

Interpersonal Conflict Management Strategies Used by Principals in Baptist Secondary Schools in North West, South West and Centre Regions in Cameroon

By

Kumah Paul Toh¹ & Titanji Peter Fon, PhD²

¹PhD Student, Department of Educational Leadership, University of Bamenda, Cameroon ²Department of Educational Leadership, University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to investigate the causes and management strategies of interpersonal conflicts among teachers in Baptist Secondary Schools (BSSs) in North West, South West and Centre Regions in Cameroon.

Methodology: A mixed-methodological design was employed, with data collected from a sample of 16 principals and 141 teachers across 7 BSSs using questionnaires and interview guides.

Findings: Principals identified violation of school rules and regulations (15, 93.5%) and poor working conditions (15, 93.7%) as major causes of conflict while teachers said that poor working conditions (132, 93.6%), violation of school rules and regulations (132, 93.6) and gossiping among teachers (114, 81%) were measure causes of conflicts. Principals identified improved working conditions of teachers (14, 87.6%) and accommodation of individual differences (13, 75.1%), while teachers disagreed that principals do not improve working conditions as a strategy to manage interpersonal conflicts.

Conclusion: Interpersonal conflicts among teachers in Baptist secondary schools are prevalent and have significant negative consequences on school effectiveness and teacher well-being. Effective conflict management strategies are essential for mitigating these conflicts.

Recommendations: School administrators should implement regular training on conflict management and foster open communication to address interpersonal conflicts. Additionally, strategies to improve working conditions and address teachers' concerns should be prioritised to reduce conflicts.

Key words: Interpersonal conflict, conflict management, Baptist secondary schools

Introduction

There is considerable interest in the subject of interpersonal conflicts in educational organizations because of their profound impact on school dynamics. A lot of research has been devoted to interpersonal conflicts in formal organizations in general and educational organizations in particular. Conflicts among teachers and staff can lead to negative consequences such as reduced collaboration, lower morale, and a decline in overall school performance, ultimately affecting students' academic outcomes (Rahim, 2011; De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). On the other hand, when managed constructively, conflicts can foster innovation, improve communication, and strengthen relationships within the school community (Tjosvold, 2008; Jehn, 1995). These outcomes highlight the dual nature of interpersonal conflicts, depending on how they are managed.

Interpersonal conflicts are not new in the history of mankind. There are biblical creation narratives of interpersonal conflicts and their consequences. For instance, in *Genesis 1:1-5*, it is reported that at creation, confusion or chaos enveloped the universe, and out of the conflict of water and darkness, God created light. Similarly, the Babylonian creation epic, narrated in the series of clay tablets discovered in the ruins of Assurbanipal's Library at Nineveh in 1873, tells of an ordered universe emerging from the victory of Marduk, the Supreme God of Babylon, over Tiamat, the deity of chaos and darkness (*Enuma Elish*; Heidel, 1942). The Jewish concept, which the Babylonian cosmogony corroborates, concurs that an ordered universe was the outcome of resolving primordial conflict.

In many biblical instances, conflict is presented as God's agent deliberately created to work out His Divine purpose. At the Tower of Babel (*Genesis 11:1-9*), God purposefully created a confusion of tongues or conflict to arrest humanity's haughty plans and desire to overstep their

bounds. Although the conflict resulting from Divine action brought hardship, from the Divine perspective, it served a righteous purpose. In this context, conflict served both positive and negative purposes.

Interpersonal conflicts did not only characterize biblical times. They have been part and parcel of formal organizations in general and educational organizations in particular. Historically, formal organizations have always been prone to interpersonal conflicts due to structural hierarchies, differing goals, and competition for limited resources. For instance, Weber's (1947) theory of bureaucracy highlighted how rigid structures and impersonal relationships in organizations could lead to conflicts between employees and management. Follett (1926) also emphasized that conflicts in organizations arise from differences in perspectives and suggested that they could be resolved through integrative problem-solving.

In educational organizations, interpersonal conflicts have been a recurring issue, often stemming from role ambiguity, resource constraints, and diverse interpersonal relationships among staff (Bush, 2011). For example, research by Hoy and Miskel (2013) identifies the hierarchical nature of educational institutions, coupled with the need for collaboration among staff, as fertile ground for conflict. These conflicts can manifest between teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders due to differences in values, teaching philosophies, and management styles. The historical development of educational systems, particularly during the Industrial Revolution, further accentuated interpersonal conflicts as schools became more structured and hierarchical, mirroring the complexities of other formal organizations (Ballantine & Hammack, 2015).

Early views on the causes of interpersonal conflicts in educational settings often revolved around structural issues, such as role ambiguity, ineffective communication, and competition for limited resources

(Hirschhorn, 1988). In these early studies, the resolution of conflicts was typically seen as the responsibility of those in positions of authority, with top-down solutions being the norm. The strategies used to manage these conflicts were largely based on hierarchical and authoritarian models, where school leaders would impose decisions without much input from other stakeholders. These strategies were aimed at suppressing or resolving conflict in a manner that maintained order and discipline within the institution.

Over time, however, the understanding of interpersonal conflict has evolved, especially with the rise of the human relations movement in the mid-20th century. Scholars and practitioners began to recognize that conflict, while disruptive, could also be constructive. In educational settings, this shift in thinking led to the adoption of more collaborative and participatory strategies. Rather than viewing conflict solely as a negative force to be eliminated, it began to be seen as an opportunity for growth and improvement. Strategies such as mediation, open communication, and team-based problem-solving gained popularity, with an emphasis on understanding the underlying causes of conflicts and working towards mutually beneficial solutions (Deutsch, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the causes and management strategies of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in BSSs in Cameroon. Specifically, this study sought to;

- i. To investigate the causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in BSSs
- ii. To explore strategies used by principals of these schools to manage these interpersonal conflicts.

METHODOLOGY

The mixed methodology research design was used, where qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were adopted. The researcher

employed the purposive sampling technique to select the North West, South West and Centre Regions out of the ten Regions that constitute the Republic of Cameroon. The researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to select 7 out of 10 BSSs. The population of this study was composed of principals, vice principals and teachers of selected BSSs from which the sample was drawn. All the principals (07) and their vice-principals (09), making a total of 16 school administrators of the selected BSSs were involved in the study by responding to the questionnaire items. A purposive sampling method was also used to select 4 principals and 12 teachers from the selected schools who were involved in the interview guide. A total of 141 teachers were conveniently selected, making a total sample of 157.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Objective 1: Major Causes of Interpersonal Conflicts between Teachers of BSSs

Table 1 shows different responses of teachers regarding the causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in the BSSs of the North West, South West and Centre regions of Cameroon. Interpersonal conflicts between teachers, according to teachers, could be attributed to three categories of factors: teachers'-related, leadership-related, and school-related.

Table 1: Responses of principals on causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in BSSs

Themes	Content	Frequency/percentage
Teachers'-related causes	Poor communication	15 (93.75%)
	Unhealthy competition between teachers	13 (81.25%)
	Disrespect for others	12 (75%)
	Poor workplace ethics	12 (75%)
	Gossips	9 (56.25)
	Lack of cooperation in assigned tasks	8 (50%)
	Poor interpersonal skills	8 (50%)
	Ignorance of professional	5 (31.25%)

	ethics		
	Personality and ideological differences	4 (25%)	
	Lack of respect for hierarchy	2 (12.5%)	
	Poor working conditions for teachers	15 (93.75%)	
	Poor salary situation of teachers	15 (93.75%)	
School-related causes	Limited school infrastructure	14 (87.5%)	
	Overload of work	11(68.75%)	
	Inability to perform tasks on time	9 (56.25)	
	Lack of adequate funding	9 (56.25)	
	Limited appointment opportunities	3 (18.75%)	
	Strict application of school rules and regulations	9 (56.25)	
Leadership-related causes	Inequitable distribution of school resources	4 (25%)	
	Inadequate motivation for teachers	3 (18.75%)	
	Inadequate communication between teachers and administration	2 (12.5%)	

Table 2 shows different responses of teachers regarding the causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in the BSSs of the North West, South West and Centre regions of Cameroon. Interpersonal conflicts between teachers, according to teachers, could be attributed to three categories of factors: teachers'-related, leadership-related, and school-related.

Table 2: Responses of teachers on causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in BSSs

Themes	Content	Frequency/percentage
	Competition between teachers	102 (72.34%)
Teachers'-related causes	Personality clashes	99(70.21%)
	Poor communication	97(68.79%)
	Jealousy	92(65.24%)
	Differences in perception	87(61.70%)
	Gossips	79(56.03%)

	Selfish interest	61(43.26%)
	Disrespect for others	53(37.59%)
	The domineering attitude of some colleagues	37(26.24%)
	Cultural differences	27(19.15%)
	Poor working conditions	139(98.58%)
	Limited school infrastructure	135(95.74%)
School-related causes	Unfair allocation of school resources	121(85.82%)
	Inadequate teaching and learning material	109(77.30%)
	Disparity in workload	102(72.34%)
	Unfair scheduling of the timetable	98(69.50%)
	low job satisfaction	54(38.30%)
	Limited growth opportunities	38(26.95%)
	Lack of motivation	108(76.60%)
Leadership-related causes	Lack of leadership skills and competencies	98(69.50%)
	Unfair task allocation	91(64.53%)
	Unfair distribution of school resources	87(61.70%)
	Poor communication	76(53.90%)
	Tribalism	67(47.52%)
	Intimidation by school leadership	61(43.30%)
	Interference in others' privacy by leadership	59(41.84%)
Dictatorial tendency of school administrators	34(24.11%)	

Findings on the Causes of Interpersonal Conflicts between Teachers in the BSSs from Interviews for Teachers and Principals

This section presents data obtained from an interview guide for principals and teachers on the major causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers of Baptist Secondary Schools. The findings revealed that interpersonal conflicts in Baptist secondary schools arise from a variety of causes identified by both principals and teachers. Principals highlighted issues such as injustice, disrespect, unforgiveness, ego, pride, unaccommodating attitudes, resistance to correction, and poor workplace ethics as major contributors. To corroborate this, one principal

said, *“The issue of interpersonal conflicts between teachers in my institution is quite preoccupying as it has a detrimental impact on the productivity of teachers. It usually appears in various forms and shapes. It ranges from the unaccommodating attitude of some teachers, to resistance to correction and lapses even in basic workplace ethics”.*

Another principal added, *“Some of the causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers sometimes stem from the disrespect of school authority, personality clashes between teachers, especially those who see themselves as coming from well-to-do backgrounds with more connections. Sometimes this makes the work environment so toxic to the extent that to bring back normalcy, we either have to transfer or outrightly dismiss some of them.”*

Teachers’ responses to this question pretty much corroborated that of the principals. Though the involvement of principals in these conflicts was again perceptible in teachers’ responses. In this respect, one teacher stated that, *“one of the principal causes of the interpersonal conflicts between teachers in my school stems from the dictatorial policies of the principal who thinks that anything he says or does should be considered as law and therefore subject to no opposition. So anytime a teacher opposes what he says, he is either insulted or threatened with sanctions. There is also the feeling of partiality and favoritism of the school administration, especially when it comes to the management of school resources and incentives to teachers. This always leaves many teachers with the impression that they are not treated the same. Thereby giving way to conflicts”.*

Another teacher asserted that, *“There is also this tendency of unnecessary competition among colleagues, especially the female colleagues. They seem to compete in almost everything possible, cars, dresses, hairstyle, handbags, and phones. This atmosphere brings a lot of gossip, backbiting and blackmailing among colleagues”*

Principals and teachers of Baptist secondary schools identified a repertoire of causes, categorized into teachers-related causes (Competition between teachers, personality and ideological clashes, poor communication, gossips, disrespect for others, lack of cooperation in assigned tasks), school-related causes (poor working conditions of teachers, limited school infrastructure, overload of work, unfair scheduling of time table, low job satisfaction, limited growth opportunities), and leadership-related causes (poor salary situation of teachers, strict application of school rules and regulations, inequitable distribution of school resources, inadequate motivation for teachers, tribalism). Though principals disagreed on the unfair allocation of subjects to teachers 11 (68.8%), poor leadership styles of some principals 11 (68.8%), and the unfair distribution of available school materials for teaching and learning 10 (62.5%), as the major causes of interpersonal conflicts in BSSs.

Teacher-related factors such as poor communication, unhealthy competition, personality clashes, and disrespect were prominently identified by both principals and teachers, though with differing emphasis. Principals viewed poor communication (93.75%) and poor workplace ethics (75%) as the most significant, while teachers emphasized competition (72.34%), personality clashes (70.21%), and ineffective communication (68.79%). These findings are consistent with Nwankwo (2006), who found that interpersonal conflicts among teachers often stem from professional rivalry and personality differences in secondary schools. Similarly, Oghuvbu (2008) observed that unhealthy competition and lack of teamwork among staff led to persistent disputes in Nigerian public schools. In contrast, Bano et al. (2013), studying public sector schools in Pakistan, found that interpersonal teacher conflicts were less pronounced, attributing conflict mostly to political interference rather than personality-based issues. Adeoye (2016) also reported fewer interpersonal clashes in private schools, where strict codes of conduct

and better staff orientation helped mitigate personality-driven tensions. These contrasting findings suggest that school type, context, and culture play significant roles in shaping how teacher-related causes of conflict are experienced and managed.

School-related causes were among the most frequently cited by both groups, especially by teachers. Factors such as poor working conditions (98.58%), inadequate infrastructure (95.74%), and unfair allocation of resources (85.82%) emerged as major sources of conflict. Principals similarly acknowledged poor salaries (93.75%) and infrastructure constraints (87.5%) as key contributors. These findings support Nkué (2013), who found that inadequate facilities and unequal access to school resources were major stressors in Cameroonian schools, often leading to staff grievances and disputes. Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) also identified poor physical work environments and insufficient teaching materials as significant conflict triggers in Osun State, Nigeria. Further reinforcing these results, Oghuvbu (2008) emphasized the impact of overcrowded classrooms and lack of staff welfare on interpersonal tensions. However, in a divergent finding, Adeleke (2016) noted that in better-funded private schools, where working conditions and facilities were more conducive, such conflict triggers were minimal. These differences highlight the influence of institutional support and investment in shaping conflict dynamics.

Leadership-related causes revealed the sharpest contrast between the perceptions of principals and teachers. While only 56.25% of principals admitted that the strict application of rules and regulations contributed to conflict, a majority of teachers attributed conflict to poor leadership. Teachers cited lack of motivation (76.60%), weak leadership skills (69.50%), and unfair task allocation (64.53%) as major causes. This supports Social Exchange Theory, which posits that when individuals perceive an imbalance between effort and reward, dissatisfaction arises.

This aligns with Okotoni and Okotoni (2003), who reported that teachers felt unappreciated and overburdened due to poor administrative practices. Nkué (2013) similarly emphasized that unclear communication from school leaders and favoritism in task distribution fostered mistrust among teachers. Moreover, Ogbogu (2017) found that rigid leadership styles often intensified workplace disputes in Nigerian universities. However, in contrast, Bano et al. (2013) found that conflict in Pakistani schools was not significantly attributed to school leadership but to external influences, such as interference from school boards or unions. These findings suggest that leadership style and competence are crucial determinants of conflict levels within schools, and that proactive, motivational leadership may reduce interpersonal tensions among teachers.

Research Objective 2: Strategies used by Principals to Manage Interpersonal Conflicts between teachers in BSSs.

Table 3 shows different responses of principals regarding the Management strategies of interpersonal conflicts in BSSs of the North West, South West and Centre regions of Cameroon.

S/ N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	% AGREE	% DISAGREE	REMARK
1	Effective communication between teachers	10 62.5%	2 12.5%	3 18.8%	1 6.3%	12 75%	4 25%	AGREE
2	Regular staff meeting	9 56.3%	4 25%	2 12.5%	1 6.3%	13 75.1%	3 24.9%	AGREE
3	Appropriate leadership style	8 50%	4 25%	2 12.5%	2 12.5%	12 75%	4 25%	AGREE
4	Transparent management of school resources	7 43.8%	4 25%	3 18.8%	2 12.5%	11 68.8%	5 31.2%	AGREE
5	Knowledge of conflict management	8 50%	4 25%	2 12.5%	2 12.5%	12 75%	4 25%	AGREE
6	Mutual respect between teachers and principals	9 56.3%	5 31.3%	1 6.3%	1 6.3%	14 87.6%	2 12.4%	AGREE

**AFO-A-KOM: Journal of Culture, Performing and Visual Arts: Kumah Paul
Toh & Titanji Peter Fon**

7	The workload should be evenly distributed	6 37.5%	7 43.8%	1 6.3%	2 12.5%	13 75.1%	3 24.9%	AGREE
8	Improved working conditions for teachers	7 43.8%	7 43.8%	2 12.5%	0 00%	14 87.6%	2 12.4%	AGREE
9	Accommodate individual differences	8 50%	5 31.3%	2 12.5%	1 6.3%	13 75.1%	3 24.9%	AGREE
10	Avoiding favoritism and tribalism	4 25%	4 25%	4 25%	4 25%	8 50%	8 50%	UNDECI DED

Table 4 shows different responses of teachers regarding the Management strategies of interpersonal conflicts by principals of BSSs of the North West, South West and Centre regions of Cameroon.

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	%		REMARK
						AGREE	DISAGREE	
1	Effective communication between teachers	81 57.4%	28 19.9%	22 15.6%	10 7.1%	109 77.30%	32 22.70%	AGREE
2	Regular staff meeting	51 36.2%	32 22.7%	34 24.1%	24 17%	83 58.87%	58 41.13%	AGREE
3	Appropriate leadership style	23 16.3%	13 9.2%	59 41.8%	46 32.6%	36 25.54%	105 74.46%	DISAGREE
4	Transparent management of school resources	19 13.5%	10 7.1%	70 49.6%	42 29.8%	29 20.57%	112 79.43%	DISAGREE
5	Knowledge of conflict management	39 27.7%	10 7.1%	34 24.1%	58 41.1%	49 34.76%	92 65.24%	DISAGREE
6	Mutual respect between teachers and principals	61 43.3%	68 48.2%	10 7.1%	2 1.4%	129 91.48%	12 8.52%	AGREE
7	Fair distribution of workload	14 9.9%	3 2.1%	79 51.1%	52 36.9%	17 12.06%	124 87.94%	DISAGREE
8	Improved working conditions of teachers	0 00%	0 00%	79 56%	62 44%	0 00%	141 100%	DISAGREE
9	Accommodate individual differences	43 30.5%	44 31.2%	32 22.7%	22 15.6%	87 61.70%	54 38.30%	AGREE
10	Avoiding favoritism and tribalism	56 39.7%	24 17%	28 19.9%	33 23.4%	80 56.73%	61 43.27%	AGREE

Another question for the participants of the interview was to solicit their views on the strategies used by principals to manage interpersonal conflicts between teachers in Baptist Secondary Schools. Again, the participants identified a repertoire of strategies Principals used to manage these conflicts. For leadership-related factors, one of the Principals commented: *“Some of the strategies I use to minimise the interpersonal conflicts between teachers in my establishment have been through clear definition and description of individual roles. Clear identification of school rules and regulations, and introducing a culture of respect, tolerance and love where every teacher feels secure and valued. These measures have been instrumental in curbing the incidence of these conflicts between teachers”*.

Another principal opined: *“Most of the interpersonal conflict between the teachers in my school has been defused through frequent staff meetings and social gatherings and improved interpersonal communication, speaking and listening and giving room for teachers to voice their concerns. This has been crucial in building a good, friendly school climate and relationships with teachers and creates social avenues where they can freely discuss. Sometimes, too, only prayers are necessary”*.

On the part of teachers, many of them were very evasive concerning the exact strategies used by principals to manage conflicts between teachers in their schools. However, one of them said: *“My principal employs various strategies to resolve conflicts, especially depending on the type of conflict and the persons involved. There are times he invites those involved privately and talks with them for the issue to be resolved amicably. There are times when he shouts at teachers, intimidating and threatening with transfer and dismissal. There are times he uses a divide and rule policy to favour those who are in the same camp”*.

Another teacher added: *“My principal also tries to resolve conflicts through open dialogue, active listening and respecting the viewpoints of the*

conflicting parties. At times during staff meetings or other social gatherings, the principal is always quick to remind teachers of the Christian nature of the institution and the necessity for them to live exemplary lives worthy to be emulated”.

Principals and teachers identified a variety of strategies used to better manage interpersonal conflicts between teachers, categorized into leadership-related, where principals identified (Organizing regular staff meetings and social gatherings, transparent management of school resources, and being role models in interpersonal relationships). Teachers differed, highlighted (punishing recalcitrant Teachers, and using divide and rule tendencies). Under teachers'-related strategies, principals and teachers identified effective communication between teachers, strict respect of school rules and regulations, and instilling mutual respect between teachers. However, teachers went forward to highlight (mastering school rules and regulations and respecting seniority in the staff) as other strategies used. Under institution related strategies, principals identified (improved working conditions of teachers, improved school infrastructure, creation of counselling units in schools). These were however, were not mentioned by teachers.

The findings obtained from the questionnaire and interview responses revealed that the strategies employed by principals in Baptist Secondary Schools (BSSs) to manage interpersonal conflicts between teachers were diverse. These were grouped into leadership-related strategies, teacher-related strategies, and institution-related strategies. Leadership-related strategies included regular staff meetings, transparent management of school resources, role-modelling interpersonal behavior, and promoting effective communication between teachers. Teacher-related strategies focused on instilling mutual respect, enforcing seniority, and punishing recalcitrant teachers. Institution-related strategies comprised improving teachers' working conditions, enhancing school infrastructure, and

ensuring strict adherence to school rules and regulations. Notably, while principals rejected the use of divide-and-rule tendencies, a majority of teachers perceived them as a key strategy in conflict management. An independent-sample t-test result ($p = .312 > 0.05$) showed no statistically significant difference in the overall perceptions of teachers and principals, but qualitative responses revealed substantial differences in emphasis and interpretation of strategies used.

These findings are supported by previous studies such as Nkué (2013), Smith (2018), and Okotoni and Okotoni (2003). Nkué (2013), for instance, found that conflicting leadership perceptions between teachers and school leaders in Cameroon led to strained working relationships, a finding consistent with the present study's discovery of divergent views between principals and teachers. Smith (2018) emphasized the role of structured communication policies and participatory leadership in minimizing interpersonal tensions, which aligns with the importance attributed to communication and mutual respect in this study. Okotoni and Okotoni (2003) similarly noted that Nigerian teachers reported dissatisfaction with administrators' structural strategies due to a lack of direct benefits, which resonates with the current findings, where teachers did not see improved working conditions or infrastructure as effective conflict management strategies.

However, these findings also differ from other related studies. For example, while this study found that principals prioritized infrastructural improvements and administrative strategies, teachers emphasized relational and leadership behavior such as fairness, communication, and respect. This diverges from findings by Engdawork and Thuo (2017), who reported strong agreement among school stakeholders on structural interventions like task allocation and infrastructural upgrades as key conflict reduction strategies. Similarly, whereas the current study indicates a perception gap concerning divide-and-rule practices, Titanji

(2017) suggests that administrators often operate in contexts of inadequate resources and diverse stakeholder interests, which may lead to misinterpretations of administrative actions rather than deliberate divisive tactics. This discrepancy underscores the importance of context-specific leadership training and the need for school principals to align strategies with teachers' lived experiences to ensure sustainable conflict resolution.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the causes of interpersonal conflicts between teachers and the strategies used by principals to manage these conflicts in Baptist Secondary Schools (BSSs). Findings revealed differing perceptions between principals and teachers regarding the causes of conflict. While principals emphasized school-related and teacher-related causes such as poor working conditions, low salaries, poor communication, and unhealthy competition, teachers highlighted leadership-related causes, including a lack of motivation and poor leadership skills. These differences underscore the need for a more balanced understanding of conflict sources that considers both structural and leadership dimensions.

Regarding conflict management strategies, principals mainly employed authoritative approaches, structured rules, and limited mediation. While most principals (81.3%) expressed satisfaction with their methods, a significant majority of teachers (69.5%) were dissatisfied, indicating a disconnect in perceptions of effectiveness. Teachers favored more participatory and inclusive conflict resolution practices. The notable difference in satisfaction levels and perceptions points to the need for principals to reassess their strategies, engage teachers in decision-making, and adopt more collaborative approaches to enhance conflict resolution in BSSs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Education Board provide leadership training for school principals to enhance their conflict resolution skills and address teacher-related and leadership-related causes of conflict. Principals should also improve communication, involve teachers in decision-making, and foster a more collaborative school climate.

Additionally, principals should adopt inclusive strategies that prioritize teacher engagement, transparency, and fairness in handling conflicts. Regular dialogue, open-door policies, and mediation frameworks should be instituted to reduce misunderstandings and build trust. These measures would help bridge the gap between teacher and principal perceptions and improve the overall effectiveness of conflict management in Baptist Secondary Schools.

REFERENCES

- Adeleke, M. O. (2016). Conflict management strategies and staff productivity in private secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Lagos.
- Adeoye, M. A. (2016). Assessment of conflict management strategies by secondary school principals. *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(1), 1–10.
<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/IJOMR/article/view/56466>
- Ballantine, J. H., & Hammack, F. M. (2015). *The sociology of education: A systematic analysis* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Bano, M., Khan, M. I., & Rehman, H. U. (2013). The dynamics of interpersonal conflict in public sector organizations of Pakistan: A study on conflict management styles. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3(4), 16–27.
- Bush, T. (2011). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Deutsch, M., Coleman, P. T., & Marcus, E. C. (2011). *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Follett, M. P. (1926). Constructive conflict. In H. C. Metcalf (Ed.), *Scientific foundations of business administration* (pp. 30-49). Harper.

- Heidel, A. (1942). *The Babylonian Genesis: The story of creation*. University of Chicago Press.
- Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2013). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (9th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Jehn, K. A. (1995). A multimethod examination of the benefits and detriments of intragroup conflict. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(2), 256–282. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393638>
- Nkué, R. (2013). *The role of school leadership in managing conflicts in secondary schools in Cameroon*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Yaoundé I.
- Nwankwo, B. C. (2006). Managing interpersonal conflicts among teachers in secondary schools: Implications for school administration. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Administration and Planning*, 6(2), 39–49.
- Ogbogu, C. O. (2017). Conflict management in Nigerian universities: A study of selected institutions in the South West. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 9(6), 73–79. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEAPS2016.0477>
- Oghuvbu, E. P. (2008). Stress among teachers in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Development in Africa*, 2(1), 15–24.
- Okotoni, O., & Okotoni, A. (2003). Conflict management in secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 12(1), 23–38.
- Rahim, M. A. (2011). *Managing conflict in organizations* (4th ed.). Transaction Publishers.
- Shanka, E. B., & Thuo, M. (2017). Conflict management and resolution strategies between teachers and school leaders in primary schools of Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(4), 63–74
- Titanji, Peter Fon (2017) University of Calabar Press Calabar – Nigeria
- Tjosvold, D. (2008). The conflict-positive organization: Stimulate diversity and create unity. *European Management Journal*, 26(1), 74–83.
- Weber, M. (1947). *The theory of social and economic organization* (A. M. Henderson & T. Parsons, Trans.). Oxford University Press.