

# Principals' Capacity-Building Needs for Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

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**Abstract:-** The work determined principals' capacity-building needs for conflict resolution in secondary schools. The public secondary schools in Anambra State were studied. It was a descriptive survey research. All the public secondary schools in all the 6 education zones in the state were studied. The population of the study consisted of 257 public secondary school principals in the area of the study. The sample for the study comprised 76 principals which consisted 30% of the entire population. The instrument for data collection was researchers-developed questionnaire. The face validity of the instrument was established and the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha method. The researchers collected the data from the respondents. The research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviations while t- test statistic was used to test the hypothesis. It was found in this study that principals need capacity-building for conflict resolution and that there was no significant difference in the mean responses scores of principals in the urban areas and principals in the rural areas on their capacity-building needs for conflict resolution in secondary schools in Anambra State. Accordingly, it was recommended among others that the identified 8 structured items for capacity building needs for conflict resolution should be utilized in developing intervention programmes for raining the principals in Anambra State through workshops and seminars short-duration retraining courses in higher institutions.

**Keywords:-** Principals; Capacity-Building; Needs; Conflict Resolution; and Schools.

## I. INTRODUCTION

People have always existed and co-existed as group. These could be cultural ethnic, social, political or work groups. Schools when seen as organizations exist as groups but also with sub groups. These groups are made up of individuals with multivariate background (Naidu, 2011). The background of people in the sub groups could have resulted from ethnic, cultural, religious, educational or political consideration. When these converge in an organization such as a school, there is the likelihood of the

existence, of issues that can cause misunderstandings, likes and dislikes, among others. The innumerable interdependence that is inherent in organizations makes conflict inevitable. Conflict which is an overt behaviour in which one party seeks to advance its own interest in its relationship with others can arise within and among groups and subgroups. Since conflict is inevitable in human organizations including schools, it becomes necessary to resolve it properly.

Conflict resolution which is an important area of human resource management is the process of controlling conflict in human relations. If a conflict is well managed and resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned, it could lead to some qualitative development in the relations between them but wrongly handled conflict can rock or destabilize a system. Conflict arises any time the root causes are not properly handled. The conflict generating factors need to be properly addressed to avoid escalation.

According to Nwakpa (2015), conflicts can arise between the Secondary Schools' Management Board and the principals, the staff or between the school and the host community. In the school system, whenever discipline is lacking, it is most likely that there will be a general breakdown of rules and order, which eventually result in conflicts.

The principal therefore, is required to implement the behavioural management policy in a fair and consistent manner that will minimize conflicts. To avoid conflict in the school, principals are to communicate well in the school. The staff and students need to know what is expected of them at any given point in time. This implies effective communication using the school channels of communication. One of such channels is the Faculty meeting.

Nikam (2010) posited that Faculty meetings may be used as an excellent um to hold periodic "straight talk" sessions, a practice that can address stormy issues directly and, in many cases prevent long-term stormy conflicts from escalating and becoming a destructive force. No one can underrate the role of communication in the effective school

administration. Communicating with staff, in this respect, does not only ensure an understanding of the existing conditions in a school, it also directs the staff to towards sustaining peaceful working relationships with one another in the school (Nakpodia, (2010). The principals, therefore, need to build their capacity and those of their staff to enable them resolve conflicts. There are so many reasons for the clamour for principals' capacity building in Anambra state.

There are reports, observations, and also outcry over poor school climate in Anambra state. Nwosu (2018) noted that principals, teachers, and even students indulge in acts of gross indiscipline such as non-challant, attitude to work, lateness, absenteeism to work, non-compliance with directives, truancy, illegal collection of fees and examination malpractices etc. Gwacham (2015) observed that some principals hardly venture to go near the classroom to supervise, guide, direct, and motivate teachers for effective curriculum delivery. Some other problems prevalent in secondary schools are: problems of inadequate finance, lack of motivation, and lack of information and communication technology facilities (ICT) and so on in the administration of the school system. If issues relating to principals' capacity building needs are not addressed properly, these deficiencies can impact negatively on quality learning such that the students are not even prepared for useful living or gaining admission to higher education as stipulated by secondary school educational objectives. To address the issues raised in this study, one research question and one null hypothesis were raised.

#### ➤ *Research Question*

In which areas do principals in Anambra state need capacity-building for resolving conflicts in their schools?

#### ➤ *Hypothesis*

The mean ratings of the principals on their capacity-building needs for conflict resolution will not differ significantly based on school location.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The research design adopted in this study was the descriptive survey. Public secondary schools in Anambra state were studied. The population of the study comprised 257 principals in the area of the study at the time of the research. The sample for the study comprised 76 principals which consisted 30% of the entire population. The education zones were regarded as clusters and 30% of the respondents drawn from each cluster.

The "Principals' Conflict Resolution Needs Questionnaire" (PCRNQ) was the questionnaire used in data collection. The questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on literature review and consultation with experts in educational management and conflict resolution. PCRNQ is structured into 4-point scale. The validation of the questionnaire was done by giving copies of the questionnaire to three experts: one in educational management; one in conflict resolution and one in measurement and evaluation. The comments of the experts guided the construction of the final draft of the instrument which was subjected to reliability test. The reliability test was done in Enugu state using 10 principals in public secondary schools. The reliability coefficient was determined using the Cronbach alpha. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained for the instrument. The researchers collected the data from the schools directly using the on-the -spot approach method of questionnaire administration. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at .05 significant level. The results are presented below.

## III. RESULTS

#### ➤ *Research Question*

In which areas do principals in Anambra state need capacity-building for resolving conflicts in their schools?

S/NO	For Conflict Resolution as a Principal, I Need Capacity-Building to be Able to:	Principals (Urban)	Principals (Rural)	Overall
		$\bar{X}$ Sd Dec	$\bar{X}$ Sd Dec	$\bar{X}$ Sd Dec
1	Foster harmony in the school.	3.6 0.42 A	3.3 0.38 A	3.05 0.4 A
2	Organize seminars or talk on conflict resolution and its effect on teaching and learning.	3.03 0.39 A	2.92 0.39 A	3.0 0.39 A
3	Explain to teachers the need for conflict resolutions and its effect on teaching through dialogue	3.45 0.45 A	3.14 0.41 A	3.3 0.43 A
4	Instruct teachers on how to resolve conflict through dialogue	3.32 0.43 A	3.04 0.39 A	3.2 0.41 A
5	Explain to teacher on how to resolve conflict through avoidance approach	3.19 0.41 A	3.56 0.47 A	3.4 0.41 A

6	Recommend incentives at the end of the year for teachers who are not involved in conflicts.	3.19 0.41 A	3.62 .48 A	3.5 0.46 A
7	Sanction individual teachers who are always involved in conflicts.	2.92 0.38 A	3.10 0.40 A	3.0 0.39 A
8	Use leaders to resolve conflicts.	2.71 0.38 A	2.55 0.39 A	3.0 0.39 A
<b>Cluster <math>\bar{X}</math> and Sd</b>		<b>3.11 0.40</b>	<b>3.03 0.39</b>	<b>3.1 0.4 A</b>

Table 1:- Analysis for Capacity-Building Needs of Principals for Conflict Resolution

The data analysis for principals’ capacity-building needs for conflict resolution is presented in Table1. The mean cluster for principals in the urban areas is 3.11 while that of principals in rural areas is 3.03 with standard deviation of 1.40 for principals in urban and 0.39 for principals in rural areas. This reveals that the respondents agree that they need to practice items 1 to 8 in order to build capacity for effective conflict resolution in their

schools. In addition, there are slight differences in the mean scores and standard deviations but the differences are insignificant.

➤ **Hypothesis Testing:** The mean ratings of the principals on their capacity-building needs for conflict resolution will not differ significantly based on school location.

Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Df	t(call)	t-value (0.05)	Decision
Principals (Urban)	30	3.11	0.40	75	1.4	1.96	$H_0$ not rejected
Principals (Rural)	46	3.03	0.39				

Table 2:- t-test Analysis for Capacity-Building Needs of Principals for Conflict Resolution

At the df of 75, the t-cal was 1.4 while the table value was 1.96. Since the table value is greater than the calculated value, the null hypothesis was accepted. The mean ratings of the principals on their capacity-building needs for conflict resolution did not differ significantly based on school location.

how to resolve conflicts through avoidance approach, individual teachers who are always involved in conflicts among other strategies, in order to build their capacity for effective conflict resolution among and students.

**IV. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS**

Based on the data analyzed, the major findings revealed that principals in secondary schools in Anambra State need to:

Foster harmony in the school, organize seminars or talks on conflict resolution and its effect on teaching and learning, explain to teachers the need for conflict resolutions and its effect on teaching through dialogue, explain to teachers on how to resolve conflicts through avoidance approach, sanction individual teachers who are always involved in conflicts among other strategies, in order to build their capacity for effective conflict resolution among staff and students. It was found that there was no significant difference in the mean responses scores of principals in the urban areas and principals in the rural areas on their capacity-building needs for conflict resolution in secondary schools in Anambra State.

The findings of this study are in agreement with Osakwe (2010) who found that conflict between personnel and at times between departments have the potential to cause great rift in faculty harmony. Therefore, when rules are not adhered to, the principal must resolve the consulting employee-management conflict through dialogue. The findings also agree with Sham (2011) who found that developing effective strategy for conflict resolution in the school requires major factors in the education enterprise working in harmony and unity in conflict management strategy. The principal in such a situation (of conflict) must ensure that communication is open promptly to avert the situation before it escalates and more people become involved.

**V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The result of the study indicated that principals in secondary schools in Anambra State need to foster harmony in the school, organize seminars or talks on conflict resolution and its effect on teaching and learning, explain to teachers need for conflict resolutions and its effect on teaching through dialogue, explain to teachers on

The findings are also in consonance with Sule (2013) whose study revealed that seminars, conferences and symposia would be organized from time to time for the management cadre of secondary schools, on educational management and conflict resolution techniques. There are certain essential skills needed to identifying and dealing with conflicts constructively; these skills include using neutral language, active listening, sanctifying and understanding distinct point of view, identifying problems and negotiating and mediating to resolve conflicts.

The findings are also in consonance with Uchefuna (2001) who found that it might be necessary to bring in a facilitator or mediator to assist resolving a conflict when it has persisted for an uncomfortable period of time.

Depending on the nature of conflicts and the parties involved, various methods were suggested and they include the use of disciplinary committee; intervention of the school authority and/or elders in the community. As discovered by Wright (2013), sometimes the local inspectors of Education and the Post primary Schools' Management Board (PPSMB) officials' intervention could be needed. The PPSMB officials could send their officials to conflict ridden schools to carryout investigation; mediate or resolve the problem. The foregoing views of the Wright strengthened the reality of the current findings.

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of principals in the urban areas and principals in the rural areas on the capacity- building needs of principals for conflict resolution in secondary schools in Anambra State.

The result of this study also showed that there was no significant difference in the mean response scores of principals in the urban and rural areas on the capacity- building needs of principals for conflict resolution in secondary schools in Anambra State. The result indicated that the location of the respondents did not affect their responses significantly. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore held for the (8) items.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that principals need capacity-building to develop their potentials in order to enhance their performances or output in their schools. Essentially, they need to build their capacity in conflict resolution to be able to handle conflicts in their schools.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made in the light of the findings, discussions that followed and the various implications which were highlighted:

- It is recommended that the identified 8 structured items for capacity building needs for conflict resolution should be utilized in developing intervention programmes for training the principals in Anambra State through workshops and seminars short-duration retraining courses in higher institutions.
- It is recommended that principals should make use of the findings of the study, especially where they require capacity-building, to seek for sponsorship from government, non-government organizations (NGOs) and Parents-Teachers-Association (PTA), to attend capacity-building workshops on retraining programmes in these areas, in order to improve their capacity to handle conflicts.

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