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CONFLICT MANIFESTATION IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to investigate conflict manifestation in the administration of public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Two specific objectives in line with two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised two hundred and twenty-six (226) principals and four thousand one hundred and forty-six (4,146) teachers from the two hundred and twenty-six (226) public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The sample for the study was 367 respondents made up of 19 principals and 348 teachers using Yaro Yamane formular, for finite population. Yaro Yamane formular was adopted to arrive at the general sample of 367 respondents. Structured questionnaire titled "Conflict Manifestations questionnaire (CMQ)", was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two of whom were from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from Measurement and Evaluation of Science Education Department, all in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The overall reliability coefficient yielded 0.90 using Cronbach Alpha method. Data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the data in order to answer the research questions and t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The findings showed that conflict manifested in the administration of the curriculum instructional programmes and on school personnel in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State are to a very high extent, while the results of the hypotheses revealed that there were no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of curriculum instructional programmes and on school personnel in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Based on this the study recommended that Government of Ebonyi State should provide regular training and support for teachers to enhance their skills and confidence in delivering of curriculum instruction in the school system.

Keywords: Conflict, Manifestation, Administration, Secondary Schools, Curriculum, Instruction and School Personnel

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Introduction

In contemporary global politics, it is believed that conflict is a contradiction of difference between two or more actors, then visible or noticeable actions taken by conflict parties can be considered as manifestations of the underlying conflict. This is important because many conflicts can begin before they manifest and become noticeable to third parties. Often, conflict is only noticed when it becomes violent. However, many conflict also manifest non-violently. In all, conflict refers to latent, attitudes, interests and beliefs of the involved parties (for example, ideology, identity, interests and socio-economic status) that leads to tension of difference. Manifestations of conflict are the actions or things that conflict parties do about their difference which are visible. One major reason for the concern about conflict manifestation in administration of secondary schools is because if it becomes protracted, conflicts can wrap up a society, economies or regions that are involved in complex emergencies which can in turn be extended to global environment and become obstacle to peace and progress.

For any organization to perform effectively, interdependent individuals and groups within the organization must establish relationships across organizational boundaries, between individuals and among groups. Individuals or groups may depend on one another for information, assistance or coordinated actions. Such inter-dependence may foster either cooperation or conflict. Based on this Nwite, Nwofia, Eze, Oko and Nnamdi (2020) opined that in school organization, the task of providing effective leadership and peaceful set environment is dependent on personality traits and disposition of the school administrators. In her support, Onele (2014) maintained that stages of conflict ranged from latent, perceived, felt, manifest to aftermath. Manifestation of conflict is the point at which the conflict becomes visible to others. This stage is characterized by overt actions such as arguments, disagreements or even avoidance. It is in line with above view that Unachukwu and Okorji (2014) stated that manifest conflict is not only perceived and felt, it is acted upon. At this stage, conflicting groups may be actively engaging in conflict behaviour through verbal, written or even physical attacks. Manifest conflict is usually very apparent to non-involved parties. Left unchecked, manifest conflicts may lead to a toxic work environment, decreased productivity and strained relationships. Manifestation also means that conflict has the capacity of appearing in different dimensions and situations.

In a broad sense, conflict manifestation is the stage of conflict where underlying tensions become openly visible between parties. In our educational institutions, these overt behaviours do manifest in the course of carrying out administrative activities. Administrative behaviours are the activities engaged in by the school administrators in the cause of effective management of schools. Uwalaka (2022) rightly pointed out, that the critical factor that distinguishes administrative behaviour

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from other behaviours is its nature and that of the actor. Okonkwo (2015) also observed that interest need to be accommodated in the administration of school's programmes. These interest if left unchecked may culminate into behaviours which manifest itself in various aspects of school administration like instructional programmes and curriculum, personnel management or staff appraisal, financial management, school plant management, resource allocation, costing and planning of school programmes and relationship with the community. It is a fact that the aims and objectives of education cannot be achieved in rancour and disharmony as a result of diverse interest, which normally show itself in the course of executing the administrative work. Based on the above observation Karakus (2021) also noted that manifestation of conflicts in school system may be seen in administration of curriculum instructional programmes, personnel, community-relationship, finance and physical facilities in secondary schools. This by extension may be inter-personal intra- personal, ethnocentric and group types among others. Disagreements over group projects can occur when students have different work styles or disagree on task distribution within a group project (Majola, 2013).

Conflict manifestation in the administration of curriculum instruction is displayed when there is differing opinions on what should be taught, how it should be taught and who should have the primary say in the decision-making process, leading to disagreements between teachers, administrators, parents and sometimes even community members, particularly when issues of cultural sensitivity, political views or controversial topics are involved. These conflicts can stem from factors like differing teaching styles, communication gap, power struggles and diverse perspectives on educational priorities. Based on the above, Nwangwu and Chidiobi (2014) opined that academic standard and curriculum conflict may arise due to disputes over the rigor of academics, content of certain subjects (e.g., sex education, history) or the levels of homework assigned to students.

Conflict manifestation in the administration of public secondary school curriculum and instructional programmes has to do with administration of changes and innovative issues in educational programme. It incorporates innovative educational research and pedagogy tailored to students of various abilities (Essa, 2021). In schools, innovative reading programmes faced challenges due to insufficient background information, hence, the need for professional development and availability of curriculum materials (Nevenlosky, 2018). Regionally, Zimbabwe's New Curriculum faced resistance due to lack of consultation, diversity and insufficient teaching resources (Gasva, Mutanana and Goronga, 2019). In South Africa, issues arose with the implementation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and non-delivery of textbooks to schools (Molapo and Pillay, 2018). In Kenya, teachers played multiple roles in

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curriculum implementation, ensuring alignment with student needs and regional characteristics (Alek, Fitria, and Eddy, 2021), while Nigeria faced challenges related to effective training especially as it relates to curriculum content and educational environment for improvement of teachers and students (Karakus, 2021).

Conflict manifestation in the administration of school personnel may occur among principals, teachers and students of public secondary schools. Saiti (2015) stated that in school setting, conflicts may arise from various factors including disagreements over personal opinions, clashes in personalities, competition for attention, jealousy, misunderstandings, differing values or beliefs, social struggles between students and staff, all often stemming from close personal relationships within a smaller group (Oboegbulem and Alfa,2013). In school social dynamics, conflicts may arise from social cliques, peer pressure or exclusion of certain individuals within the small group. It is assumed that in school relationship issues, personal conflicts may escalate quickly due to existing close relationships, leading to hurt feelings and resentment. Competition for academic achievements, leadership roles or even popularity may lead to tension and conflict. In school administration, it appears that communication breakdowns like poor communication or misinterpretations can easily escalate disagreements into conflicts. Personal values and beliefs, can arise when students have differing opinions on personnel matters like politics, religion or social issues. Disagreements over group projects may occur when students have different work styles or disagreement on task distribution within a group project.

Conflicts manifestation in the administration of school personnel may occur regarding students and teachers dress code, attendance policies, disciplinary actions, student behaviour expectations and technology in school. According to Majola (2013) spreading negative rumours and gossip about another student may lead to conflict and damage relationships. He laments that bulling or harassment, verbal or physical aggression towards another student, often stemming from power dynamics. Conflict manifestation may arise from jealousy, breakups or complicated relationships within the group. Disagreement over personnel boundaries when students feel uncomfortable with another student's behaviour or actions. It may discourage students to openly discuss issues and actively listen to each other's perspectives. Majola suggested several approaches for managing conflicts in schools. The increasing poor performance of teachers and principals as reported by the chairman Secondary Education Board (SEB 2019), which obviously manifest in students' poor achievement, government has resolved to lay emphasis on the identification of conflict related areas in all aspects of school administration. The statement emphasized indication of various levels of conflict for resolution.

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The government as well appreciated the fact that major administrative and instructional lapses in school stem from administrators' inability to dictate the evidences of conflict at the early stage. It is believed that conflict can never exist in a vacuum, it must be perceived in various aspects of school operation. As such a detailed assessment of conflict manifestation in the administration of public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict among school personnel, community members relationship, as well as in the usage of available physical facilities. The students are not left out. Students of public secondary schools sometimes disrupt school programmes, either by boycotting lectures, writing damaging posters and violent protests or riots or through clashes sometimes lead to fight. However, cases of students-related conflict leading to killing of teachers, poisoning other students' food and closure of schools have also been noticed in Ebonyi State in recent time. With the current emphasis of government on the need for increase in the number of school administrators, the purpose of accomplishing projects at secondary school level, has become very necessary that researchers in the field of educational administration, explore the conflicts in school administration based on its manifestation to the school administrators so that problems in the implementation of school curriculum instructional programmes, personnel management, physical facilities, finance and community relationship in school could be brought to fore so as to proffer possible solutions. Therefore, the problem of this study is posed in question form, thus, what are the extent of conflict manifestations in the administration of public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine various conflict manifestations in the administration of public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the extent: of;

1. Conflict manifestation in the administration of school instructional programmes.
2. Conflict manifestation in the administration of school staff personnel.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does conflict manifest in the administration of school instructional programmes in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
2. To what extent does conflict manifest in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

HO_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and

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teachers on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of school instructional programmes in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

HO_2: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

Methodology

The research design selected for this study was a descriptive survey. According to Abonyi, Okereke, Omebe, Nnachi and Anugwo (2022), descriptive survey consists of those studies in which data are collected from a small sample of a large population to enable the researcher describe it in a systematic manner and interpret the characteristic features and facts about things that exist. This study was carried out in Ebonyi State. The public secondary schools in Ebonyi State are grouped under three Education Zones. The Zones include Onueke Education zone, Abakaliki Education zone and Afikpo Education zone. Ebonyi State is one of the thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria. As such, may be conflicting with their teaching job. However, to carter for the education needs of its increasing population, there is need to carry out this study in Ebonyi state so as to ascertain manifestations of various nature of conflict in the administration of public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The population of this study comprised two hundred and twenty-six (226) principals and four thousand one hundred and forty-six (4,146) teachers from two hundred and twenty-six (226) public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The sample for this study was three hundred and six seven (367) research respondents. Taro Yamane was used to determine the sample size. Also proportionate simple random sampling techniques was used to select nineteen (19) principals and three hundred and forty-eight (348) teachers for the study.

The researcher developed a structured questionnaire instrument titled; "Conflict manifestations in administration questionnaire (CMQ)". It contains thirty (30) items. The questionnaire consists of two sections, 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' contains personal information of respondents, while section 'B', contains items built on **two** clusters. Cluster (A) elicited information from the respondents on manifestation of conflict in the administration of school curriculum and instructional programmes, cluster (B) administration of school personnel**.** The items in this section were rated on 4 points scale of: Very High Extent (VHE)– 4points, High Extent (HE)– 3points, Low Extent (LE) – 2points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) – 1point. To establish the appropriateness of the questionnaire items, the instrument was subjected to face validation by three

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subject experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation Unit in Science Education Department all in Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The overall reliability index of 0.993 indicated higher reliability index. This showed that the instrument was reliable for use in carrying out the study. Data collected for this study were analysed using means and standard deviations for describing the data in order to answer the. research questions. In the analysis of research questions, range means values used. In terms of the null hypotheses that guided the study, t- test of differences was employed at 0.05 level of significance. When probability value is greater or equal to alpha value at 0.05 than the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted while below was rejected.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENTS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Teachers disagree over the selection of subjects to be included in the curriculum	3.81	0.56	VHE
2	Conflicts arise between teachers and administrators over teaching methods	3.45	0.49	HE
3	There are frequent disputes about the allocation of instructional time for subjects	3.67	0.52	VHE
4	Teachers and school management have disagreements on assessment and grading policies.	3.43	0.66	HE
5	Conflicts occur over the introduction of new curriculum guidelines from educational authorities.	3.52	0.64	VHE
6	Disagreements among teachers affect the coordination of lesson plans and schemes of work.	3.50	0.64	VHE
	GRAND MEAN	**3.56**	**0.58**	**VHE**

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does conflicts manifest in the administration of the instructional programmes in public Secondary school in Ebonyi state?

Data collected with items 1-6 were used to analyse this research question. The result collected on these items were presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent conflicts manifests in the administration of the instructional programmes in public Secondary school: N=367
Source: Igwe's research field work 2026.

Data in Table I shows that items 1, 2, 3,4,5 and 6 have mean scores of 3.81, 3.45, 3.67, 3.43, 3.52 and 3.50, respectively, which indicates that to a high extent (HE) do: teachers disagree over the selection of subjects to be included in the curriculum, conflicts arise between teachers and administrators over teaching methods,

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there are frequent disputes about the allocation of instructional time for subjects, conflicts occur over the introduction of new curriculum guidelines from educational authorities and that to a high extent do disagreements among teachers affect the coordination of lesson plans and schemes of work.

The grand mean for the cluster is 3.56; which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore, the results showed that conflicts manifestation in the administration of the curriculum instructional programmes are to a very high extent in public Secondary school in Ebonyi state.

Research Question 2: To what extent does conflict manifest in the administration of school personnel in public secondary school Ebonyi state?
Items 7-12 with used the research question on the extent conflict manifest in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools. The results in respect to this research question are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent conflict manifest in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools N=367

	ITEM STATEMENTS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
7	Teachers complain about favouritism in staff promotions and appointments.	3.74	0.49	VHE
8	Conflicts arise between staff members due to unclear job descriptions.	3.63	0.49	VHE
9	Disagreements occur between teachers and administrators over workload distribution.	3.44	0.56	HE
10	Personnel conflicts result from poor communication between management and staff.	3.48	0.61	HE
11	There are tensions among staff caused by unequal opportunities for professional development.	3.42	0.62	HE
12	Disputes arise over disciplinary actions taken against certain staff members.	3.61	0.56	VHE
	GRAND MEAN	**3.55**	**0.55**	VHE

Source: Igwe's research field work 2026.

Table 2 reveals that items 7-12 which are on teachers complain about favouritism in staff promotions and appointments, conflicts arise between staff members due to unclear job descriptions, disagreements occur between teachers and administrators over workload distribution, personnel conflicts result from poor communication between management and staff, there are tensions among staff caused by unequal opportunities for professional development and disputes arise over disciplinary actions taken against certain staff members had mean scores of 3.74, 3.63, 3.44, 3.48, 3.42 and 3.61 with a standard deviation of 0.49, 0.49, 0.56, 0.61, 0.62 and 0.56 recorded high extent respectively. The mean value for the cluster is 3.55 which is

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above the criterion mean of 2.50. This shows that conflict manifest in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools is to a very high extent.

Hypotheses

HO_1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of curriculum instructional programmes in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Table 3: t-test Summary of principal and teachers on what extent does conflicts manifest in the administration of the curriculum instructional programmes in public Secondary school in Ebonyi State

Item	Status	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P-value	Decision
1	Principal	19	3.526	0.772	365	2.321	0.021	Significant
	Teachers	348	3.833	0.548				
2	Principal	19	3.368	0.495	365	0.777	0.438	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.459	0.499				
3	Principal	19	3.842	0.374	365	1.424	0.155	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.666	0.529				
4	Principal	19	3.526	0.512	365	0.603	0.547	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.431	0.677				
5	Principal	19	3.578	0.507	365	0.366	0.714	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.523	0.654				
6	Principal	19	3.315	0.749	365	1.302	0.194	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.514	0.641				

Source: Igwe's research field work 2026. Significant @ $P < 0.05$

Result on Table 3 revealed that there is difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on item 1 while items 2,3,4,5, and 6 are of no significant difference on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of curriculum instructional programmes in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State is not significant. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of curriculum instructional programmes in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Hence, the hypothesis is not rejected

HO_2: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

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Table 4: t-test Summary of principals and teachers on what extent does conflict manifest in the administration of school personnel in public secondary school Ebonyi state

Item	Status	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P-value	Decision
7	Principal	19	3.421	0.769	365	2.979	0.003	Significant
	Teachers	348	3.767	0.475				
8	Principal	19	3.684	0.478	365	0.418	0.676	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.635	0.499				
9	Principal	19	3.578	0.507	365	1.034	0.302	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.442	0.563				
10	Principal	19	3.631	0.496	365	1.062	0.289	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.477	0.623				
11	Principal	19	3.421	0.607	365	0.009	0.993	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.422	0.624				
12	Principal	19	3.526	0.612	365	0.670	0.503	Not Significant
	Teachers	348	3.615	0.559				

Source: Igwe's research field work 2026. Significant @ $P < 0.05$

Result in Table 4 items, 8,9,10,11, and 12 reveals that the difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers' opinions on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State is not significant because the p-value is greater than 0.05. only item 7 recorded significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State. is not rejected.

Discussion

The finding that conflict manifestation in the administration of curriculum instructional programmes is to a very high extent in public secondary schools is strongly supported by empirical literature on curriculum implementation and school management in Nigeria. This discussion explains the nature, causes, and implications of such conflicts, and then provides scholarly support with detailed references. Conflict in curriculum administration as a disagreement, tensions, and struggles among stakeholders (principals, teachers, students, and government agencies) over how the curriculum should be implemented. Studies indicate that curriculum implementation is not merely technical but deeply political and organizational, involving power relations and competing interests. These conflicts manifested in the areas of teachers disagree over the selection of subjects to be included in the curriculum, conflicts arise between teachers and administrators over teaching methods, there are frequent disputes about the allocation of instructional time for subjects, conflicts occur over the introduction of new curriculum guidelines from educational authorities and that to a high extent do disagreements among teachers affect the

coordination of lesson plans and schemes of work; while the result of the hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which headteachers adopt funds sourcing practice for quality education in public primary schools.

The result is in line with the findings of Ohiare-Udebu, Ogunode and Sarafadeen (2021) asserted that curriculum implementation in public secondary schools is plagued by inadequate funding, poor supervision, and lack of resources, which create tensions among staff. They argued that poor educational outcomes in Nigeria are linked to implementation challenges and administrative inefficiencies, which often manifest as conflict among stakeholders. In consonance with the findings, Ibrahim and Gedawa (2022) observed that curriculum revealed crises in curriculum implementation, indicating persistent conflict in instructional delivery processes. In support of the Alade (2011) emphasized that curriculum implementation failure is largely due to lack of understanding of institutional dynamics, which often results in conflict among implementers.

The finding that conflict manifests to a very high extent in the administration of school personnel suggests that interpersonal and professional disagreements among staff are widespread. Personnel administration involves recruitment, deployment, supervision, promotion, and discipline of teachers and non-teaching staff. These processes often generate tension due to perceived bias, inequity, or lack of transparency. The result fully indicates that teachers complain about favouritism in staff promotions and appointments, conflicts arise between staff members due to unclear job descriptions, disagreements occur between teachers and administrators over workload distribution, personnel conflicts result from poor communication between management and staff, there are tensions among staff caused by unequal opportunities for professional development and disputes arise over disciplinary actions taken against certain staff members while the test of the hypothesis indicated that: there was no significant difference in the mean scores of principals and teachers on the extent of conflict manifestation in the administration of school personnel in public secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

The findings are in support of Ajai (2017) who asserted that conflicts among school personnel commonly arise from poor leadership style, ineffective communication, and role ambiguity. When principals adopt authoritarian leadership approaches, teachers may resist directives, leading to strained relationships. Similarly, Ejiogu (2020) argues that lack of participatory decision-making increases dissatisfaction among staff, thereby intensifying workplace conflict. While Ogunode (2021) emphasizes that poor motivation and inequitable distribution of duties often result in disputes among staff members, thereby affecting the smooth administration of school personnel.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study clearly reveal that conflict manifests to a very high extent in critical areas of public secondary school administration, particularly in the management of school personnel, while conflict in school–community relations occur to a high extent. These outcomes underscore the pervasive nature of conflict within the school system and confirm that it is a significant administrative challenge that cannot be overlooked. The high level of conflict in school personnel administration suggests deep-rooted issues such as poor communication, ineffective leadership styles, lack of staff involvement in decision-making, and inadequate motivation. These issues weaken staff morale, reduce productivity, and hinder the achievement of educational objectives.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. Government of Ebonyi State should provide regular training and support for teachers to enhance their skills and confidence in delivering of instruction in the school system
2. As regard conflict manifest in the administration of school personnel, School principals should involve teachers and other staff in decision-making processes to reduce feelings of marginalization and resistance.

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