VOL. 05 NO. 8,
AUGUST, 2024
E-ISSN 3026-8893
P-ISSN 3027-1061



African Scholar Publications & Research International
www.africanscholarpub.com

Journal of Education Research and Library Practice (JERLP)

Principals' Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State, Nigeria

Dr. Uwaleke, Gladys Chinelo; Yakubu Sani Ph.D; & Nuhu Yahaya

Nasarawa State University, Keffi. Nigeria, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Management.
Corresponding Author: *agwoyegladys@gmail.com*

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State Nigeria. Three research questions with corresponding three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A correlational survey research design was adopted for this study. The total population of this study consisted of 2140 (97 principals and 2043 teachers) obtained from all the 97 senior secondary schools. Krejcie and Morgan's table of specifications for determining sample size from a given population was used to obtain the sample size of the study which consisted of 322 respondents (19 principals and 303 teachers). The instrument used for data collection was principal emotional intelligent and conflict management Questionnaire (PEICMQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Management and it yielded 0.74 as validity index. The instrument was pilotested on 10 principals and 40 teachers in Government Secondary School, Otukpo to determine the reliability index of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha method was employed to compute the coefficient of internal consistency of the instruments which produced reliability index of 0.78. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were employed to answer the research questions while Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to analyze the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between principals' self-awareness and

conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, the relationship between principals' social awareness and conflict management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District is positive and significant, there is a positive and significant relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, he relationship between principals' self-management and conflict management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the ministry of education should consider the emotional intelligence test as one of the criteria for the appointment of principals, to ensure that the intending principals have the ability to identify, assess, and manage their emotions and that of others which is necessary for effective management of conflict in the school system.

Keywords: Emotional Inteligence, Self-awareness, Social-awareness, empathy and conflict managment

Introduction

The 21st Century schools are not only considered as "autonomous organizations", but also as environments that provide support to students' and teachers' learning communities to enhance effective teaching and learning. Since the schools consist of people with diverse backgrounds, conflicts are bound to occur in the process of interaction among people in the school system (Karimova, 2015). Conflicts are inevitable, especially when this dynamic process takes place among people, who are experiencing negative emotional reactions (Barki & Hartwick, 2004). The school system in today's world is dynamic in nature and it is characterised by time deadlines, cross cultural teams, work pressures, and work family conflicts, which in turn result in a highly stressed workforce. This therefore necessitate that conflicts are expected to be managed properly in the school setting.

Conflict management refers to the approaches through which principals handle disputes in their schools by being just and fair to all the parties that are involved in such disputes. Conflict management strategies represent the internal mechanisms that enable managers to identify the causes of certain problems in order to handle the situations in a way that would be acceptable and favourable to all the conflicting groups (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). Proper management of conflict brings about harmonious working relationship among students, staff, management staff and community members as the reverse may result to disunity, low morale and low commitment among staff. Conflict

management approaches are techniques that facilitate the control of differences among a group of people. The choice of appropriate strategies in managing conflicts could enable principals to resolve conflict by influencing the affected parties to change their views opinions towards effective job performance in terms of their classroom communication, maintenance of classroom discipline and supervision of students' academic activities.

Inappropriate management of conflicts in secondary schools may contribute to indiscipline and restiveness among students especially when students feel exploited by the school authority. Ineffectiveness in conflict management could render some schools unconducive for teachers to perform their teaching jobs successfully (Alabi, 2012). Conflicts related issues that lead to strike action and student's demonstrations may reduce the standard of education at the secondary school level as teachers would perform their job under fears and teachers under such situations may not be able to provide students with the required standard of education through effective teaching. In some situations, after argument and misunderstanding that occur through conflicts, the affected parties may develop good ideas on how to handle certain school issues. However, when conflicts are poorly managed through wrong strategies, it may degenerate into chaos and anarchy that may impede the attainment of stated school goals (Ayoma, 2015).

In the past, academic qualifications, job related know-how and intellectual abilities were the yardsticks used to assess teachers in the school system. Emotions had no place in the institutional context and were considered as counter-productive unlike today where people have realized that emotions and works are intertwined. Thus, the school system seeks to have workforce that is more emotionally intelligent (Khalili, 2012). Excellent organizations are places where feelings are managed, matured or removed. Muchinsky (2020) established that emotions have many differences which cover from pleasurable experiments of our existence which are positive experiences to the negative ones that are most noxious. Individual's job-related behaviour is reflected from affective or emotional experiments in the workplace that generate cognition.

Impulsive reaction fuel conflict and enhance workplace tension. Thus, no institution can ignore emotions in a working environment because employees make no decision without emotions, emotions guide workplace relationships, emotions are integral to learning at work, emotions are a sign that people care about the workplace and are personally involved in organizational success.

Nzomo (2018) described emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist and understand emotions and emotional meanings. Any aspect of personal, emotional and social abilities and skills that

influence one's ability to succeed in coping with the environment is related to emotional intelligence. It addresses the personal, social and survival dimensions of intelligence that are more important for daily functioning than traditional aspects of intelligence. This encompasses an emphasis on the understanding of oneself and others and adapting to changing demands. Ramana (2017) maintained that emotional intelligence involves the ability of an individual to access feelings, understand emotions, perceive and express emotions, and promote emotional and intellectual growth. It is the ability to learn or understand from experience or to respond successfully to new experiences, the ability to acquire and retain knowledge. It is the ability to perceive, access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions, regulate emotions as well as improve the thought and behaviour of other people.

Salovey and Mayer who were the major figures in promoting works on emotional intelligence in 1990 categorised emotional intelligence into five components which self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, empathy, and relationship management. The various dimensions of emotional intelligence are useful for the effective management of conflicts in the school system. Self-awareness is key to realizing one's strengths and weaknesses. Individuals with self-awareness skills are aware of their abilities and limitations, seek feedback and learn from their mistakes, and know where they need to improve and when to work with others who have complementary strengths. Self-awareness could help emotionally intelligent principals to make appropriate decisions needed for effective conflict management in the school setting, and determine their roles in the decision-making process. Through self-awareness, principals could be guided to identify their emotional ability and use it to make decisions that are devoid of the frequent occurrence of conflict but rather promote peaceful working relationships among staff in the school environment. Self-awareness could help a principal to be fair towards his approach, actions, and reactions. Principals with such qualities are great motivators and managers of the situation around them (Goleman, 2015).

Another component of emotional intelligence is self-management which consists of self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement, drive, and initiative skills which help managers to develop a good sense of judgment for the peaceful management of conflicts. Self-management is the ability to control and manage impulses, inner feelings, behaviors, and actions. It includes adaptability, innovation, and initiative in given situations; not being a self-manager leads to decreased credibility and respect (Aremu & Tejumola, 2008). When there is self-management of emotions, competence is demonstrated, which brings about transparency and integrity. A principal with the ability to manage his/her feelings and anger could be highly respected and trusted by both staff and students. Principals who

manage themselves properly could make decisions that would minimize conflicts in the school system. Principals who control their feelings and impulses could create an environment of trust and fairness, and they are models of resilience. As a result, modern school organizations need principals who are emotionally intelligent in other to handle the affairs of the school system diligently

Social awareness could also help principals to understand the feelings of teachers and students and their reactions towards a particular issue. It helps the principals to be equipped to make decisions that would be devoid of conflict and promote peace in the school environment. Empathy on the other hand is the consideration of other people's feelings, especially when making a decision. This implies that a principal who is empathic is capable of identifying the thoughts, feelings, and states of another person. This sometimes helps the principal to consider the feelings of the staff and students with emotional and psychological problems when making decisions that would help to reduce the rate of conflicts in the school system.

In Benue South Senatorial District of Benue State and Nigeria as a whole, principals are not selected using emotional intelligence criteria. As a result, principals in the state may not integrate emotional intelligence successfully into conflict management of their various secondary schools, and such a situation may not promote a peaceful school atmosphere. Every secondary school in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State consists of students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and other management staff who are expected to cooperate to facilitate the attainment of stated goals. Every staff is expected to work toward effective teaching and learning. Both staff and students interact among themselves to ensure that they undertake their respective responsibilities successfully. The interaction sometimes influences conflict among the stakeholders in different ways. In secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State, conflicts normally arise as students fight among themselves, students fight with teachers, teachers disagree among themselves, and management staff may take decisions that could be opposed by other staff among others (Nwafor, 2013).

The frequent occurrence of conflicts in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District is a worrisome situation as principals are not novices but experienced teachers who are promoted to occupy the position of principal. In this regard, it seems obvious that every principal has adequate knowledge of instructional delivery, and understands local, state, and federal guidelines, policies, and laws respectively that guide school management among others. One, therefore, wonders why conflicts frequently occur among staff and school authorities in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. The researcher speculated that principals seem to be managers with good knowledge of school rules and regulations but fail to understand how to accommodate the feelings and moods of both students and staff to reduce the level of incessant conflicts in the secondary school system. As such, this study was structured to find out the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State seems to be faced with a series of conflicting issues like tension especially during a rampage by students when they feel that they have been exploited by teachers and school management. Many principals seem not to have definite approaches to managing certain conflicting issues in their schools as some of them apply some personal ideas and initiatives which may favour some parties who are involved in a given conflict against the others. This may be responsible for complaints by some teachers that principals are partial and authoritarian. The prevalence of conflicts normally creates tension, misunderstanding, confusion, and unfriendly relationship among staff that could prevent teachers from undertaking their teaching job effectively.

Most secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District witness strife, disagreement, discord of action, antagonism, segregation, protest, and confusion which demonstrate the presence of conflicts in the school system. The above conflict-related issues may be connected to principals' emotional intelligence-related issues. The conflict issues have prompted many stakeholders of secondary schools such as the parents, community leaders, and teachers to wonder if principals employ emotional intelligence components to manage conflicts The thrust of this study was to investigate the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between principals' self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District?
2. What is the correlation between principals' social awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District?
3. What is the relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District?

Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State. The following were the specific objectives of the study:

1. To determine the relationship between principals' self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.
2. To ascertain the correlation between principals' social awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.
3. To examine the relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Research Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between principals' self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.
HO_2: There is no significant correlation between principals' social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.
HO_3: There is no significant relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Methodology

This study investigates the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, Benue State Nigeria. Three research questions with corresponding five hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A correlational survey research design was adopted for this study. The total population of this study consisted of 2140 (97 principals and 2043 teachers) obtained from all the 97 senior secondary schools. Krejcie and Morgan's table of specifications for determining sample size from a given population was used to obtain the sample size of the study which consisted of 322 respondents (19 principals and 303 teachers). The instrument used for data collection was principal emotional intelligent and conflict management Questionnaire (PEICMQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Management and it yielded 0.74 as validity index. The instrument was pilotested on 10 principals and 40 teachers in Government Secondary School, Otukpo to determine the reliability index of the instrument. Cronbach Alpha method was employed to compute the coefficient of internal consistency of the instruments which produced reliability index of 0.78. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were employed to answer the research questions while Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to analyze the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Three research questions were raised and answered using mean and standard deviation. The details of the results are presented on tables 1 to 3 below:

Research Question One: What is the relationship between principals' self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Showing Responses on Principals' Self-Awareness and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{X}$	Std. Dev. σ	Decision
1.	Principal handles tense situations with diplomacy to avoid fight among staff.	200	96	20	6	2.55	0.75	Agreed
2.	Principal is skillful in managing negative feelings that promote disunity among staff.	64	201	30	27	2.50	0.70	Agreed

3.	Principal does not quarrel or display his or her anger openly.	136	158	12	16	2.65	0.68	Agreed
4.	Principal deals with staff politely to avoid provoking them towards revolting against school policies.	109	190	10	13	2.60	0.80	Agreed
5.	My principal assigns responsibilities to staff without any form of partiality to avoid grievances that could induce crisis in the school system.	100	188	15	19	2.70	0.77	Agreed
Cluster Mean						**2.60**	**0.74**	**Agreed**

Scale Mean 2.50

Table 1 revealed that item 1 has the mean value of 2.55 with standard deviation of 0.75 item 2 has the mean value of 2.50 with standard deviation of 0.70, item 3 has the mean value of 2.65 with standard deviation of 0.68, item 4 has a mean value of 2.60 with standard deviation of 0.80 while item 5 has a mean value of 2.70 with standard deviation of 0.77. The analysis of research question 1 showed that the cluster mean of 2.60 is above the scale mean of 2.50. It therefore means that the respondents agreed that principals' self-awareness has positive relationship with conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Research Question 2: What is the correlation between principals' social awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Showing Responses on Principals' SocialAwareness and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{X}$	Std. Dev. σ	Decision
6.	Principal handles disciplinary issues in a fair manner to avoid tension in the school system.	136	156	12	18	2.60	0.71	Agreed
7.	Principal possesses self-control skills that help him to avoid conduct that would lead to regular clashing with staff and students.	73	219	25	15	2.58	0.79	Agreed
8.	Principal encourages mutual relationships among staff to reduce the frequent occurrence of misunderstanding in the school system.	198	96	10	18	2.66	0.60	Agreed
9.	Principal maintains a high level of interpersonal relationship with staff members which enable them to discuss their grievances freely with him.	186	100	16	20	2.70	0.61	Agreed

10.	Principal organizes social events on regular basis to promote unity and limit the frequent occurrence of conflicts among staff.	110	166	25	21	2.77	0.58	Agreed
Cluster Mean						**2.66**	**0.65**	**Agreed**

Scale Mean 2.50

Table 2 showed that item 6 has the mean value of 2.01 with standard deviation of 0.71, item 7 has the mean value of 2.52 with standard deviation of 0.79, item 8 has the mean value of 2.50 with standard deviation of 0.60, item 9 has the mean value of 2.00 with standard deviation of 0.61 while item 10 has the mean value of 2.02 with standard deviation of 0.58. The analysis of research question 3 revealed that the cluster mean of 2.66 is above the scale mean of 2.50, it therefore means that principals' social awareness has positive correlation with conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Showing Responses on Principals' Empathy and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Std. Dev. 6	Decision
11	Principal do not possess the required interactive skills to promote a peaceful school atmosphere that is free from frequent conflicts with staff.	110	80	20	16	2.70	0.88	Agreed
12	Principal does not encourage team spirit to reduce misunderstanding among staff.	94	105	10	17	2.78	0.77	Agreed
13	Principal does not carefully handle negative feelings among staff to avoid revolting actions.	120	78	12	16	2.57	0.68	Agreed
14	Principal avoids role conflicts among staff by balancing tasks with human relationships.	83	200	10	13	2.65	0.72	Agreed
15	Principal easily identifies and handles situations that could make staff unhappy.	196	92	15	19	2.73	0.65	Agreed
Cluster Mean						**2.27**	**0.74**	**Agreed**

Scale Mean 2.50

Table 3 showed that item 11 has the mean value of 2.70 with standard deviation of 0.88, item 12 has the mean value of 2.78 with standard deviation of 0.77, item 13 has the mean value of 2.57 with standard deviation of 0.68, item 14 has the mean value of 2.65 with standard deviation of 0.72 and item 15 has the mean value of 2.73 with standard deviation of 0.65. The analysis of research question 4 showed that the cluster mean value of 2.73 is below the scale mean of 2.50, this therefore implies that principals' empathy has positive relationship with conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Hypothesis Testing

All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, Linear Regression and ANOVA. The results are presented in tables 4.6- 4.10

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between principals' self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

The answer to the above hypothesis 1 is contained in table 4.7:

Table 4: Correlation Coefficient Analysis Showing the Significant Relationship between Principals' Self-Awareness and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Benue South Senatorial District

Group	R	p-value	Remarks
Self-Awareness			
Conflict Management	0.516	0.000	H_{01} not accepted

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 indicates the correlation coefficient of the significant relationship between principals' self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. The analysis of the results revealed that the p-value is 0.000 while the R-value is 0.516. Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the significant level of 0.05, hypothesis one (HO_1) was not accepted. The result, therefore, implies that there was a significant relationship between principal self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between principals' social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Table 5: Correlation Coefficient Analysis Showing the Significant Relationship between Principal Social-Awareness and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Benue South Senatorial District

Group	R	p-value	Remarks
Principal Social-Awareness			
Conflict Management	0.601	0.002	H_{02} not accepted

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 showed the correlation coefficient of the significant relationship between principals' social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. The analysis of the results revealed that the p-value is 0.002 while the R-value is 0.601. Since the p-value of 0.002 is less than the significant level of 0.05, hypothesis two (HO_2) was not accepted. The result therefore, implies that there was a significant relationship between principal social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Table 6: Correlation Coefficient Analysis Showing the Significant Relationship between Principal Empathy and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Benue South Senatorial District

Group	R	p-value	Remarks
Principal Empathy			
Conflict Management	0.641	0.001	H_{03} not accepted

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 6 indicated the correlation coefficient of the significant between principals' empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. The analysis of the results revealed that the p-value is 0.001 while the R-value is 0.641. Since the p-value of 0.001 is less than the significant level of 0.05, hypothesis three (HO_3) was not accepted. The result, therefore, showed that there was a significant relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Major Findings of the Study

The following were the major findings of the study:

1. There is a positive and significant relationship between principals' self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.
2. The relationship between principals' social awareness and conflict management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District is positive and significant.
3. There is a positive and significant relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Discussion of the Findings

The discussion of the findings of the study are with reference to the research questions and hypothesis as follows:

The findings of the study revealed that there was a positive relationship between self-awareness and conflict management, similarly, there is a significant relationship

between them. The finding of this study agreed with that of Omini (2015), who conducted a study on demographic and emotional correlates of principals' performance in conflict management of secondary schools in South-South Nigeria, and concluded that there is a significant relationship between self-awareness of principals and their conflict management skills. The sameness in the findings of this study and that of Omini (2015) gives credit to the relationship that exist between self-awareness of principals and conflict management. Though Omini (2015) involved demographic factors like age, gender, and working experience, the present study focused on how emotional intelligence components determine principals' skills to manage conflicts in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District. Nonetheless, both study reveals a positive relationship between self-awareness and conflict management, an indicator that there is a relationship between these two variables. That is, principals' self-awareness will help the principal to be aware of his/her own feelings and emotions, to understand the feelings of the teachers and students, and their reactions towards a particular issue. Hence, it will equip principals to make decisions that would be devoid of conflict, thereby promoting a peaceful school system. Little wonder Ramana (2017) posited that principal's emotional stability increases his or her power to manage difficult situations that may induce conflicts in secondary schools.

The findings of the study further demonstrated that there is positive and significant relationship between principals' social-awareness and conflict management of secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, hence, the null-hypothesis was not accepted while the alternative was retained. The findings of this study totally agreed with Adeyemi (2019) who conducted a study on principals' level of emotional intelligence and management of conflicts in public secondary schools in Ondo State; and reveals that emotional intelligence of self-awareness and social-awareness influences conflict management in public secondary schools in Ondo State. That is, the two studies reveal a positive relationship between social-awareness and conflict management; the studies through her findings agreed in totality that emotional intelligence of social-awareness of principals account for management of conflict in secondary schools. The understanding of other people's feelings and concerns flows from awareness of one's feelings. This sensitivity to others is critical for higher job performance of principals since the principals must necessarily interact in the management of the school system. The social-awareness component therefore help the principals to be empathic (sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking interest in their concerns); organizational-awareness (reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships) and service orientation (anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs). Hence, principals with social awareness see situations differently,

sense others' feelings and perspectives, and taking interest in their concerns avoid and manage conflicts effectively.

The findings of the study also revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between principals' empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District, hence, the null-hypothesis was not accepted, while the alternative was retained. The findings of the study disagreed with Alireza, Hamid, Maghme, and Fatemi (2017) who conducted a research on Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Strategies in Iran, and revealed that emotional intelligence of empathy and relational management do not determine the level of conflict management in Iran High School. This clearly shows that empathy alone does not make a principal able to handle conflict issues effectively in secondary schools. However, the place of empathy cannot be ruled out in the discussion of conflict management in secondary schools, little wonder the analysis of this study reveals a positive relationship of the two variables. To achieve managerial effectiveness, principals need to develop the skills of empathy to the fullest, since it enhances a sense of management by providing principals with the awareness to listen, serve their subordinates and have a greater understanding of interrelationships within a group. Empathy plays significant role in the success of school management because empathic principals are more likely to have an appropriate degree of openness about diversity and the differences between cultures. It is based on this that Rahman and Castelli (2017) stated that empathy plays an important role in developing trust in manager-employee relationships, as a result, it could also improve the relationship between principals, teachers and students.

C**onclusion**

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study:

Principal's self-awareness will help principals in Benue South Senatorial District to become aware of: their feelings and emotions, to understand the feelings of the teachers and students, and their reactions towards issues, hence, it will increase their power to manage conflicts successfully.

The findings of the study on relationship between social-awareness and conflict management concluded that the understanding of other people's feelings and concerns flows from awareness of one's feelings. Thus, principals with social-awareness see situations differently, sense others' feelings and perspectives, and taking interest in their concerns help them to manage conflicts effectively.

The study further concluded that the place of empathy cannot be ruled out in the discussion of conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District; since it enhances a sense of management by providing principals with the

awareness to listen, serve their subordinates and have a greater understanding of interrelationships within the school system.

The study also concluded that principals' awareness of their emotion of self-management and that of others is a vital factor in conflict management in secondary schools in Benue South Senatorial District.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of his study:

1. The Benue State Ministry of Education should organize regular training for principals through seminars and conferences to boost the level of their self-awareness component of emotional intelligence to help them become effective conflicts managers of the various secondary schools in the state.
2. The Benue State Teaching Service Commission should include emotional intelligence test as part of the criteria for promotion of teachers to the position of principals as this may help to ensure that only teachers with good level of social-awareness component of emotional intelligence are appointed as principals to ensure conflicts are easily managed in the secondary school system.
3. The skill of empathy should be developed in the curriculum and extra curriculum of all levels of education so that graduates of any level of education will acquire the requisite skills of empathy needed for effective management of conflicts in secondary schools; in case any of the graduates become a principal of a secondary school.

REFERENCES

Adedokun, A. N. (2015). Emotional intelligence and administrative effectiveness of provosts of federal training centres in Nigeria. *Journal of Research & Method in Education,* 4(5), 15-24.

Adeyemi, T. O. (2019). Principals' management of conflicts in public secondary schools in Ondo state, Nigeria: A Critical Survey. *Educational Research and Review,* 4(9), 418-426.

Adeniyi, W. O. & Omoteso, B. A. (2016). Emotional intelligence and administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Southwestern Nigeria. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 4(2), 79-85.

Adeyemi, T. O. & Ademilua, S. O. (2012). Conflict management strategies and administrative effectiveness in Nigerian Universities. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies,* 3(3), 368-375.

Abdu-Raheem, B. O. (2014). Improvisation of instructional materials for teaching and learning in secondary schoolsas predictor of high academic standard. Nigerian Journal of Social Studies, 17(1), 131-143.

Aigbedion, N. (2010*). Disaster and Conflict Management: Quest for Proactive Reduction Strategies.* A Paper presented at the Pre-induction Training Programme of the Emergency, Crisis and Risk Management Institute, Nigeria.

Ajai, E. N. (2017). Assessment of conflict management strategies in public secondary schools in Delta state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research Studies in Management* 6(1), 99-115.

Ali, E. & Reza, H. (2016). Relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management styles in staffs at the bank of Sepah, Tehran. *Continental Journal of Education Research,* 4(1), 32-41.

Alireza, R., Hamid, H., Naghme, E. & Fateme, P. (2017). Relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies in Iran high schools. *Journal of Educational Administration, 45*(2), 3(2), 14-26.

Aremu, A. O., & Tejumola, T. O. (2008). Assessment of emotional intelligence among Nigerian police. *Journal of social sciences*, *16*(3), 221-226.

Ashworth, S. R. (2013). The Relationship Between the Emotional Intelligence of Secondary Public School Principals and School Performance. Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Ph.D. in Educational Leadership Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Texas.

Ayogu, D. U. (2015). Emotional intelligence and implication for career development in selected Federal Universities in South East, Nigeria. A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Management Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus In Partial Fulfilment of The Requirements for the Award of Ph.D. in Management.

Barent, O. (2005). Influence of emotional intelligence and gender on job performance and job satisfaction among Nigerian Policemen. *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences,* 2(3), 147-154.

Bar-on, R., (1997). *The Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I): A Test of Emotional Intelligence.* Toronto: Brominck Ltd.

Başaran, T. O. (2010). Teachers' challenges in nigerian public secondary schools climate: implications on students' dropouts. *Science Journal of Sociology and Anthropology,* 3(4), 114-125.

Beal, C. R. & Stevens, R. H. (2007). *Student motivation and performance in scientific problem solving simulations*. Amsterdam: IOS Press.

Billikopf, G. (2009). Party-Directed Mediation: On-line 2nd edition. California: Agricultural and Natural Resources, University of California.

Cook, C. R. (2016). Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership Performance of Secondary Schools' Principals in Bozeman, Montana. A Dissertation Submitted Montana State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the award of Ph.D. in Education.

DeFranco, J. A. & Golden, N.L. (2003). *Educational leadership improvement tool: A research-based assessment, evaluation, & improvement tool for school administrators*. Eugene, OR: Eugene School Distric

DeWall, C. N., Baumeister, R. F., Mead, N. L. and Vohs, K. D. (2011). How leaders Self-Regulate their Task Performance: Evidence that Power Promotes Diligence, Depletion, and Disdain. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *100*(1), 47-65.

Fareo, H. & Jajua, K. (2018). Conflict Management Strategies in Ondo State Tertiary Institutions. *Journal of Educational Review,* 1(2), 329-333

Fehintola, T. A. & Lasebikan, V. O. (2016). Mental health of teachers: teachers' stress, anxiety and depression among secondary schools in Nigeria. *International Neuropsychiatric Disease Journal, 7(4), 1-10.*

George, T. (2019). Emotional intelligence as a strategy for effective school management in Katsina State. *International Journal of Learning,* 5(10), 12-23.

Goldman, R. M. (1966). Theory of conflict processes and organizational offices. *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 10 (3), 328-343.

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.

Goleman, D. (2005). *Emotional Intelligence and Working with Emotional Intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury.

Goleman D. (2016). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury.

Goleman, D. (2015). What makes a Leader? *HBR*'S *10 must Read Reads on Emotional Intelligence,* (23), 1-22.

Goleman et al. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence*.Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Herbert, E. B. (2020). Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Transformational Leadership and Effectiveness in School Principals. A Dessertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of Requirements for the Award of Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies in College of Education, Geogia State University.

Ignace, T. Y. (2016). Assessment of heads of schools' strategies on managing conflicts in secondary schools: a case of Kinondoni Municipality. *Journal of Labor Economics,* 26(1), 101-136.

Iwowari, I. A. (2017). *Approaches for Effective Management of Students' Conflicts in Secondary Schools in Rivers State (P.hD) Seminar paper*) Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt.

Jahanian, R. & Ebrahimi, M. (2013). Principles for educational supervision and guidance. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 4(2), 3-12.

Jimoh, M. O. (2017). Spiritual Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence and Intelligent Quotient as Predictors of Adjustment to Teaching Profession among the Voluntary Teaching Corps Scheme Employees in Ogun State. Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation Submitted to University of Ibadan.

Kathungu, B. M. (2020). *Emotional intelligence among workers in rehabilitation schools in Kenya*. Nairobi: Ph.D. Unpublished, Kenyatta University.

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P. & Caruso, D. R. (2008). Emotional Intelligence. New Ability or Eclectic Traits. *American Psychologists,* 63(6), 503-517.

Michael, O. O., Anpe, M. S. & Gambo, M. B. (2015). Principals' administrative skills for secondary schools in Plateau state, Nigeria. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences*, 2(1), 30-42.

Michele, R. (2011). *An Investigation of the Emotional Intelligence Competencies of National Middle Schools to Watch Principals*. Retrieved February 1, 2022, from http://encompass.eku.edu/etd/42

Muindi, G. (2016). Influence of Principals' Conflict Management Styles on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni Sub-County, Makueni County. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences*, 2(1), 10-23.

Narehan, H., Syahrina, H. M., Jani, R. M. S., Nur Z. A. H. & Nor, A. A. (2015). The relationship between emotional intelligence and teaching effectiveness among lecturers at University Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam, Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity,* 5(1), 27-44.

Nasir, M. & Masrur, R. (2010). An exploration of emotional intelligence of the students of IIUI in relation to gender, age and academic achievement. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 2(1), 37–51.

Nwafor, C. J (2013). Conflict Management Strategies of Secondary School Principals in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. A Thesis Submitted to School of Post Graduated Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsuka for the Award of M. Ed. in Educational Administration and Planning.

Nzomo, L. N. (2018). Relationship between Principals' Emotional Intelligence and Students' Learning Achievements in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya: A Thesis Submitted to the School of Education in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the award of Ph.D. in Educational Psychology in Kenyatta University.

O'Boyle, E. H., Humphrey, R. H, Pollack, J. M., Hawver, T. H. & Story, P. A. (2020). The relation between emotional intelligence and job performance: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 10(1), 2-14.
Oforjindu, C. A. (2019). Stress management among secondary school teachers: implications for counseling**.** *Nigerian Journal of Research and Production,* 19(2), 2-11.
Olaleye, F. O., & Arogundade, B. B. (2013). Conflict management strategies of university administrators in South-West Nigeria. *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, *2*(6), 96.
Omini, W. B. A. (2015). Demographic and Personality Correlates of Principals' Performance in the Management of Secondary Schools in South-South Nigeria. A Thesis Submitted for the award of Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Planning. University Of Nigeria, Nsukka.
O'Toole, G. (2012). Communication: Core Interpersonal Skills for Health Professionals. Retrieved from http://www.elsevierhealth.com.au/media/anz/samplechapters/9780729541008/Communicatione_9780729541008_O'Toole_SampleChapter.pdf on January, 15, 2020.
Ramana, T. V. (2017). Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Effectiveness. *Voice of Research*, 2(2), 21-33).
Rotimi, A. A. (2020). Intelligent Quotient, Emotional Intelligence and Spiritual Intelligence as Correlates of Prison Adjustment among Inmates in Nigeria Prisons. J*ournal of Social Sciences,* 22(2), 121-128.
Salami, S.O. (2016). Management of stress among trainee-teachers through cognitive behavior therapy. *Personality Study and Group Behaviour,* 26(3)*,* 1-25.
Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, cognition and personality*, *9*(3), 185-211.
Subburaj (2016). The role of emotional intelligence in managing academic stress in Coimbatore, India. *Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 2(5), 10-22.
Sumathy, L. Madhavi, C. and Felix, A. J. W. (2015). Influence of emotional intelligence on decision making by leaders. *American International Journal of Social Science,* 4(1), 13-24.
Tjan, A. K. (2012). How Leaders Become Self-Aware. *Harvard business review*. Retrieved from http://blogs.hbr.org on15/01/2022
UNICEF (2011). The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
Uzoechi, B. C. (2015). Research Design in Education: Fundamental Issues in Educational Research, *Keffi Journal of Educational Studies,* 4 (1), 32-51.