verbal aggression, others physical clashes, and some adopt more passive expressions. In the Nigerian school system, conflict arises from time to time and involves collision, opposition, or clashes among individuals or groups [10]. [3] defined conflict as a struggle over values and claims to limited status, power, and resources, where opponents aim to neutralize, dominate, or eliminate rivals. Similarly, [11] conceptualized conflict as a struggle involving competing claims to power, status, or resources, while [12] described it as any divergence of interests, objectives, or priorities between individuals, groups, or organizations, often caused by non-conformity to tasks, processes, or activities. Obi further noted that conflict reflects opposite needs, such as the mismatch between teachers' personal needs and institutional demands, while Ezegbe (2017) identified it as mutual hostility in human relationships. Since organizational members come from diverse backgrounds and communicate differently, conflict in schools is highly probable. [13] found that most conflicts arise from miscommunication, misunderstandings, unintended meanings, poor choices, ineffective management styles, unclear roles, false expectations, fluctuating economic and political conditions, or personal misfortunes—many of which are avoidable and can be resolved through dialogue (Elangovan). [14] further identified specific causes of conflict in secondary

schools, including principals' leadership styles, stress, lack of professional training, poor communication, and inadequate motivation.

### **Impact of Conflict on School Management**

It has been established that either too much or too little conflict can be dysfunctional for an organization, indicating that only an optimal level of conflict is necessary for organizational growth [10]. Accumulating unresolved conflicts without appropriate management strategies can be disastrous, as conflicts left unchecked often escalate into violence [2]. In schools, conflicts can be functional or dysfunctional, depending on their level and how they are resolved [15]. Functional conflicts contribute positively to growth, while poorly handled conflicts generate broader disputes and hinder effective administration. The goal is not to eliminate conflict but to manage it constructively so it enhances individual and organizational performance. In educational institutions, properly managed conflicts can promote industrial harmony and foster collaboration. [16] highlighted that conflict can be educative when participants exchange ideas, correct misconceptions, and improve understanding. Through constructive conflict, principals and teachers reassess cooperation and work toward achieving educational goals. Conflict stimulates innovation in policies, actions, and conflict resolution techniques, while also reducing monotony and boredom in school operations [17]. Furthermore, conflict enhances group cohesion and collective problem-solving, leading to improved teamwork and organizational effectiveness [15], [18]. Satisfying conflict outcomes can increase participants' commitment and foster organizational growth [17]

However, when conflicts are poorly managed, they produce harmful effects on individuals and organizations. While conflicts can be converted into opportunities to evaluate practices and improve processes [15], unresolved disputes can damage school cooperation and productivity. Achala (2002) stressed that conflict can help identify hidden problems requiring attention, but unmanaged conflicts may escalate into structural crises affecting institutional performance. [19] noted that while some conflicts contribute to progress, destructive conflicts often result from persistent disharmony. [20] emphasized that well-managed conflicts strengthen relationships and foster understanding, but unmanaged conflicts can lead to distrust, hostility, and disunity. Long-standing disputes reduce organizational performance, disrupt coordination, and obstruct goal attainment [17]. They may also compel leaders to adopt autocratic approaches, limiting participation and cooperation in decision-making, thus impeding institutional effectiveness [21]. [22]observed that avoiding conflict altogether often worsens destructive disputes, leading to communication breakdowns, low trust, suspicion, and concealment of information among principals, teachers, and staff. Hence, while conflict can promote growth, innovation, and collaboration when properly managed, its mismanagement undermines school administration and educational objectives.

## **Concept of Conflict Management**

In every organization where there is different kind of people with different backgrounds, religions, ideologies, and level of understanding, violent cannot be completely ruled out, but the ability of the leader to handle them should it arise [8]. [3]described conflict management as the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way. It establishes conditions by which conflict can lead to mutual explorations and new level of consensus in problem solving. According [23], conflict management techniques to refer to the process of becoming aware of actual or potential conflict, diagnosing its nature and scope and employing appropriate methodology to diffuse the emotion energy, involved and enable disputing parties to understand and resolve their differences in the schools setting. Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspect of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting. Conflict management is the ability to be able to identify and handle conflict sensibly, fairly and effectively. Conflict affects the accomplishment of organization goal due to their attending stress, hostility and other undesirable factors, when poorly managed [7]. The objective of conflict management is to see that conflicts remains to the creative side of an invisible but critically important line that separate the good or natural conflict from that which is bad or unnatural. [24] explained that people who work in environment where conflict is not managed effectively tend to exhibit both low satisfaction and reduced productivity. [25] posited that conflict may have either a positive or negative effect on the organizational performance. It depends on the nature of the conflict and how it is managed. For a group to be effective, individual members need to work in a positive conflict environment. If conflict is well managed it adds to innovation and productivity.

## **Conflict Management Strategies**

According to Ezeugbor, [26], effective conflict management strategy is a planned process in educational institutions aimed at resolving disputes constructively to promote peace and enhance educational attainment. Akubue (2002) emphasized that principals must adopt various techniques to manage crises effectively, whether between teachers, students, or school authorities. The managerial competence of principals determines the specific strategies used in resolving different crises. [2] defined conflict management strategies as internal mechanisms authorities employ to resolve disputes, while [12] noted that the choice of strategy depends on the nature of the conflict and the personalities involved. Various scholars have identified different strategies. Ladipo (1997) highlighted forcing, structural changes, avoidance, compromise, and smoothing, while Hodge and Anthony (1991) listed suppression, confrontation, third-party intervention, cooperation, democratic processes, and job rotation. Meyer (1994) considered effective communication the best strategy, enabling groups to understand problems and engage in collective problem-solving. Ibukun (1997) identified problem-solving, appeals to superior goals, avoidance, expression of opportunities, authority use, organizational restructuring, and compromise, while Oyebade (1995) stressed dialogue,

automatic, emergency, and delaying approaches. Adebayo (2007) argued that effective conflict management begins with commitment to resolving disputes productively, promoting rule of law, fairness, equity, and respect for human rights to minimize friction. Similarly, [27] recommended procedures such as facilitating open communication, encouraging mutual compromise, and creating compensatory mechanisms to reduce tension and enable stakeholders to adjust their activities harmoniously. Although these strategies do not guarantee total agreement, they enhance understanding, encourage negotiated solutions, and create a healthy atmosphere for peace. Principals, therefore, act as top strategists, working collaboratively with staff to apply effective conflict management strategies that foster harmonious relationships, stimulate progress, and ensure a conducive environment for achieving educational goals.

### **Conflict Management Techniques Used in Secondary Schools**

Conflict is inevitable in schools due to diverse values, interests, and backgrounds, and thus, effective techniques for managing disputes are critical. According to Oyeade (1994), various conflict management approaches have been highlighted by scholars as applicable in school settings. Kilmann (1970) identified five major techniques: competition, collaboration, compromise, accommodation, and avoidance – each varying in levels of cooperativeness and assertiveness. School heads must possess high conflict competence to apply appropriate techniques effectively. Robbins (1974) outlined eight resolution techniques: problem solving, superordinate goals, avoidance, smoothing, compromise, authoritative command, altering human variables, and altering structural variables. Similarly, Thomas (1996) cited in Adeyemi (2009) identified strategies including citizens' advisories, confrontation sessions, sensitivity training, educational pluralism, cooperative studies, and process involvement. Ladipo (1997) suggested forcing, structural adjustments, compromise, avoidance, and smoothing, while Hodge and Anthony (1991) included suppression, confrontation, third-party intervention, democratic processes, cooperation, and job rotation. Meyer (1994) emphasized effective communication as a superior strategy since it fosters mutual understanding and problem-solving. Likewise, Ibukun (1997) proposed problem-solving, prevention, appeals to organizational goals, expression of opportunities, use of authority, restructuring, and compromise, while Blake and Mouton (1964) highlighted smoothing, withdrawal, compromise, forcing, and problem-solving.

### **Accommodation Technique**

Also known as smoothing, accommodation prioritizes the concerns of others over personal interests. It is effective when temporary relief is needed, when maintaining harmony is essential, or when an issue matters more to one party than another (Habu, Dagett & Freejob, n.d). According to the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN, n.d), accommodation is useful when one realizes they are wrong, seeks to satisfy another's needs to build goodwill, or aims to preserve cooperation. It is also effective when continued competition may harm one's cause, when maintaining harmony is paramount, or when managers wish to encourage subordinates' growth by allowing them to learn from their mistakes.

### **Catharsis Technique**

Catharsis refers to emotional release achieved through specific behaviors. Ezegbe (1997) recommended engaging aggressive students in sporting activities such as football, tennis, or athletics to channel built-up aggression constructively. Involving bullies in recreational activities fosters friendliness and reduces hostility. Principals and teachers are encouraged to implement instructional programs and extracurricular activities that promote students' holistic development and prepare them for responsible adulthood. Oboegbulem (2004) emphasized involving students in school governance and giving them responsibilities, as this enhances communication among students, teachers, and administrators, promotes understanding, and resolves personal or social conflicts that might disrupt school operations.

### **Collaboration Technique**

Also called problem solving or problem confronting, collaboration seeks a win-win outcome where both parties' concerns are addressed. It involves mutual efforts to reconcile organizational objectives with individual needs (Habu, Dagett & Freejob, n.d). Collaboration is particularly effective where consensus and commitment are critical, when addressing multiple stakeholders' interests, or when fostering unity after previous conflicts [6]. According to Magaji (2015), collaborative individuals are assertive yet cooperative, acknowledging everyone's importance and striving to integrate diverse viewpoints for optimal solutions. This technique is useful when group cohesion is vital, trust is high, or participants are willing to reconsider positions as new information emerges. It encourages teamwork, creativity, and lasting resolutions while maintaining relationships. Collaboration works best in situations where:

- a. A high level of trust exists among parties;
- b. Responsibility should be shared equitably;
- c. Joint "ownership" of solutions is desired;
- d. Participants are open to changing positions when better options arise; and
- e. There is a need to resolve animosity or repair strained relationships [6].

### **Integrating Techniques for Effective School Management**

School principals play a central role in applying conflict management techniques effectively. Robbins (1974) emphasized that choosing a strategy depends on the nature of the conflict and the personalities involved. While accommodation maintains harmony, catharsis diffuses aggression, and collaboration fosters sustainable solutions, strategies like compromise, avoidance, and authoritative command are occasionally necessary depending on circumstances (Thomas, Hodge & Anthony). Meyer (1994) stressed that effective communication underpins all techniques by enabling understanding and minimizing misinterpretation. Furthermore, Oboegbulem (2004) recommended integrating students into school activities to build shared responsibility and reduce tensions.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Karl Marx Model of Conflict Theory.**

Karl Marx is a conflict theorist who demonstrated the existence of a class struggle which arose from the organization of material production within the society. His argument was based on the creation of social structures created by the ruling class who were the most powerful members of a society. To this end, the methods or ways of governance is determined by the ruling class because of its power and influence. Besides, he argued that the ruling class constructs social structures that best serve its interest. As a result of social structures characterized by strata class conflict emerged. Furthermore, social conflict theory of Karl Marx argues that individuals and groups (social classes) within the society have differing amounts of materials and non-material resources the (wealthy and poor) and that the more powerful groups (bourgeoisie) use their power in order to exploit groups with less power (proletariat). The two methods by which exploitation is done are through brute force and economics. Marxism argues that in human history conflict arises as a result of the strong (the rich) exploiting the weak (poor). Besides this position, he argued that the ruling class constructs social structures that best serve its interest. Thus, with the emergence of social structures characterized by strata class conflict emerged. This theory is related to the present study because in the school system conflict may take the form of school administrators exploiting the teachers and non-tutorial staff. This can ensue when the principals of the school deny the teachers school farm produce and other allowances due to them which can result to conflict. This study is anchored on Karl Marx theory because in the school system school administrators exploit the teachers and non-tutorial staff. This obtains when principals of the school deny the teachers the opportunity of partaking in conflict resolution by taking unilateral decisions in conflicts arising from the school system against the wishes of the entire staff of the school, this can result to conflict.

### **Empirical Studies**

[3] examined the effect of conflict management on organizational performance of public secondary schools in Gombe State. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. The study is descriptive research which employed survey design. The target population of the study comprised of teachers in the 268 public Secondary Schools in Gombe State. 54 schools were sampled using simple random sampling. Four teachers were selected from each of the 54 schools using purposive sampling, giving a total of 216 respondents. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Frequency count, simple percentage and ranking order were used to analyze the data. However, the findings of the study show that the conflict mostly experiences in Public Secondary Schools in Gombe State are a student versus a student conflict and a student versus a teacher conflict. The study also revealed that the effect of conflict on the performance of Public Secondary Schools is slightly dysfunctional and that conflict in public secondary schools in the state are not effectively managed. It was therefore recommended that students should be actively involved in decision making process and the school management should be sensitive to the students' needs.



Edet, Benson and Williams (2017) conducted a research titled Principals' Conflict Resolution Strategies and Teachers' Job Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and were duly converted into two research hypotheses to guide the study. Correlational research design was used in the study. The sample size of the study consisted of one thousand and fifty (1,050) public secondary school teachers and two thousand, one hundred (2,100) Senior Secondary two students randomly sampled from the population of six thousand, two hundred and ninety three (6293) teachers and twenty thousand, five hundred and ten (20,510) students respectively. Data collected from the study's instruments called Principals' Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (PCRSQ) and Teachers' Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (TJEQ) were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The findings revealed what causes identification and integration strategies had significant relationship with teachers' job effectiveness in terms of classroom teaching, maintenance of classroom discipline and supervision of students' academic activities. In the light of these findings, it was recommended that the government should ensure that school principals are retrained regularly and constantly through school-based workshops, conferences and seminars on effective conflict resolution strategies in-order to enhance teachers' job effectiveness.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered to facilitate extraction of data from different sources. The population of the study is one thousand six hundred and thirty (1630) respondents. This consists of one thousand four hundred and eighty seven (1487) secondary school teachers, one hundred and thirteen (113) principals and thirty (30) school supervisors from Ikom Education Zone. The sample size used for the conduct of this study is three hundred and twenty eight (328) respondents. A self-designed questionnaire used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire tagged "Assessment of Conflict Management Techniques in Secondary Schools" was structured and designed based on the objectives, research questions and the hypotheses. The questionnaire has two parts. Part one is on Bio data of the respondents. Part two has 30 items divided into three (3) sections designed to explore the assessment of application of conflict management techniques in Secondary Schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. The four points modified Likert rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was used for this section of the instrument. The researcher requested expert to vet and offer useful suggestions on each item of the instrument to ensure the questions attained both content and face validity. Their suggestions, modification and corrections were incorporated in the final draft of the instruments. In order to establish the reliability of a research instrument a try out procedure is very essential. The researcher used a small sample questionnaire to conduct the pilot test at Ogoja Local Government Area, Cross River State. The pilot test was conducted by administering the instrument on thirty five

(35) randomly selected teachers, nine (9) principals and six (6) supervisors of education. The data collected from the pilot study was subjected to reliability test using the split half method of reliability in determining the internal consistency of the items in the Likert structured of the questionnaire and were analysed using Cronbach' Alpha Formula. The result of reliability test for the pilot test yielded 0.79. The researcher administered the questionnaires to the respondents electronically. The mean was used to analyzed the research questions. Inferential statistics used was Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the significant difference between the opinions of the respondents at 0.05 significance level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data Analysis and Discussion

#### Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does application of accommodation technique contribute to resolving conflict between teachers and students in secondary schools?

**Table 1.** Opinions of Respondents on the Application of Accommodation Technique between Teachers and Students in Secondary Schools

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
1	Establishing goodwill gestures helps to maintain and reduce conflict between teachers and students in schools.	75	24.1	146	44.5	45	13.7	43	13.1	15	4.6	3.71
2	Establishing mutual respect helps to resolve conflict between teachers and students in schools.	73	22.3	155	47.3	60	18.3	32	9.8	8	2.4	3.77
3	Good interpersonal relationships reduce conflict between teachers and students.	82	25.0	160	48.8	61	18.6	21	6.4	4	1.2	3.90

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
4	Avoiding disruptive behaviors helps to reduce conflict between teachers and students in secondary schools.	70	21.3	154	47.0	79	24.1	24	7.3	1	0.3	3.95
5	Allowing students to experiment and learn from their own mistakes reduces conflict between teachers and students.	70	21.3	135	41.2	83	25.3	34	10.4	6	1.8	3.70
6	Preserving harmony in schools helps to enhance conflict management between teachers and students.	82	25.0	135	41.2	73	22.3	32	9.8	6	1.8	3.79
7	Building up social credit for later issues helps to resolve conflict between teachers and students in secondary schools.	54	16.5	157	47.9	69	21.0	44	13.4	4	1.2	3.65
8	Satisfying the needs of others helps to reduce conflict between teachers and students.	39	11.9	119	36.3	81	24.7	82	25.0	7	2.1	3.31
9	Establishing rules and	29	8.8	77	23.5	83	25.3	102	31.2	37	11.3	2.87

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
	regulations helps to reduce conflict between teachers and students in secondary schools.											
10	Establishing a guidance and counseling unit helps to reduce conflict between teachers and students.	31	9.5	125	38.1	50	15.2	79	24.1	43	13.1	3.07

The table summarizes respondents' views on techniques to reduce conflict between teachers and students in secondary schools. Establishing goodwill gestures (mean: 3.71), mutual respect (3.77), and good interpersonal relationships (3.90) are seen as effective strategies for conflict resolution. Avoiding disruptive behaviors (3.95) and allowing students to learn from mistakes (3.70) are also recognized as positive approaches. Preserving harmony (3.79) is deemed essential for conflict management, while building social credit (3.65) receives moderate support. However, satisfying others' needs (3.31) and establishing rules (2.87) are viewed less favorably, indicating a need for reevaluation. Establishing guidance and counseling units (3.07) is acknowledged but requires more focus to enhance effectiveness in reducing conflicts.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does application of catharsis technique contribute to resolving conflict among students in secondary schools?

**Table 2.** Opinions of Respondents on the Application of Catharsis Technique among Students in Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
1	Assigning responsibilities to students helps to reduce conflict among students in secondary schools.	92	28.0	152	46.3	31	9.5	47	14.3	6	1.8	3.84
2	Involvement of aggressive students in	110	33.5	136	41.5	17	5.2	60	18.3	4	1.2	3.90

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
	athletics helps to manage conflict among students.											
3	Availability of adequate instructional materials helps to reduce conflict among students in secondary schools.	65	19.8	108	32.9	43	13.1	95	29.0	17	5.2	3.36
4	Establishing a conducive learning environment reduces conflict among students in schools.	57	17.4	107	32.6	49	14.9	102	31.1	13	4.0	3.28
5	Establishment of religious clubs in schools helps to manage conflict among students.	37	11.3	121	36.9	53	16.2	98	29.9	19	5.8	3.18
6	Adequate provision of recreational facilities reduces conflict among students in secondary schools.	82	25.0	90	27.4	53	16.2	89	27.1	14	4.3	3.42
7	Involvement of students in inter-house competitions helps to manage conflict among secondary school students.	38	11.6	128	39.0	47	14.3	95	29.0	20	6.1	3.47
8	Provision of adequate seats and tables reduces conflict among students	43	13.1	113	34.5	57	17.4	101	30.8	14	4.3	3.21

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
	in secondary schools.											
9	Availability of space for convenience reduces conflict among students in secondary schools.	52	15.9	108	32.9	54	16.5	97	29.6	17	5.2	3.25
10	Availability of library and laboratory facilities reduces conflict among students.	76	23.2	77	23.5	68	20.7	84	25.6	23	7.0	3.30

The table presents respondents' opinions on various catharsis techniques for managing conflicts among students in public secondary schools. Assigning responsibilities (mean: 3.84) and involving aggressive students in athletics (3.90) are viewed as highly effective strategies. The availability of adequate instructional materials (3.36) and establishing a conducive learning environment (3.28) receive moderate support. Establishing religious clubs (3.18) and providing recreational facilities (3.42) are also seen as beneficial. Other factors, such as adequate seating (3.21), space for convenience (3.25), and the availability of libraries and laboratories (3.30), are acknowledged but with lower mean scores. Hence, the findings highlight the importance of active involvement and adequate resources in conflict management among students.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does application of collaboration technique contribute to resolving between teachers and Ministry of Education in Secondary Schools?

**Table 3.** Opinions of Respondents on the Application of Collaboration Technique Between Teachers and Ministry of Education Officials in Secondary Schools

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
1	Establishing a high level of trust helps to reduce conflict between teachers and Ministry of Education officials.	69	21.0	101	30.8	59	18.0	76	23.2	23	7.0	3.36

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
2	Good interpersonal relationships help to reduce conflict between teachers and Ministry of Education officials.	38	11.6	120	36.6	38	11.6	91	27.7	41	12.6	3.17
3	Intervention of a third party helps to reduce conflicts between teachers and inspectors.	94	28.7	131	39.9	31	9.5	63	19.2	9	2.8	3.74
4	The use of reconciliation helps to manage conflict between teachers and Ministry officials.	83	25.3	157	47.9	24	7.3	57	17.4	7	2.1	3.79
5	Collaborating with staff helps to manage conflict between teachers and Ministry of Education officials.	99	30.2	151	46.0	38	11.6	39	11.9	1	0.3	3.94
6	Involvement of teachers in decision-making that affects them reduces conflict between teachers and Ministry officials.	55	16.8	100	30.5	82	25.0	83	25.3	8	2.4	3.34
7	Effective communication networks help to resolve conflict between teachers and Ministry of	99	30.2	67	20.4	60	18.3	69	21.0	33	10.1	3.40

S/N	Item Statements	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
	Education officials.											
8	Use of democratic supervision helps to manage conflict between teachers and Ministry of Education officials.	51	15.5	97	29.6	40	12.2	82	25.0	58	17.7	3.35
9	Conflict with the Ministry could be resolved if teachers are dedicated to their duties.	93	28.4	147	44.8	34	10.4	47	14.3	7	2.1	3.83
10	Mutual respect helps to reduce conflict between teachers and Ministry of Education officials.	111	33.8	177	54.0	18	5.5	22	6.7	-	-	4.15

The table reflects respondents' opinions on collaboration techniques between teachers and Ministry of Education officials in secondary schools. The highest mean score (4.15) indicates strong support for mutual respect as a key factor in reducing conflict. Collaborating with staff (3.94) and third-party intervention (3.74) are also seen as effective strategies. The use of reconciliation (3.79) and establishing trust (3.36) receive moderate support, while good interpersonal relationships (3.17) are viewed less favorably. Involvement in decision-making (3.34) and effective communication (3.40) are acknowledged but with lower mean scores. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of collaboration, communication, and respect in managing conflicts within educational settings

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers, principals and Ministry of Education Officials on the application of accommodation technique between teachers and students in Secondary Schools.



**Table 4.** Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Application of Accommodation Technique between Teachers and Students in Secondary Schools

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	F-crit.	P-Value
Between Groups	3.953	2	1.976	1.303	3.03	0.39
Within Groups	492.692	325	1.516			
<b>Total</b>	<b>496.645</b>	<b>327</b>				

**P<0.05**

Table 4.4 shows Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test revealed that the calculated F- ratio value of 1.303 is less than the 3.03 F-critical value while the calculated P-value of 0.39 is greater than 0.05 level of significant set for the study. The null hypothesis is hereby retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers, principals and Ministry of Education Officials on the application of accommodation technique between teachers and students in Secondary School.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers, principals and ministry of education officials on the application of catharsis technique among students in Secondary Schools.

**Table 5.** Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Application of Catharsis Technique among Students in Secondary Schools.

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	F-crit.	P-Value
Between Groups	1.357	2	0.679	0.289	3.03	0.79
Within Groups	763.100	325	2.348			
<b>Total</b>	<b>764.457</b>	<b>327</b>				

**P<0.05**

Table 4.5 shows Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test. It revealed that the calculated F-ratio value of 0.289 is less than the 3.03 F-critical value while the calculated P-value of 0.79 is greater than 0.05 level of significant set for the study. The null hypothesis is hereby retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers, principals and ministry of education officials on the application of catharsis technique among students in Secondary Schools.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers, principals and ministry of education officials on the application of collaboration technique between teachers and ministry of Education in Secondary Schools.

**Table 6.** Summary of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Application of Collaboration Technique between Teachers and Ministry of Education in Secondary School.

Variable	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	F-crit.	P-Value
Between Groups	4.064	2	2.032	0.623	3.03	0.60
Within Groups	1061.870	325	3.268			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1066.034</b>	<b>327</b>				

**P<0.05**

Table 4.6 shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test. It revealed that the calculated F-ratio value of 0.623 is less than the 3.03 F-critical value while the calculated P- value of 0.60 is greater than 0.05 level of significant set for the study. The null hypothesis is hereby retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the opinions of teachers, principals and ministry of education officials on the application of collaboration technique between teachers and ministry of Education in Secondary Schools.

### Discussions of Findings

Based on the opinions of the respondents, the findings of the study revealed that the application of accommodation technique such as establishing good interpersonal relationship and mutual respect helps to reduce conflict between teachers and students in secondary schools. This indicates that the application of accommodation as a technique of conflict management helps to manage conflict between teachers and students. Therefore, establishing goodwill gesture, preserving harmony in school, establishing rules and regulations, satisfying the need of others as well as establishing guidance and counseling unit will help to reduce conflict between teachers and students in secondary schools. In line with this finding, [6] revealed that the conflict between teachers and students emerges as a result of teachers having illicit relationships with students or poor academic performance by teachers. Therefore, the appropriate techniques for managing such conflict include: teachers should be hardworking and committed to the assigned responsibilities. They should be honest in the sharing and carrying of responsibilities and should be incorrigible exemplary personnel in their affairs. The findings were also in line with the finding of research conducted by Adeyemi and [2] who investigated conflicts management strategies and administrative effectiveness in Nigerian universities. The research found that communication gap between the authorities and the workers was found to be the major cause of conflict in the universities. The study then recommended that the authorities of Nigerian universities should adopt a blend of management strategies, such as accommodation techniques, in managing conflicts in their institutions in order to enhance administrative effectiveness.

The study revealed that the application of catharsis technique such as assigning responsibilities to students, involvement of them in inter-house competitions and establishing conducive learning environment help to reduce conflict among students in

secondary schools. This indicates that the use of catharsis, as a technique of conflict management help to reduce conflict among students in secondary schools. Therefore, involvement of aggressive students in athletics activities, adequate provisions of recreational facilities, availability of space of conveniences, adequate provision of seats and tables as well as establishing religious clubs are potential sources of conflict management among students in secondary schools. These findings were in line with the findings of a research conducted by [3] who examined the effect of conflict management on organizational performance of public secondary schools in Gombe State. The researchers revealed that conflict mostly experience in public secondary schools in Gombe State are a student versus a student conflict and a student versus a teacher conflict.

Finally, the findings of the study revealed that the application of collaboration technique such as effective communication network and the use of democratic supervision help to manage conflict between the teachers and ministry of education officials in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. This indicates that the use of collaboration, help to reduce conflict between the teachers and Ministry of Education Officials. Therefore, establishing high level of trust, good interpersonal relationship and involvement of teachers in decision making are some of the potential sources of managing conflict between the teachers and Ministry of Education Officials. This finding was in line with the finding of research conducted by Onyedieke (2011) on the intervention techniques teachers can use to resolve conflicts in secondary schools of Owerri Education Zone. The researcher recommended that secondary school principals should provide communicative and participative process in which teachers and individual members of staff will have opportunities and freedom to express their views and opinions in any kind of administrative decision making and conflict resolution techniques.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding :** The study concluded that various conflict management techniques—accommodation, competition, catharsis, compromise, and collaboration—play critical roles in reducing and managing conflicts across different relationships in secondary schools, including between teachers and students, among teachers, between students, and between school management and education officials. **Implication :** These findings imply that the effective adoption of tailored conflict management approaches can foster more harmonious school environments, enhance teaching and learning processes, and strengthen institutional relationships, thereby promoting sustainable educational outcomes. **Limitation :** However, the study was limited to public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, which may restrict the generalizability of its conclusions to other educational contexts or regions with differing cultural and administrative structures. **Future Research :** Further studies are recommended to explore comparative analyses across different states or countries,

incorporate longitudinal designs to track conflict management outcomes over time, and integrate qualitative perspectives to deepen the understanding of stakeholders' experiences in applying conflict management techniques.

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