PRINCIPAL'S PERSONAL TRAITS FOR MANAGING CONFLICT AMONG THE TEACHERS IN FEDERAL UNITY COLLEGE (FUC) NORTH CENTRAL ZONE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This paper sought for Principal's Personal Traits for Managing Conflict among the Teachers in Federal Unity College (FUC) North Central Zone, Nigeria. It is descriptive survey carried out ex-post facto. The population for this study was 318 (Three hundred and eighteen) comprised principals and teachers from Federal Unity College. North Central had 24 (Twenty four) Federal Unity College and a principal each. No sampling for schools and principals all were selected for the study. Sampling error was used to select 294 (Two hundred and ninety four) teachers with Yaro Yamane formula: $n= N/1+N (e)^2$. The researcher developed instrument tagged "Principals Personal Traits for Managing Conflict among the Teachers (PPTMCT)" was used to collect information from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts - two in Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Abuja and one measurement and evaluation in University of Abuja. In other to ascertain the reliability co-efficient of the instrument, test re-test method was adopted and 0.94 was derived with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) *that shows the instrument was reliable. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Frequency count and percentage were using to analysis demographic data and research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed that a significant relationship existed between male and female principal's personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers in Federal Unity College, North Central Zone of Nigeria (calculated t-valve =3.285 > critical t-valve =1.384, p ≤ 0.05, df =318). In view of this findings, it was recommended among others that principals' should understand the foundation of conflict in the school system and use appropriate strategies to revolutionize the situation based on personal distinctiveness.*

Keyword: Federal Unity College, Managing conflict, Personal traits, Principal's, Teacher.

Introduction

Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement or discord arising within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more unacceptable to one or more members of another group. Conflict defines as an activity which takes place when conscious beings (individual or groups) which to carry out mutually inconsistent acts concerning their wants, needs or obligations. Conflict involves situations in which differences are expressed by interdependent people in the process of achieving their needs and goals, and it arises when a difference between two or more people necessitates change in at least one person in order for their engagement to continue and develop. In 2012, Rakhim's notes that a conflict may be limited to one individual, who is conflicted within himself (the intrapersonal conflict).

Conflict management is the art of designing appropriate mechanism to guide the inevitable conflicts into appropriate channels. Conflict management involves implementing strategies to control the negative aspects of conflict and to increase the positive aspects of conflict at a level equal to or higher than where the conflict is taking place. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group effectiveness or

performance in an organizational setting. Conflict management is what people who experience conflict intend to do as well as what they actually do. The better educators and students understand the nature of conflict, the better able they are to manage conflicts constructively. Abdul, (2014) cited in Moran, sees conflict management as "a philosophy and a set of skills that assist individuals and groups in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of their lives".

Principal is the head of Federal Unity College (FUC) in Nigeria, who monitors and controls the school with the help of supporting staff. The principal is responsible for all school-based activities of routine nature and special events like speeches, debates and games to improve mental health of students. Conflict in schools takes different forms; for example teachers seem reluctant to obey the principals, they do not seem to follow rules or accept extra work, they do not easily get along with their principals (Fischer and Ferlie, 2013). Principals too adopt an authoritative approach, for example they pressurize teachers for an uninterrupted working of the school activities. Its therefore, becomes common that conflict between teachers and the school principal occur frequently at any time in the school.

The principals' capabilities to handle member's in his/her jurisdiction with a standard measurable attitude in the schools sitting. Usually the members of a department or work team have different levels of skills and abilities. Conflict can result when an experienced employee must work with a novice who has good theoretical knowledge but few practical skills [Salleh and Adulpakdee, 2012]. For example, a long-teaching teacher in school who was graduated many years ago and she is familiar to teach in the old way of teaching will have a conflict with young newcomer teacher who has an advance technique of teaching [Michael, 2012]. Rakhim [2012] admitted that personality conflicts are a reality in any group setting, including the workplace. There always seems to be at least one co-worker who is difficult to get along with. One of the most difficult personality traits is abrasiveness. An abrasive person is often hardworking and achievement-oriented, but critical and insensitive to others feelings. Other irritating personality traits include laziness and gossiping.

It is the perception or belief that opposing needs, wishes, ideas, interests, and goals exist that create what we commonly call conflict. Conflict is everywhere, and it is inevitable. It arises from many sources. In addition to being the antecedent for negotiation, conflict may also arise during negotiation. Abdul [2014] suggested that conflict may be simply described as a clash between two individuals who are unwillingly or unable to fulfill expectations of each other. Much organizational conflict stems from the fact that employees and managers have different perceptions of situations. For example, a principal may feel that a teacher is underperforming in teaching, whereas the teacher may feel that the best job possible is being done [Salleh and Adulpakdee, 2012].

Effective principal's values diversity in perspectives, leading to a deeper understanding of organizational reality and an enriched knowledge base for decision making. There are increasingly heterogeneous. Differences in age, cultural background, ethics, and values can be a source of conflict among employees. For instance, long-serving staffs who feel loyal to the school may clash with a young newcomer staff that sees the school as nothing more than a stepping stone [Oyeniran, Fashiku and Durosaro, 2012].

When we bring our personal problems to work, our performance tends to suffer and we may clash with co-workers who are obliged to "pick up the slack." [Salleh and Adulpakdee, 2012]. For example, some teachers have a problem at their home then they could not teach effectively in their class because they lack of concentration. A common cause of conflict is poor communication, which can lead to misunderstandings and allow barriers to be erected. Probably the easiest way to prevent conflict is to ensure good communication. However, both too little and too much communication can lead to conflict. On the one hand, when there is too little communication, associates do not know enough about each other's intentions, goals, or plans. Coordination becomes difficult, and misunderstandings are more likely to occur, which can result in conflict. On the other hand, too much communication can also result in misunderstandings that

cause conflict [Hitt, Miller and Chet, 2006]. For instance, a principal should be cleared in details when he notices a new discipline for all teachers and students in school.

Many experts have done a lot of research regarding conflict management in schools both inside Nigeria and outside. These are: Conflict management and school leadership; Conflict management in secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria; Teachers' perceptions of the consequences of interpersonal conflict: A case study in three primary schools; Conflict in schools: its causes and management strategies; Causes of conflict and effective methods to conflict management at Islamic secondary schools in Yala, Thailand (Vuyisile, 2012; Okotoni and Okotoni, 2013; Cain and Plessis, 2013; Abdul, 2014; Salleh and Adulpakdee, 2012). Principals in FUC, NCZ in Nigeria have experienced many challenges in respect of conflict management in the area of funding, tormenter teachers, school climate, school infrastructure, management administration. Conflict happen when there is disagreement between both parties (Principal and Teacher) in schools but the principal who is the head can manipulate everyone and subdue the situation to get enhance or worse. Teachers have the mandate and responsibilities to support their principals in solving any occurrence conflict in schools. But reverse be the case in FUC, NCZ in Nigeria secondary schools, where principals sees themselves has omnipotent without carry the teachers along. To resolve conflict cannot happen without teacher's understanding and cooperation. Therefore, teachers also should know the strategy for solving conflict and try to solve it before the expansion of conflict. The belief is that if the principal and teacher can control and solve the conflict among themselves in the school, teaching and learning will be improved. Hence, this study was designed to investigate the principal's personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers in Federal Unity College (FUC) North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

i. What are the principal's personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers in FUC, NCZ of Nigeria?

ii. How did the principal's use to manage conflict in FUCs?

Hypothesis

No significant difference between male and female principal's personal traits in managing conflict among the teachers in terms of skills and abilities, personal conflict, perceptions, diversity, personal problem and communication in FUC, NCZ, Nigeria.

Methods

Descriptive survey research design was adopted because is suitable and easy for collecting data which refer to a numerous sample in the study. The population under consideration in this study was 318 (Three hundred and eighteen) comprised principals and teachers from Federal Unity College (FUC) North Central Zone of Nigeria. North Central had 24 (Twenty four) Federal Unity College (FUC) with 1108 teachers and a principal each. No sampling for schools and principals all were selected for the study. Sampling error was used to select 294 (Two hundred and ninety four) teachers with Yaro Yamane formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = the sample size
N = the finite population
e = level of significant (or limit of tolerable error)
1 = unity (constant)
Population is 1108; e= 0.05;

$$n = \frac{1108}{1 + 1108(0.05)^2}$$
$$= \frac{1108}{1 + 1108(0.0025)}$$
$$= \frac{1108}{1 + 2.77}$$

$$= \quad \frac{1108}{3.77}$$

$$= \quad 294$$

Table 1: Sampled Principals and Teachers, Federal Unity College (FUC) North Central Zone of Nigeria

| S/N	North Central States	Federal Unity College in NCZ	No of Principals selected	No of Teachers selected
1	Benue	FGC Vandeikya	1	12
		FGGC Gboko	1	12
		FGC Otobi	1	12
		FSTC Otukpo	1	13
2	Kogi	FGC Ugwolawo	1	12
		FGGC Kabba	1	12
3	Kwara	FGC Ilorin	1	12
		FGGC Omu-Aran	1	12
		FGC Minna	1	12
		FGGC Bida	1	12
4	Niger	FGGC New Bussa	1	12
		FSTC Shiroro	1	13
		FGA Suleja	1	13
5	Plateau	FGC Jos	1	12
		FGGC Langtang	1	12
		FGC Keffi	1	12
6	Nasarawa	FGGC Kenna	1	12
		FSTC Doma	1	13
		FGC Kwali	1	12
		FGGC Bware	1	12
7	FCT	FGGC Abaji	1	12
		FGBC Apo-Garki	1	13
		FGC Roboch	1	12
		FSTC Orozo	1	13
	Total	**24**	**24**	**294**

FGC= Federal Government College; **FGGC**= Federal Government Girls College; **FSTC**= Federal Science and Technology College; **FGA**= Federal Government Academy; **FGBC**= Federal Government Boys College.

The instrument used in the study was a self-constructed questionnaire tagged "Principal's Personal Traits for Managing Conflict among the Teachers (PPTMCT)" that contained items which were selected from a thorough review of the available literature on the subjects. The questionnaire was designed to deal with the demographic data of the principals and teachers in terms of their age, gender, marital status, educational qualifications, years of experience and level/cadre for section A. Section B elicited principal's personal traits: skills and abilities, personality conflict, perceptions, diversity, personal problems and communication. Section C focused on the principal's conflict management among the teachers. In section B and C Likert Scale 1-4 was used (1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes and 4=Always). The instrument was validated by three experts-two in Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Abuja and one measurement and evaluation in University of Abuja to determine the relevance, clarity and appropriateness. The reliability of the instrument which is an estimate of it consistency and stability, was determined through a test re-test with a sample of forty (40) respondents consisted 3 principals and 37 teachers in FGC Kaduna, FGGC Zaria and FSTC Kafanchan using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and a coefficient of 0.94 was obtained which is high enough to guarantee its use for the study. The instrument was administered to 318 respondents in Federal Unity College, North Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeria personally with the two research assistance. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count and percentage for demographic data and research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

The figure A-F below presents the demographic facts of the respondents in terms of Age, Gender Marital status, Educational qualifications, Years of experience and Levels.

Figure A-F: Demographic Facts of the respondents in percentages
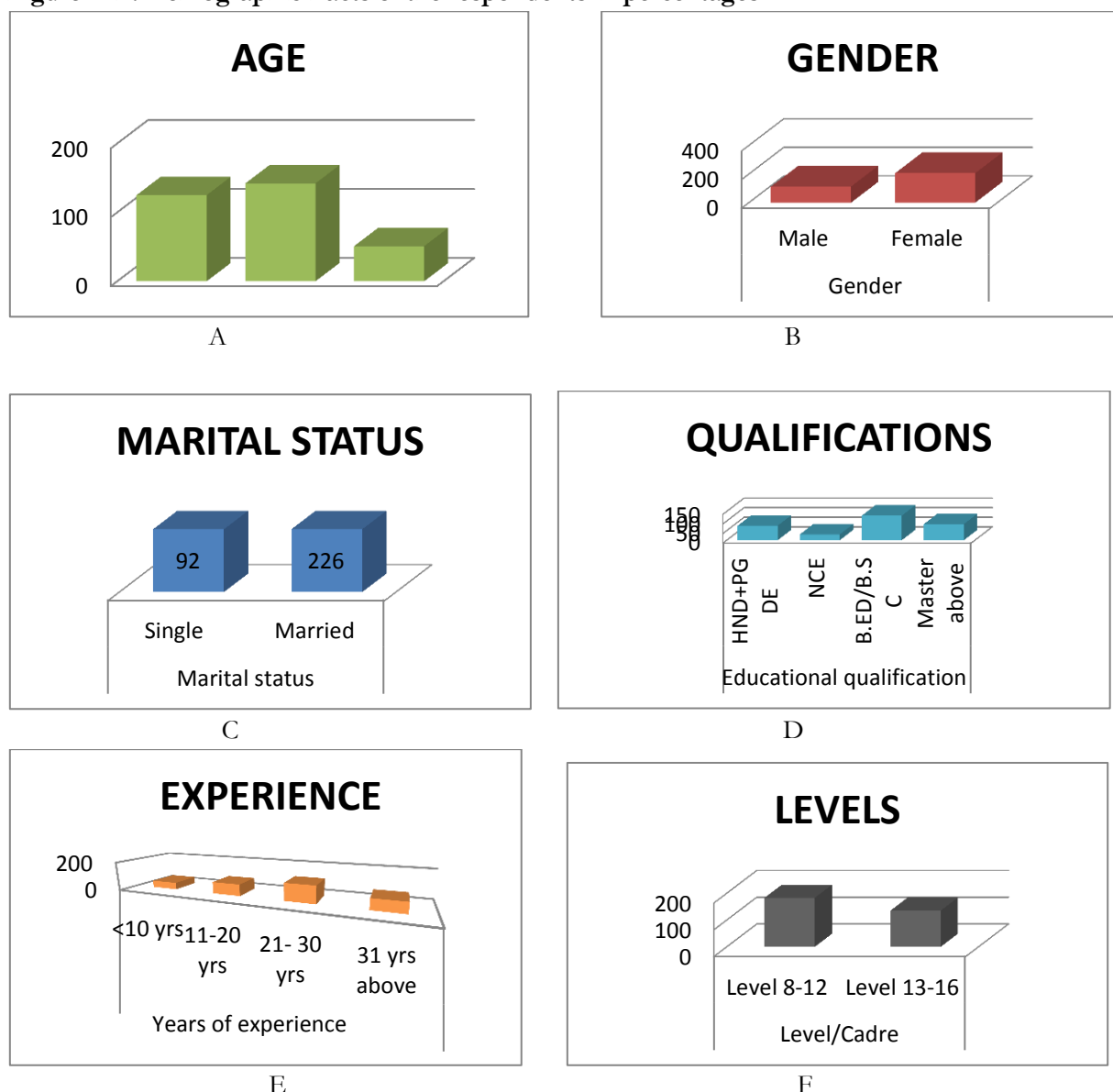
The figures above shows that 125 (39.31%) of the participants were between age of 20-35 years, 142 (44.65%) of them fall between the age brackets of 36-50 years while 51 (16.04%) were between the age of 51 years above. Likewise 112 (35.22%) were male and 206 (64.78%) were female. Also, their marital status revealed that 92 (28.93%) were single and 226 (71.07%) were married. Result also shows that 76 (23.90%) of the participants possessed HND+PGDE, 30 (9.43%) of them hold NCE, 128 (40.25%) with first degree qualification while 84 (26.42%) were with masters above. Finding also shown that 48 (15.09%) had spent less than 10 years, 80 (25.16%) were spent between 11-20 years, 118 (37.11%) were spent between 21-30 years and 72 (22.64%) had also spent 31 years above. The result shown that 183 (57.55%) of the participants were fall between level 8-12 and 135 (42.45%) of the respondents were between level13-16.

Research Question One: What are the principal's personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers in FUC, NCZ in Nigeria?

Table 2: Showing percentage on the principal's personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers

S/N	Principals personal traits	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	Skills and abilities	168 (52.83%)	102 (32.08%)	48 (15.09%)	-
2	Personality conflict	86 (27.04%)	188 (59.12%)	-	44 (13.84%)
3	Perceptions	196 (61.64%)	62 (19.50%)	24 (7.55%)	36 (11.32%)
4	Diversity	164 (51.57%)	92 (28.93%)	62 (19.50%)	-
5	Personal problems	78 (24.53%)	128 (40.25%)	38 (11.95%)	74 (23.27%)
6	Communication	108 (33.96%)	96 (30.19%)	32 (10.06%)	82 (25.79%)

From table 2 above, revealed the principal's personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers in term of Always, Sometimes, Rarely and Never. Participants ascertained that **Skills and Abilities** was one of the principal's personal traits to manage conflict among the teachers with 168 (52.83%) for always, 102 (32.08%) sometimes, 48 (15.09%) rarely and non for never; **Personality conflict** with 86 (27.04%) for always, 188 (59.12%) sometimes, non for rarely and 44 (13.84%) never; **Perceptions** with 196 (61.64%) always, 62 (19.50%) sometimes, 24 (7.55%) rarely and 36 (11.32%) never; **Diversity** with 164 (51.57%) always, 92 (28.93%) sometimes, 62 (19.50%) rarely and non for never; **Personal problems** with 78 (24.53%) always, 128 (40.25%) sometimes, 38 (11.95%) rarely and 74 (23.27%) never; **Communication** with 108 (33.96%) always, 96 (30.19%) sometimes, 32 (10.06%) rarely and 82 (25.79%) never.

Research Question Two: How did the principal's use to manage conflict in FUCs?

Table 3: Showing percentage on how the principal's use to manage conflict

S/N	Statements	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	Conflicts always occur in my school but we know how to manage and solve it.	48 (15.09%)	218 (68.55%)	52 (16.35%)	-
2	It is better to lie low and live with the conflicts.	6 (1.89%)	58 (18.24%)	164 (51.75%)	90 (28.30%)
3	Conflicts are inevitable in organizations and nothing can be done about them.	244 (76.73%)	74 (23.27%)	-	-
4	A conflict is like a problem; we have to find the causes and take steps to find solutions.	208 (65.41%)	-	66 (20.75%)	44 (13.84%)
5	It is foolish to be bothered by conflicts; they are there and we may better live with them.	186 (58.49%)	98 (30.82%)	32 (10.06%)	2 (0.61%)
6	When two parties are deeply involved in conflict, arbitration by an acceptable outside party may be very helpful.	36 (11.32%)	158 (49.69%)	-	124 (38.99%)

Table 3 indicated how principal's uses personal traits to manage conflict among the teachers. Item 1 has the highest responds of sometimes 218 (68.55%) that conflicts occurred in their schools and they know to manage themselves. Item 2 shown that rarely 164 (51.75%) better to lie low and live with the conflicts. Item 3 has the greater respondents of always 244 (76.73%) that conflicts are inevitable in any situated organization while 74 (23.27%) was in opinion of sometimes. 208 (65.41%) of the subjects pinpoints always that conflict is like a problem; we have to find the causes and a step for the solution. Item 5 indicated 186 (58.49%) always that bothered by conflict is a foolish; we better live with a conflict. Then, item 6 revealed 158 (49.69%) sometimes outside party may be helpful for conflict intercession, while 124 (38.99%) admitted never to invite outside party for conflict settlement.

Ho₁: No significant difference between male and female principal's personal traits in managing conflict among the teachers in terms of skills and abilities, personal conflict, perceptions, diversity, personal problem and communication in FUC, NCZ, Nigeria

Table 4: Showing t-test result on no significant different between male and female principal's personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers

Principal's personal traits		Mean	SD	Simple size	Df	t-cal.	t-cri.	Prob.
Skills and abilities	Male	29.55	08.23					
	Female	28.16	10.89	318	7	3.28	1.38	p>0.05
Personality conflict	Male	26.63	11.20					
	Female	28.08	11.57	318	6	2.13	1.50	p>0.05
Perceptions	Male	27.86	10.95					
	Female	28.27	10.54	318	10	2.30	1.94	p>0.05
Diversity	Male	29.21	11.67					
	Female	29.01	10.92	318	8	2.01	1.63	p>0.05
Personal problems	Male	28.60	11.89					
	Female	27.74	11.78	318	8	3.20	1.82	p>0.05
Communication	Male	29.25	11.39					
	Female	28.91	11.72	318	7	2.21	1.97	p>0.05

The results from table 4 shown that the mean score of skills and abilities for male (29.55) and that of female (28.16), yielded a calculated t-valve (3.28), is greater than the critical t-valve (1.38). The mean score of personality conflict for male (26.63) and the female is (28.08), yielded a calculated t-valve (2.13) and is greater than critical t-valve (1.50). Perceptions mean score for male (27.86) and female is (28.27), via the calculated t-valve (2.30) where as critical t-valve is (1.94). Likewise diversity mean score for male is (29.21) while female is (29.01), calculated t-valve (2.01) and critical t-valve (1.63). Then, personal problems mean score for male (28.60) and female (27.74), calculated t-valve (3.20) and critical t-valve (1.82). However, communications mean score for male is (29.25) and for the female (28.91), calculated t-valve (2.21) and is greater than the critical t-valve (1.97). Therefore, this null hypothesis was rejected because all calculated t-valve were greater than the critical t-valve at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there was a significant difference between male and female principal's personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers in terms of skills and abilities, personal conflict, perceptions, diversity, personal problem and communication in FUC, NCZ, Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The aim of this study was to find out how principal's uses personal traits for managing conflict among the teachers in Federal Unity College in North Central Zone of Nigeria. Three hundred and eighteen respondents participated in the study. The result from table 2 showed those principal's personal traits for managing conflict which was emphatically exhilarating. The principal's personal traits was major instrument that he/she could easily applied immediately when the conflict surface among the teachers before deteriorating. The identified personal traits can be used effectively with the indiscriminate bahaviour of the principal's for solving conflict in schools. This finding was supported with the opinion of Oyeniran, Fashiku and Durosaro, (2012) that conflict is part and parcel of the school and the school cannot shy away from it, because it is experienced daily in the teaching and learning process. It is demanded of the principal to use his personal characteristics to proffer plausible solutions to grievances that emanate as a result of conflict among the school personnel so that the school goals and objectives will not be hindered. This finding also corroborated with Oyeniran, Fashiku and Durosaro, (2012) that the smooth running or failure of a school is attributed to the principal's personal characteristics.

Table 3 revealed principal's capabilities of managing conflict among the teachers. There are many effective methods for solving conflict in school which could be used by principals. Most of them noticed that

using each method depending on the situation or case or if they know the source of conflict, they can solve it directly. All the methods for solving conflict in school presented by participants in this study would not be successful without the understanding, acceptance and cooperation. A principal is the person who holds the most important role in schools. Conflict can appear in controlled or uncontrolled situations in schools, depending on the principals' management based on their knowledge, experiences, decisions, attitudes and characteristics.

The study hypothesis that was hypothesized no significant difference between male and female principal's personal traits in managing conflict among the teachers in terms of skills and abilities, personal conflict, perceptions, diversity, personal problem and communication in FUC, NCZ, Nigeria was rejected. This result showed that there is a significant difference between male and female principal's traits in managing conflict among the teachers. The results of this study were encompassed with the motives and opinions of research done by Salleh and Adulpakdee (2012) which the study encapsulated in the background. Their submission was magnificently in line with the outcome of this study. Zaccaro, Kemp and Bader, (2004) documented that the significance of headship qualities are supported by individual traits functioning, jointly. Those traits are judged by mental capabilities, personality features, motives and values, social assessment techniques, skills in conflict resolution, and proficiency in specific field. This finding was affirmed with Mohamad Johdi and Raman, (2011) that conflict need to be managed appropriately and efficiently which would add important values to an organization as it act as a catalyst for change. This type of change will lead to a smooth environment in workplace whereby over a period of time it will result in high productivity. Apart from that, employees will also be able to foster good relationship among them and with the management. This is important because as a team they can work hand in hand to achieve the organizational goals.

Conclusion

Conflicts constitute the exposed struggle between at least two individuals who perceive incompatible goals or interference from others in achieving their goals. Since conflict is inevitable and the school manager is aware of it, its management is highly dependent on his or her personal traits. The principal's is sole called heaven and earth of the schools administration and his/her traits based on monumental skills and abilities, personality conflict, perceptions, diversity, personal problems and communication tugged to govern the entire schools.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, conflict can be managed based on the principal's personal traits in FUC and some others educational pursuits. Therefore, principal should understand the cause of conflict in the school system and use appropriate strategies to revolutionize the situation based on personal distinctiveness. The principal should discover areas he/she is more efficient and utilize such areas to resolve conflict in the school system. Conflict and conflict resolution should be included in the secondary school curriculum, including the programme of teacher education.

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