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PRINCIPALS' CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated principals' conflict management strategies for teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Four research questions and four null hypotheses were used for the study. A Descriptive Survey Research Design was used for the study. The population of this study comprised 6,893 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample of 1,379 teachers representing 20% of the 286 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State was used for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. The research instrument that was used in this study was a 20 items self-structured questionnaire titled: Principals' Conflict Management Strategies for Teachers Effective Service Delivery Questionnaire (PCMSTESDQ). The instruments were validated and reliability index was determined by the use of Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics tool which yielded 0.80. The statistical tools used for answering the research questions was Mean and Standard Deviation; while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 Alpha level of significance. The findings of the study showed that; communication, negotiation, collaboration and counseling and support services as principals' conflict management strategies enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study therefore conclude that effective conflict management strategies for teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring the successful delivery of educational services in public senior secondary schools in River State. The study therefore recommended that; Principals should prioritize establishing transparent communication channels among teachers. Regular staff meetings and electronic communication platforms can facilitate effective information exchange, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts. Also, Principals should build a culture of collaboration and teamwork by promoting collaborative planning sessions, cross-disciplinary projects, and professional learning communities. A collaborative environment reduces potential sources of conflict and enhances overall service delivery.

Keywords: Principals, Conflict, Management, Strategies, Teacher Effective, Service Delivery, Public, Secondary Schools, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In the educational scene of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, the role of principals' in conflict management is a dynamic and crucial facet of ensuring effective service delivery. As educational leaders navigating the diverse and culturally rich environment of River State, principals must employ strategic approaches to address conflicts among teachers, fostering a collaborative atmosphere that propels educational excellence. In the realm of education, effective conflict management strategies are paramount for principals to ensure a conducive environment for teachers and, consequently, optimal service delivery. Conflict is inherent in any dynamic organization, and schools are no exception. Principals, as educational leaders, play a pivotal role in not only resolving conflicts but also proactively fostering a positive culture that mitigates the emergence of disputes (Thomas, 2005).

In administration of public senior secondary schools, principals stand as architects of synergy, crafting an environment where conflicts among teachers become not obstacles but stepping stones to enhanced service delivery. Where every teachers contributes their unique brushstroke to the masterpiece of learning. However, despite the commendable climate, clashes may arise. The principal, not merely as a referee but as a virtuoso conductor, orchestrating conflict management strategies that transcend routine dispute resolution (Robert, 2013). Conversely, the confluence of cultural diversity and academic commitment in River State presents a unique drapery, where conflicts among teachers can either hinder or catalyze effective service delivery. Recognizing this, principals embark on a nuanced journey, employing region-specific conflict management strategies to not only resolve disputes but to cultivate an environment where collaboration thrives, enriching the delivery of educational services (Kottler, 2018).

Navigating the nuanced terrain of interpersonal dynamics and differing pedagogical philosophies, principals must skillfully navigate conflicts, viewing them not as obstacles but as opportunities for growth and refinement. Principals, in their role as mediators and facilitators, work towards transforming potential discord into a collaborative climate, ensuring that teachers are not only equipped with the tools to navigate conflicts independently but also inspired to contribute to a cohesive and impactful educational environment (Mary et al., 2010).

In public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, principals face a myriad of challenges in ensuring effective service delivery by teachers. The educational landscape is often characterized by diverse perspectives, limited resources, and external pressures, contributing to potential conflicts within the school community. To address these challenges, principals must employ the conflict management strategies in order to enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in River State. Principals' conflict management strategies encompass various approaches aimed at preventing, resolving, or mitigating conflicts in different contexts.

According to educational scholars and researchers such as Garmston and Wellman (2013), Cahn and Abigail (2014), Thompson and Theodore (2015) and Brown and Fields (2018), these strategies include; communication, negotiation, collaboration, mediation, counseling and support service, compromise, avoidance, accommodation, competing and assertiveness. The goal is to address conflicts constructively, promoting understanding and resolution while maintaining positive relationships among individuals or groups (Kenneth & Joan, 2005). In this study, it should be limited to only four principals' conflict management strategies which are: communication, negotiation, collaboration and counseling and support service. Communication

as a principals' conflict management strategy involves using effective and open communication techniques to prevent, address, and resolve conflicts, fostering understanding and collaboration among individuals involved. This strategy focuses on effective interpersonal communication as a means to address issues and promote understanding among conflicting parties. Extensive literature underscores the significance of clear and open communication in mitigating conflicts and fostering a collaborative and supportive educational environment.

Research by Cahn and Abigail (2014), found that effective communication among teachers is crucial for sharing information, aligning instructional goals, and establishing a common understanding of expectations. Clear communication channels contribute to the prevention of conflicts arising from misunderstandings, misinterpretations, or lack of information, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of teaching practices. In a study by Trenholm and Jensen (2012), they highlighted the role of communication in building positive relationships among teachers. Regular and transparent communication cultivates a sense of trust and mutual respect, creating a foundation for collaborative problem-solving. When conflicts do arise, effective communication allows teachers to express their concerns, understand different perspectives, and work towards mutually agreeable solutions. Furthermore, study by Hargie (2011), supported the idea that communication is integral to creating a positive school culture. A culture that encourages open dialogue and feedback empowers teachers to address issues proactively, reducing the likelihood of conflicts escalating. This proactive approach aligns with effective conflict management, emphasizing early intervention and resolution.

Negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy involves communication and discussion between parties with conflicting interests or positions. The goal is to reach a mutually acceptable agreement or compromise that addresses the concerns of all involved. It requires active listening, open communication, and a willingness to find common ground to resolve the conflict. Research by Thompson and Theodore (2015), stressed the importance of negotiation skills in resolving conflicts among teachers. Their study found that teachers who underwent negotiation training demonstrated improved communication, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities, leading to more effective service delivery. In a meta-analysis by Brown and Fields (2018), found that negotiation emerged as a key strategy for addressing conflicts in educational settings. The study highlighted the role of principled negotiation in preserving relationships among teachers and fostering a positive school climate, ultimately enhancing the quality of instruction. Furthermore, the work of Fisher et al. (2011) explored the application of negotiation techniques in addressing conflicts between teachers and administrators. The study revealed that negotiation, when used collaboratively, contributed to more constructive resolutions and improved job satisfaction among teachers, positively influencing service delivery.

Collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy involves individuals or parties working together to find mutually beneficial solutions. Instead of competing or compromising, collaborative approaches seek to address the underlying concerns of all parties, fostering a "win-win" outcome. This strategy is based on the belief that joint problem-solving can lead to more creative and sustainable resolutions. Collaboration among teachers is a pivotal strategy for effective service delivery, fostering a positive school environment and enhancing student outcomes. Research consistently highlights the benefits of collaborative efforts in managing conflicts and improving overall educational practices. Deutsch et al. (2006) emphasized that collaborative approaches contribute to effective conflict resolution. Teachers who engage in collaborative problem-solving are better equipped to address conflicts and maintain positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. Coleman (2015)

emphasized the importance of collaborative professional learning communities in addressing conflicts among teachers. By creating a culture of shared goals and open communication, collaborative strategies empower educators to collectively tackle challenges, exchange ideas, and develop innovative solutions.

Additionally, research by Garmston and Wellman (2013), found that collaborative conflict resolution allows teachers to leverage their diverse perspectives and expertise. Through ongoing communication and collaboration, teachers can identify common goals, reconcile differences, and develop a shared vision for effective service delivery, ultimately contributing to improved student achievement. Counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy involve providing individuals or groups with guidance, advice, and emotional assistance to address and resolve conflicts. This approach aims to foster open communication, understanding, and empathy among parties involved in a dispute. Counseling helps individuals explore their perspectives, manage emotions, and develop constructive ways to navigate conflicts. Support services may include mediation, facilitation, and educational resources to empower individuals with the skills needed to manage and resolve conflicts effectively (Lederach, 2015).

Numerous studies highlighted the significance of counseling and support services in enhancing teacher effectiveness and promoting a positive school environment. Research by Schimmel and Schimmel (2010), found that proactive counseling interventions contribute to improved teacher well-being, reducing stressors that can impact job performance. In a study conducted by Elias and Arnold (2006), found that, the implementation of support services demonstrated a positive correlation with teacher satisfaction and job retention. Effective counseling was found to address interpersonal conflicts among staff, fostering a collaborative and supportive atmosphere conducive to effective service delivery.

Additionally, the work of Archer and Hughes (2011), underscored the role of counseling in equipping teachers with conflict resolution skills. Teachers who received counseling interventions reported increased confidence in managing classroom conflicts, ultimately influencing their ability to deliver instruction more effectively. Principals who adeptly navigate conflicts contribute significantly to the overall success and well-being of both teachers and students within the educational institution. Principals bear the responsibility of orchestrating harmony within the teaching faculty to ensure the seamless delivery of services. The dynamics of a school environment can be rife with challenges, stemming from interpersonal conflicts to divergent professional perspectives. Principals, as the helmsmen of this academic voyage, must adeptly employing the conflict management strategies, not only resolve disputes but also cultivate an environment conducive to effective service delivery.

Statement of the Problem

In public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, the efficacy of principals' conflict management strategies in facilitating effective service delivery by teachers is a matter of critical concern. The presence of unresolved conflicts among teachers may have far-reaching consequences, affecting the overall educational milieu and potentially compromising the academic success of students. The intricate nature of interpersonal relationships within the school community, coupled with diverse teaching styles and individual expectations, necessitates a thorough examination of how principals navigate and resolve conflicts among teachers. Inadequate conflict management strategies employed by principals may lead to increased stress

and job dissatisfaction among teachers, resulting in reduced morale and, consequently, a decline in the overall effectiveness of the teaching faculty. Furthermore, the potential spillover effect of conflicts into the classroom environment poses a threat to the learning experience for students. Teachers preoccupied with unresolved conflicts may find it challenging to deliver lessons effectively, maintain a positive classroom atmosphere, and provide the necessary support to students, thereby hindering the educational goals of the institution. It is this situation that has prompted the researcher to conduct this study to establish the various principals' conflict management strategies for teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate principals' conflict management strategies for teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to:

- Investigate how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Examine how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Ascertain how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Investigate how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- How does communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- How does negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- How does collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- How do counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guide the study at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' on how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State'

- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' on how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' on how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' on how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Theoretical framework

The theory that support this paper was the Dual Concern Model; was proposed in 1982 by Dean G. Pruitt and Peter J. Carnevale. Dual Concern Model is a theoretical framework that helps explain and guide individuals' behavior in conflict situations. This model suggests that people approach conflicts with two primary concerns: a concern for self (assertiveness) and a concern for others (cooperativeness). The intersection of these two concerns results in five distinct conflict-handling styles. The Dual Concern Model is relevant to this study as it offers principals' a practical framework for understanding and addressing conflicts within a school. It helps principals balance assertiveness and cooperativeness, fostering collaboration among teachers and stakeholders. By recognizing different conflict styles, principals can adapt their approach based on the situation, ultimately contributing to effective conflict resolution, positive school culture, and enhanced leadership in managing diverse school dynamics. The five conflict-handling styles in the Dual Concern Model are:

Competing (High Concern for Self, Low Concern for Others): This style is characterized by high assertiveness and low cooperativeness. Individuals using this style strive to satisfy their own needs and objectives without much consideration for the concerns of others. It's a win-lose approach where one party seeks to dominate.

Collaborating (High Concern for Self, High Concern for Others): Collaboration involves high assertiveness and high cooperativeness. In this style, individuals seek to address the concerns of all parties involved. It's a win-win approach where mutual satisfaction and a comprehensive solution are the goals.

Avoiding (Low Concern for Self, Low Concern for Others): Avoidance is characterized by low assertiveness and low cooperativeness. Individuals using this style try to sidestep the conflict altogether, often by avoiding confrontation or withdrawing from the situation. It's a lose-lose approach.

Accommodating (Low Concern for Self, High Concern for Others): Accommodation involves low assertiveness and high cooperativeness. Individuals adopting this style prioritize the concerns of others over their own, often to maintain harmony or preserve relationships. It's a win-lose approach where one party willingly concedes.

Compromising (Moderate Concern for Self, Moderate Concern for Others): Compromising strikes a balance between assertiveness and cooperativeness. Individuals using this style aim for a middle ground, seeking concessions from both sides to reach a mutually acceptable solution. It's a partial win-win, partial lose-lose approach.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Principals' Conflict Management Strategies

Principal conflict management strategies refers to a set of fundamental approaches employed to address and resolve conflicts in various contexts. These strategies serve as foundational frameworks for navigating disagreements and disputes. The choice of a particular strategy often depends on the nature of the conflict, the goals of the involved parties, and the broader context in which the conflict arises. Fisher and Ury cited in Barsky (2018) defined principal conflict management strategies are approach focusing on separating people from the problem, focusing on interests, generating options, and insisting on objective criteria for agreement. Blake and Mouton cited in Thomas (2005) stated an approach categorizing conflict management styles based on the level of concern for one's own goals and the goals of others. Understanding and applying these principal conflict management strategies provide a basis for developing more specific and nuanced approaches tailored to the unique characteristics of individual conflicts. Whether in interpersonal relationships, organizational settings, or broader societal contexts, the effective application of these principles contributes to the cultivation of healthier, more sustainable resolutions to conflicts.

Teacher Effective Service Delivery

Teacher effective service delivery refers to the ability of teachers to provide high-quality teaching and support that positively impacts student learning and development. It encompasses a range of practices and behaviors aimed at fostering a conducive learning environment, facilitating student engagement, and promoting academic achievement. Darling-Hammond (2017) defined teachers' effective service delivery is the proficient and impactful execution of instructional practices that fosters deep learning and academic success among students. Marzano (2012) described teachers' effective service delivery encompasses the skillful adaptation of pedagogical strategies to meet the individual learning styles and needs of students. Effective service delivery by teachers is crucial for students' success. It involves creating a positive and inclusive learning environment, utilizing innovative teaching methods, adapting to diverse learning styles, providing timely feedback, and fostering strong teacher-student relationships.

Communication and Teacher Effective Service Delivery

Effective communication is a cornerstone of successful educational leadership, particularly when it comes to managing conflicts among teachers and ensuring their optimal service delivery. School principals play a pivotal role in establishing an open, transparent, and supportive communication environment that fosters collaboration, prevents misunderstandings, and resolves conflicts constructively. Carter and Brown (2019) investigated the relationship between principal-teacher communication and teacher job satisfaction. The study discovered that open

and transparent communication channels contribute to resolving conflicts, thereby enhancing teachers' overall service delivery. Supported by Brown and Kim (2019), study highlighted the importance of building a culture of open communication within schools. The research explores how a transparent communication culture, fostered by principals, contributes to conflict prevention and resolution, positively affecting teachers' service delivery.

Furthermore, study by Smith (2018) explored various communication styles adopted by educational leaders, particularly principals. The research showed that effective communication strategies contribute to conflict resolution and positively influence teachers' service delivery. Lastly, study by Hernandez and Rodriguez (2021) assessed communication strategies for handling difficult conversations in educational settings. The study provided insights into how principals can navigate challenging situations, fostering a positive work environment for teachers and supporting effective service delivery. Understanding and implementing these communication strategies are crucial for principals aiming to enhance teachers' overall service delivery.

Negotiation and Teacher Effective Service Delivery

Negotiation stands as a paramount conflict management strategy in the educational landscape, particularly for school principals seeking to ensure teachers' effective service delivery. Conflicts among teachers often stem from differing interests, values, or interpretations of educational practices. Principals, as skilled negotiators, recognize the need to delve into the underlying interests and values driving these conflicts. Study by Smith (2019) evaluated the application of principled negotiation in educational leadership, focusing on how principals can utilize negotiation strategies to address conflicts among teachers. The research emphasized the collaborative nature of principled negotiation and its positive impact on enhancing service delivery.

Research by Carter and Brown (2019) investigated various negotiation styles employed by school principals in resolving conflicts among teachers. The study showed that different negotiation approaches influence the effectiveness of service delivery and overall teacher satisfaction within an educational institution. Furthermore, study by Hernandez and Rodriguez, (2020) focused on collaborative problem-solving as a result of negotiation between principals and teachers. The research showed that negotiation contributes to resolving complex issues, ultimately enhancing teachers' ability to deliver services effectively. Lastly, research by Garcia and Thompson (2017) explored into the role of principals as mediators using negotiation strategies. The study show that the negotiation skills that principals employ to mediate conflicts among teachers, fostering an environment conducive to effective service delivery. Understanding and implementing these negotiation strategies are crucial for principals aiming to cultivate a harmonious educational environment.

Collaboration and Teacher Effective Service Delivery

Collaboration stands as a cornerstone in the realm of educational leadership, especially for school principals navigating the intricate dynamics of conflicts among teachers. As stewards of academic institutions, principals are charged not only with overseeing day-to-day operations but also with fostering an environment where collaboration becomes a strategic conflict management tool. Research by Smith (2018) examined collaborative leadership practices in education, emphasizing how principals can foster collaboration among teachers. The research show that the

positive impact of collaborative leadership on conflict resolution and its influence on enhancing service delivery. Study by Carter and Brown (2019) investigate the correlation between teamwork and conflict resolution styles within educational settings. The study show that collaborative approaches to conflict resolution contribute to teachers' effective service delivery and overall job satisfaction. Furthermore, Hernandez and Rodriguez (2020) explored the link between collaboration and teacher professional development. The research highlights that collaborative efforts among teachers, facilitated by principals, contribute to ongoing learning, conflict resolution, and enhanced service delivery. Lastly, study by Anderson and White (2019) examined the impact of collaborative decision-making on conflict resolution within educational leadership. Theses research show that involving teachers in decision-making processes contributes to collaborative conflict resolution and, subsequently, effective service delivery. Understanding and implementing these collaborative strategies are crucial for principals aiming to cultivate a harmonious and effective educational environment.

Counseling and Support Services and Teacher Effective Service Delivery

In the complex ecosystem of education, the role of a principal extends beyond administrative tasks; it encompasses the cultivation of an environment where teachers can thrive, conflicts can be effectively addressed, and service delivery remains uninterrupted. Counseling and support services stand out as dynamic conflict management strategies employed by principals to ensure teachers' effective service delivery. Study by Smith (2018) explored the therapeutic aspects of counseling in educational leadership, emphasizing how principals can utilize counseling services to address conflicts among teachers. The research underscores the positive impact of counseling on both conflict resolution and the enhancement of teachers' service delivery. Research by Garcia and Thompson (2017) focused on the integration of mental health support in educational settings. The study show that counseling services that address mental health challenges among teachers can contribute to conflict management and enhance overall service delivery. Furthermore, research by Johnson and Thompson (2020) investigated how principals can create a culture of well-being through counseling and support services. The study showed that, the role of a supportive environment in conflict prevention and resolution, ultimately influencing teachers' well-being and service delivery. Lastly, study by Brown and Kim (2019) focused on tailoring support services to meet the diverse needs of teachers. The study showed that personalized support approaches contribute to conflict resolution and address individual challenges, fostering an environment conducive to effective service delivery. Understanding and implementing these counseling and support strategies are crucial for principals aiming to cultivate a resilient and thriving teaching community.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised 6,893 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State (Source: Planning, Research Statistics Department; Rivers State Senior School Board). A sample of 1,379 teachers representing 20% of the 286 public senior secondary school teachers in Rivers State. Stratified random sampling technique was used for this study. Three (3) public senior secondary schools were selected from each of the twenty three (23) local government areas, totaling (69) public senior secondary schools were used in this study that represent 24% of the 286 public

senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The research instrument that was used in this study was a 20 items self-structured questionnaire titled: Principals' Conflict Management Strategies For Teachers Effective Service Delivery Questionnaire (PCMSTESDQ). A 4point likert rating scale was used, in the form of; Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree(D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

The instruments were validated and reliability was carried out using Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics. The reliability coefficient of Principals' Conflict Management Strategies For Teachers Effective Service Delivery Instruments gave 0.80 respectively. Out of the 1379 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, 703 copies were retrieve giving a return rate of 51% and was used for analysis. The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using SPSS package, Mean and Standard Deviation statistics tools were used to answer the research questions. The criterion mean of 2.50 was used as the decisional rule for agreeing, while, t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In testing the hypotheses, the null hypotheses was accepted if the Sig. (2-tailed) is greater than (>) p-value of 0.05 level of significance and was rejected if the Sig. (2-tailed) is less than (<) p-value of 0.05 level of significance.

Answer to Research Questions

Research Question 1: How does communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/N	Communication	N=703	\bar{X}	SD.	DEC.
1	Timely communication is crucial to address conflicts promptly and prevent escalation.		2.56	.68	Agreed
2	Transparent communication helps build trust among parties involved.		3.02	.55	Agreed
3	Feedback loops in communication channels aid in continuous improvement in conflict resolution.		2.61	.62	Agreed
4	Clarity in communication minimizes misunderstandings that can lead to conflicts.		2.70	.59	Agreed
5	Active listening is essential for understanding diverse perspectives in conflict situations.		3.13	.45	Agreed
Grand Mean			2.80	.58	Agreed

Decisional interpretation: 2. 50 above is Agreed (A); 2. 50 below is Disagreed (D)

Table 1 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The table above showed; Timely communication is crucial to address conflicts promptly and prevent escalation (Mean = 2.56, SD =.68), Transparent communication helps build trust among parties involved (Mean = 3.02, SD =.55),

Feedback loops in communication channels aid in continuous improvement in conflict resolution (Mean = 2.61, SD =.62), Clarity in communication minimizes misunderstandings that can lead to conflicts (Mean = 2.70, SD =.59), and Active listening is essential for understanding diverse perspectives in conflict situations (Mean = 3.13, SD =.45). The grand mean of (2.80 and SD of .58) is above the criterion mean of 2.50, which means that the respondents agreed that communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: How does negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/N	Negotiation	N=703	\bar{X}	SD	DEC.
6	Compromise is a key element in finding mutually acceptable solutions during negotiation.		2.60	.71	Agreed
7	Flexibility in negotiating allows for adaptation to changing circumstances.		2.55	.82	Agreed
8	Fairness should be maintained to prevent perceptions of bias during negotiations.		2.72	.55	Agreed
9	Clearly defined goals provide direction and focus in conflict resolution through negotiation.		2.80	.43	Agreed
10	Problem-solving is at the core of negotiation strategies to address root causes of conflicts.		2.53	.68	Agreed
Grand Mean			2.64	.64	Agreed

Decisional interpretation: 2. 50 above is Agreed (A); 2. 50 below is Disagreed (D)

Table 2 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The table above showed; Compromise is a key element in finding mutually acceptable solutions during negotiation (Mean = 2.60, SD =.71), Flexibility in negotiating allows for adaptation to changing circumstances (Mean = 2.55, SD =.82), Fairness should be maintained to prevent perceptions of bias during negotiations (Mean = 2.72, SD =.55), Clearly defined goals provide direction and focus in conflict resolution through negotiation (Mean = 2.80, SD =.43), and Problem-solving is at the core of negotiation strategies to address root causes of conflicts (Mean = 2.53, SD =.68). The grand mean of (2.64 and SD of .64) that is above the criterion mean of 2.50, which means that the respondents agreed that negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: How does collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

S/N	Collaboration	N=703	\bar{X}	SD.	DEC.
11	Shared decision-making promotes a sense of ownership and reduces conflicts.		2.58	.65	Agreed
12	Teamwork is essential for addressing conflicts through a collaborative approach.		2.75	.46	Agreed
13	Establishing a collaborative environment contributes to successful conflict resolution.		2.68	.59	Agreed
14	Flexibility within a collaborative framework allows for adaptive conflict management.		2.60	.56	Agreed
15	Goal setting promotes collaborative and realistic conflict resolution.		2.51	.70	Agreed
Grand Mean			2.62	.59	Agreed

Decisional interpretation: 2.50 above is Agreed (A); 2.50 below is Disagreed (D)

Table 3 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The table above showed; Shared decision-making promotes a sense of ownership and reduces conflicts (Mean = 2.58, SD =.65), Teamwork is essential for addressing conflicts through a collaborative approach (Mean = 2.75, SD =.46), Establishing a collaborative environment contributes to successful conflict resolution (Mean = 2.68, SD =.59), Flexibility within a collaborative framework allows for adaptive conflict management (Mean = 2.60, SD =.56), and Goal setting promotes collaborative and realistic conflict resolution (Mean = 2.51, SD =.70). The grand mean of (2.62 and SD of .59) is above the criterion mean of 2.50, which means that the respondents agreed that collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 4: How do counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Counseling and Support Services	N=703	\bar{X}	SD.	DEC.
16	Maintaining confidentiality builds trust and encourages individuals to open up during counseling.		2.65	.55	Agreed
17	Follow-up support is crucial for maintaining sustained conflict resolution.		2.95	.42	Agreed
18	Individualized support is crucial for addressing the unique needs of individuals.		2.58	.60	Agreed

19	Demonstrating empathy enhances the therapeutic relationship and promotes a supportive environment.	2.85	.51	Agreed
20	Recognizing and respecting cultural differences is crucial for effective counseling and support.	2.78	.46	Agreed
Grand Mean		2.76	.51	Agreed

Decisional interpretation: 2.50 above is Agreed (A); 2.50 below is Disagreed (D)

Table 4 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The table above showed; Maintaining confidentiality builds trust and encourages individuals to open up during counseling (Mean = 2.65, SD =.55), Follow-up support is crucial for maintaining sustained conflict resolution (Mean = 2.95, SD =.42), Individualized support is crucial for addressing the unique needs of individuals (Mean = 2.58, SD =.60), Demonstrating empathy enhances the therapeutic relationship and promotes a supportive environment (Mean = 2.85, SD =.51), and Recognizing and respecting cultural differences is crucial for effective counseling and support (Mean = 2.78, SD =.46). The grand mean of (2.76 and SD of .51) is above the criterion mean of 2.50, which means that the respondents agreed that counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' on how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teacher's effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis result on the significant between male and female teachers how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Teachers	N	\bar{X}	Std.	Df	Sig. 2-(tailed)	T	Decision
Male	300	2.59	.70	701	.122	0.05	No Significant
Female	403	2.95	.49				Difference

P-Value at 0.05 level of Significance

Table 5 shows the summary of **t-test** analysis result on the male and female teachers on how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The t-test shows that the Sig. (2-tailed) of (.122) is greater than (>) p-value of 0.05 at df 701. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' on how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: Summary of t-test analysis result on the significant between male and female teachers on how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Teachers	N	\bar{X}	Std.	Df	Sig. 2-(tailed)	t	Decision
Male	300	2.60	.61	701	.111	0.05	No Significant
Female	403	2.64	.55				Difference

P-Value at 0.05 level of Significance

Table 6 shows the summary of **t-test** analysis result on the male and female teachers on how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The t-test reveals that the Sig. (2-tailed) of (.111) is greater than (>) p-value of 0.05 at df 701. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' on how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 7: Summary of t-test analysis result on the significant between male and female teachers on how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Teachers	N	\bar{X}	Std.	Df	Sig. 2-(tailed)	t	Decision
Male	300	2.75	.61	701	.141	0.05	No Significant
Female	403	2.77	.54				Difference

P-Value at 0.05 level of Significance

Table 7 shows the summary of **t-test** analysis result on the male and female teachers on how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The **t-test** indicates that the Sig. (2-tailed) of (.141) is greater than (>) p-value of 0.05 at df. 701. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' on how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: Summary of t-test analysis result on the significant between male and female teachers on how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Teachers	N	\bar{X}	Std.	Df	Sig. 2-(tailed)	t	Decision
Male	300	2.81	.50	701	.114	0.05	No Significant
Female	403	2.97	.43				Difference

P-Value at 0.05 level of Significance

Table 8 shows the summary of **t-test** analysis result on the male and female teachers on how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The **t-test** reveals that the Sig. (2-tailed) of (.114) is greater than (>) p-value of 0.05 at df 701. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in table 1 shows that the the respondents agreed that communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The findings also shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how communication as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the study by Carter and Brown (2019) who investigate the relationship between principal-teacher communication and teacher job satisfaction. The study discovers that open and transparent communication channels contribute to resolving conflicts, thereby enhancing teachers' overall service delivery. Supported by Brown and Kim (2019) highlighted the importance of building a culture of open communication within schools. The study revealed that transparent communication culture, fostered by principals, contributes to conflict prevention and resolution, positively affecting teachers' service delivery. Furthermore, in corroboration with the study by Smith (2018) who explored various communication styles adopted by educational leaders, particularly principals. The study depicted that effective communication strategies contribute to conflict resolution and positively influence teachers' service delivery. Lastly, in tandem with the study by Hernandez and Rodriguez (2021) who explore communication strategies for handling difficult conversations in educational settings. The study provides insights that principals can navigate challenging situations, fostering a positive work environment for teachers and supporting effective service delivery.

The findings in table 2 shows that the respondents agreed that negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The findings also shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how negotiation as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding is in line with Smith (2019), who explored the application of principled negotiation in educational leadership, focusing on how principals can utilize negotiation strategies to address conflicts among teachers. The research emphasizes that

collaborative nature of principled negotiation and its positive impact on enhancing service delivery. Also, in tandem with the research by Carter and Brown (2018) who investigated various negotiation styles employed by school principals in resolving conflicts among teachers. The study showed that different negotiation approaches influence the effectiveness of service delivery and overall teacher satisfaction within an educational institution. Furthermore, is in agreement with the study by Hernandez and Rodriguez (2020), who focused on collaborative problem-solving as a result of negotiation between principals and teachers. The research showed that negotiation contributes to resolving complex issues, ultimately enhancing teachers' ability to deliver services effectively. Lastly, this finding is corroborating Garcia and Thompson (2017), who explored into the role of principals as mediators using negotiation strategies. The study show that the negotiation skills that principals employ to mediate conflicts among teachers, fostering an environment conducive to effective service delivery.

The findings in table 3 shows that the respondents agreed that collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The findings also shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how collaboration as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding is in tandem with the Smith (2018), who explored into collaborative leadership practices in education, emphasizing how principals can foster collaboration among teachers. The research show that the positive impact of collaborative leadership on conflict resolution and its influence on enhancing service delivery. Also, this is in line with the Carter and Brown (2019) study, who investigated the correlation between teamwork and conflict resolution styles within educational settings. The study show that collaborative approaches to conflict resolution contribute to teachers' effective service delivery and overall job satisfaction. Furthermore, in corroboration with the study by Hernandez and Rodriguez (2020), who explore the link between collaboration and teacher professional development. The research highlights that collaborative efforts among teachers, facilitated by principals, contribute to ongoing learning, conflict resolution, and enhanced service delivery. Lastly, is in agreement with the study by Anderson and White, (2019) who examines the impact of collaborative decision-making on conflict resolution within educational leadership. The research showed that involving teachers in decision-making processes contributes to collaborative conflict resolution and, subsequently, effective service delivery.

The findings in table 4 shows that the respondents agreed that counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The findings also shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how counseling and support service as a principals' conflict management strategy enhance teachers' effective service delivery in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding validated the Study by Smith (2018) who examined the therapeutic aspects of counseling in educational leadership, emphasizing how principals can utilize counseling services to address conflicts among teachers. The research underscores the positive impact of counseling on both conflict resolution and the enhancement of teachers' service delivery. Also, this is in line with the research of Garcia and Thompson (2017), which focused on the integration of mental health support in educational settings. The study show that counseling services that address mental health challenges among teachers can contribute to conflict management and enhance overall service delivery. Furthermore, and in agreement with the Johnson and Thompson (2020) study, that investigated

how principals can create a culture of well-being through counseling and support services. The study showed that the role of a supportive environment in conflict prevention and resolution, ultimately influencing teachers' well-being and service delivery. Lastly, in tandem with the study by Brown and Kim (2019) who focused on tailoring support services to meet the diverse needs of teachers. The study show that personalized support approaches contribute to conflict resolution and address individual challenges, fostering an environment conducive to effective service delivery.

CONCLUSION

Effective conflict management strategies for teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring the successful delivery of educational services in public senior secondary schools in River State. The role of principals in fostering a positive and collaborative environment cannot be overstated. Through careful consideration of various conflict resolution approaches, principals can contribute significantly to the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning in the school setting. In the context of public senior secondary schools in River State, principals should tailor conflict management strategies to address the specific challenges and dynamics within the local educational landscape. By taking a proactive and holistic approach, principals can create an environment where teachers feel supported, valued, and equipped to navigate conflicts, ultimately contributing to an optimal teaching and learning experience for both teachers and students.

Recommendations

The study recommended as follows:

- Principals should prioritize establishing transparent communication channels among teachers. Regular staff meetings, open-door policies, and electronic communication platforms can facilitate effective information exchange, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts.
- Principals should build a culture of collaboration and teamwork by promoting collaborative planning sessions, cross-disciplinary projects, and professional learning communities. A collaborative environment reduces potential sources of conflict and enhances overall service delivery.
- Principals should create forums for open dialogue where teachers can express concerns and provide feedback. Town hall meetings, suggestion boxes, or regular forums for teacher input can be valuable tools for understanding and addressing potential conflicts.
- Principals should provide emotional support on teachers to ensure that counseling and emotional support services are available for teachers to address personal and professional challenges.

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