

Influence of Administrators' Use of Dialogue and Counseling Strategies on Conflict Management in Public Secondary Schools in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State

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ABSTRACT

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This study examined the influence of administrators' use of dialogue and counseling strategies on conflict management in public secondary schools in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined how dialogue and counseling strategies employed by school administrators contribute to effective conflict management. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The study was guided by relevant empirical studies and appropriate theoretical frameworks. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 3,550 respondents (406 principals and 3,144 teachers) drawn from 406 public secondary schools in the study area. A sample of 356 respondents was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from related literature and the researcher's experience. The instrument was validated by an expert in Educational Administration and Planning, and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha, indicating high internal consistency. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Chi-square statistics were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that administrators' use of dialogue and counseling strategies significantly enhances conflict management in public secondary schools in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that school administrators should consistently adopt dialogue and counseling approaches in managing conflicts to promote a more harmonious school environment and improve overall school effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Administrators' effectiveness could be defined as the success recorded by the administrator in ensuring teachers welfare in the performance of their duties. Edem (2003) states that administrator' administrative effectiveness requires rational decisions which leads to the selection of the best alternatives for the achievement of agreed goals. The task of defining administration is fascinating and frustrating. This is because Igwe (2006) sees administration as the capacity to coordinate many and often conflicting social energies in a single organization so that they efficiently operate as an entity to achieve the organizational set up. It is the marshalling of available labor and materials in order to gain that which is desired at the lowest cost in energy, time and money. Ochai (2013) sees the school manager as

a person whose job is to oversee one or more employees, division or volunteers to ensure that they are carrying out certain responsibilities or meet specific goals in the institution. He stated further that a manager is in charge of teachers' performance and material resources of an institution of learning which aims at achieving educational objectives. The secondary school administrator in order to ensure effective school teachers performance should perform the above listed duties of a manager. Educational development and meaningful growth hardly take place without planning.

Ejogu (2010) states that planning means dreaming, the practical thinking, scheming, scheduling of actions and activities that would be performed in order to achieve the objectives for which the enterprise is set up. The administrator as an administrative head in the secondary school has the responsibility of planning, organizing, coordinating the school programme and activities, managing the human financial and material resources; even space and time too.

Tead (2014) states that administration is a variety of component elements which, together in action, produce the result of a defined task done; administration, primarily is the direction of people in association to achieve some goal temporarily shared. It is the inclusive process of integrating human efforts so that a desired result is obtained. Administration is the central power house of the motivational impulsion and spirit which makes the institution drive to fulfill its purpose. The administrative functions include planning, organizing, staffing, supervision, and school-community relations. Kochhar (2003:23) points out some administrative tasks for effective teacher's performance of an organization. These include:

Teacher's motivation in our educational institutions which can bring about maximum productivity in our public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. Secondly maintenance of school-community relations can also enhance teacher's job performance in our various public schools in Zone C senatorial district of Benue State. Maintenance of school facilities in our educational institution can as well promotes effective teaching and learning by the teachers and students.

Ezeocha (2009) opined that conflict resolution was dependent on the co-operation and assistance of the staff. He further stated that the administration of the school is said to be effective and sound, when staff, Administrators and students are together in harmony and share each other's experiences. Secondary school Administrators are concerned with resolving such conflict in schools. Conflict must therefore be expected if change is to take place. In recent times, a lot of problems have emerged in Nigeria, such as drug abuse, alcoholism, broken homes, emotional disorder, inability to face retirement and defeats, students unrest, labour union strike actions, armed robbery, unemployment, to mention but a few. The truth was that when peoples' emotions are imbalanced, it results in conflict.

The study findings may enable Administrators and staffs to take right decisions, adopt the leadership pattern that will stimulate and encourage co-operation, team spirit, hard work among members of the school community. This study may also be useful to the school administrators in their attempt to effectively handle and possibly minimize the waves of conflict in schools. Also, to the students, the study will help them to practice fair competition and hard-work towards becoming properly educated, morally and socially, in the areas of counseling as a management strategy in the school. To the guidance and counselors, the findings will enable the audience to organize periodic workshops or seminars for the Administrators to acquaint them with conflict management rules and regulations to assist them in effective management of their schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Management

The term management evolved from the classical Latin verb as used by Circero (2000) has two apparently distinct senses: to help, assist or serve and to manage, Dunshire (2003) attempts a translation of some of these as "to run" "to run the state". "To carry out" "to implement" "to execute", Here we have the hint of two principal senses "directing and serving" at the same time, completing a process someone else has started clear that management is as old as when man began to line together. It is indeed an ancient activity in human endeavour.

Simon and Thomas (2000). Simply put it this way: "when two men co-operate to roll a stone that neither could have done alone, the rudiments of management have appeared." from the foregoing, it may be observed that management is concerned with the implementation of purposes for which an organization is established. Therefore, the concern of

management is to direct the efforts of the people in the organization towards the achievement of organizational goals and objective. Mbiti (2001) holds a similar view as he adds “By managing, is meant the formalized system which is intended to control, supervise, plan and make decisions about the various activities of an organization on the basis of established authority”. Adams (2002) adds that management “is the capacity to co-ordinate many and often conflicting social energies in a single organization so adroitly that they shall operate as a unit”.

Therefore, as rightly observed by Campbell (2000), Management has suffered too much emphasis on adjective and too little on the noun. It is because of this fact that major theories of management science centre their definition on certain management processes as postulated by Guliks and Urwick and represented in an acronym called (POSDCORB) (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting). This may include holding together the organization, making progress towards set objectives and getting things done. Hence manager could be seen as a planner, and organizer who seeks to carry out plans to operate within the framework of rules, policies and procedures established for the organization.

From the foregoing, we can trace common thread linking the various views. For example management is often discussed in the context of organizations, home, public, business or school. As the head of any of those establishments, there is the administrator who provides the central leadership, co-ordinates the organizational human and material resources and makes decisions towards the accomplishment of their goals and objectives: hence there is a consensus on fundamental. There must be people, there must be goals, or objectives and these people should be managed to achieve the goals

2.2 Influence of Dialogue in Conflict Management on School/Community Relationship

This strategy was revealed by Kats and Kein (2006) as one of the effective means of managing conflict. According to Clement (2002 pg 85) dialogue has been found very effective in managing conflict among individuals, human groups and nations as a whole. This is done by bringing the disputants into a conference table to identify the root causes of the conflict. He further states that dialogue took into considering the findings and implications of human interaction, dynamics and analysis. Dialogue considers the status of people involved in conflict to determine whether it can work or not.

Donald (2005) opined that negotiation dialogue strategy and the use of two different styles of using dialogue for resolving conflict is the best strategy with this strategy, the manager or principal deals with the cause of the conflict rather than the symptom, not only in solving the problem but in dealing with all future problem as well. He concluded that the school principal should note that not every attempt at problem solving will be automatically successful and encourage the attention of mediators. As consultant or facilitator, the mediator remains object. Open up and avenue for new ideas and encourages mutual understanding that can lead to a final resolution of conflict.

This strategy was revealed by Kats and Kein (2000), as being one of the effects mean of managing conflict in school. Olusola (2003), opined that the use of dialogue in conflict management involved separation of both parties in conflict for some times and finally reconciling hem in a round table discussion. He further stated that dialogue over time has proved to be one of the best tools in conflict management in our educational institutions and the society at large.

2.3 Influence of counseling in resolving conflict on school/community relationship

Counseling according to Nweke (2003), is defined as a helping profession in which the counselor directs and conducts counseling sessions in order to help the counselee maximize his potentials. The word counseling derived its roots from the word counsel “meaning a piece of advice given by older people or experts”. Counseling involves a wide range of procedure including advice giving, support in times of trouble or need, mental exchange of ideas, encouragement, information giving and test interpretation.

Olayinka (2000) sees counseling as the process whereby a person is helped to a face to face relationship in which one person helps another to resolve an area of conflict that has not been hitherto resolved. It is a helping relationship in

which the counselor assists the client(s)/ counselee in a personal confidential encounter to make appropriate decision(s) and choice(s).

Idowu (2006) saw counseling as the process by which a person with a problem is helped by a professional counselor to voluntarily change his behavior, clarify his attitude, ideas and goals so that his problems may be solved. Counseling is that process which takes place in a one-to-one relationship between an individual troubled by problems with which he cannot cope with alone, and a professional worker whose training and experience have qualified him to help others reach solutions to various types of personal difficulties. Since counseling aims at helping individuals or group solve problem, the school principals through the help of a counselor assist in resolving conflict in schools/communities.

Mankind (2014) stated that the ordinary meaning attached to counseling is that of consultation, discussion, deliberation, exchange of ideas, advice or process of decision making. Counseling, he further stressed, is a service defined to help an individual analyses himself by relating his capabilities achievements, interests, and modes of adjustment to what new decision he has made or has to make.

Ipaye (2010) saw counseling as programme concerned with creating opportunities and suitable environment for the personal social education and vocational growth of the individual. In counseling for example, the individual learns new ways of communicating, new ways of obtaining information and new ways of interaction.

2.4 Causes of Conflict

Deutsch (2003) states that conflicts generally concern four types of issues. First, conflict can concern issues on control over resources which are perceived to be non-shareable, such as space, money, property, power, prestige, food, and so forth. Second, conflict can also arise over preferences and nuisances, which means that the activities or tastes of one person or group impinge upon another's preferences, sensitivities, or sensibilities. Third, values and beliefs can induce conflict. The claim that certain values should dominate or be applied in general, even by those who hold different values, can cause conflict. Beliefs are about what one perceives to be reality. If the perception of reality of one person differs from that of another person, this can cause conflict. Finally, the relationship between parties can evoke conflict when, for example, two people have opposing views and desires in their relationship (Deutsch, 2013).

According to Filley (2015), there are several conditions which can increase the occurrence of conflict in social relationships: ambiguity of the limits each party's jurisdiction, conflicting interests, separation of parties from each other either physically or with respect to time which causes communication barriers, dependency of one party upon the other, parties wanting to make joint decisions, a need for consensus, imposing behaviour regulation on one of the parties, and the presence of unresolved prior conflict. These conditions may not always lead directly to conflict, but they can create opportunities for conflict to arise.

There are several processes which can cause a conflict to escalate into a destructive conflict. Competitive processes in an attempt to win the conflict can cause the communication between the disputing parties to be unreliable and impoverished. It also leads to a suspicious and hostile attitude, and it stimulates the view that the solution of the conflict can only be imposed by one side or the other. Processes of misperception and biases in perception cause an inaccurate image of the actual state of affairs and can transform a conflict into a competitive struggle. Processes of commitment to a position or opinion, as a result of pressures for cognitive and social consistency (also known as cognitive dissonance), can cause intensification of conflict because one's actions have to be justified to oneself and to others (Deutsch, 2013). Forces that can sustain conflict are trained incapacities, climate, power, and face-saving behaviours (McFarland, 2018).

According to Johnson and Johnson (2016), there is not enough information about the specific events that trigger conflict and the barriers that prevent it from occurring. There are not many studies about conflict in schools that, for example, examine the factors that influence aggressive behaviour, although it is generally agreed upon that the psychological experience of arousal contributes strongly to aggression, which can evoke destructive conflicts. Therefore, it seems important for educators to also examine the possible factors that induce aggression in schools, such as frustration and anger among students, and also factors like crowding, temperature, and the presence of aggressive individuals who are perceived as role models (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

The following are the causes of conflict in a school environment:

- i. **A Clash of Personalities:** A clash of personalities occurs when an intense and highly energetic teacher has to work in the same environment with a slower and less intense teacher. In this case, the one who is a hard worker becomes irritated by the sloppiness and laziness of the colleague.
- ii. **Personal Value:** This becomes a cause of conflict due to diverging ideas or different perceptions of the same situation (Peterson, 2001). The difference in perception results in different people attaching different meaning to stimuli. Resolving value conflict does not mean that the disputants must change or agree on their values, but a mutual acknowledgement that each person views the situation differently is the first step.
- iii. **Limited Resources:** In most organization, resources are scarce and limited, which leads to individuals and groups to scramble or compete for their share (Hoban, 2004). This normally occurs when different parties have different priorities over scarce resource management and policy development. They involve a combination of economic, value and power sources. This is normally beyond the traditional management system.
- iv. **Departmentalization and Specialization:** Most organizations are divided into separate departments with specialized functions. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003) and Hoban (2004) argued that, because of familiarity with the manner in which they undertake their activities, departments tend to turn inwards and concentrate on the achievements of their own aims. This type of conflict may involve turf problems and overlapping responsibilities (Legotlo, Teu, & Matshidiso, 2003).

2.5 Economic Theory of Conflict by (Faleti, 2006)

Economists, like all theorists, attempt to explain the occurrence of conflict in human society through economic explanations and basically see humans as rational beings who have the tendency to fight over things that are material (Faleti, 2006). This has led to the greed thesis and grievance thesis in attempting to explain conflicts in society. The greed thesis sees conflict in society as resulting from human greed and the desire of some people, called conflict entrepreneurs, to benefit from conflict that propels them to go to war (Collier, 2006). Collier gives the example of a rebel group in a country, which uses grievance as bait to go to war in order to gain economic benefits.

The grievance thesis, however, believes that conflict in society is not just the result of greed, but a number of economic, social and historical factors (Collier, 2006), observes that lack of economic opportunities such as employment, poverty, lack of educational opportunities and underdevelopment are factors that mainly cause conflict although the geography, history, ethnic and religious factors may also account for the existence of conflict in a society.

Also, Berdal & Malone (2000) opine that economic factors such as poverty, economic disparities and unemployment are the main factors that compel people to violence although a lot of other factors do exist. They believe that the contest for the control of economic assets, resources and systems are the basic causes of conflicts in human society.

Thus, economic theories attribute the existence of conflict in society to the contest for resources, unemployment, economic inequalities, poverty, human greed and underdevelopment. Some conflicts which arise from economic factors such as the fight over resources tend to affect development negatively because these conflicts become violent thereby leading to destruction of property and people livelihoods. As a weakness, the economic theory over-emphasizes economic factors as being the main reason for conflict in society. This is not so because a conflict could exist independent of economic factors unless we want to argue that man's reason for conflict is mainly economic in nature. New conflicts arising within many countries arise from other factors such as identity, ethnicity and religion other than only economic factors.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted descriptive-survey design. It is descriptive because it assesses the influence of conflict management strategies on administrator's effectiveness in public secondary schools in Zone C senatorial district of Benue State. Descriptive survey, according to Emaikwu (2012), is aimed at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics features or facts about a given population. The design is only interested in

describing certain variables in relation to the population. Usually, hypotheses are tested since a descriptive survey is concerned with a description of events as they are.

The justification for the use of this design is based on the fact that only a representative sample of the entire population was studied and the findings generalized to the entire population (Emaikwu, 2012).

3.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample consists of 356 (43 principals and 313 teachers) representing 10% of the total population of 3550 of (406) public secondary schools in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State. A Sample of 10 to 25% is considered adequate, according to Emaikwu (2009), who reports that where the population is as high as 3550 and above, 10% or more is considered suitable as a sample for a study.

Table 1: Sample Distribution of 10% Principals and Teachers

Area councils	No. of Principals	10% of Principals	No. of Teachers	10% of Teachers
Ado	65	7	490	49
Agatu	58	6	484	48
Apa	57	6	382	38
Obi	58	6	483	48
Oju	56	6	480	48
Otukpo	57	6	481	48
Okpoko	55	6	344	34
Total	406	43	3144	313

3.3 Population of the Study

The population for the study comprises 3,550 senior staff (principals and teachers), of whom 406 are principals, and 3144 are teachers of 406 secondary schools in Zone C senatorial district of Benue State, Nigeria. The senior staff used for this study is based on qualification and experience. This is so because they can give valid and useful information.

Table 2: Population Distribution of Principals and Teachers

Area Councils	No. of Principals	No. of Teachers	Total
Ado	65	490	555
Agatu	58	484	542
Apa	57	382	439
Obi	58	483	541
Oju	56	480	536
Otukpo	57	481	538
Okpoku	55	344	399
Total	406	3144	3550

Source: Benue State Ministry of Education (2013)

3.4 Method of Data Collection

3.4.1 Instrument of the Study

A structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was titled the Influence of Conflict Management Strategies on Administrators' Effectiveness in Secondary School Questionnaire (ICMSAEPSSQ). The questionnaire was developed based on a review of related literature and through the researcher's personal experience.

The 25-item questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A contains information on the demographic data of respondents, which consists of the name of the school and its status. Section B consists of 25 items that seek information on the variables of negotiation, information dissemination, dialogue, counseling, and arbitration. It consists of five clusters. Cluster (i) has items ranging from 1 to 5, which are on negotiation. Cluster (ii) consists of items from number 6 to 10 on information dissemination. Cluster (iii) consists of items ranging from number 11 to 15 on dialogue. Cluster (iv) consists of items ranging from number 16 to 20 on counseling. Cluster (v) consists of items ranging from number 21 to 25 on arbitration.

The instrument is structured on a Likert modified 4-points rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)-3, Disagree (D)-2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1. The rationale for choosing this scale is that it provides different levels for respondents to express their opinion. The flexibility of the scale has rendered it appropriate for measuring the statements relating to the variables of the study. The cut-off value for responses considered to be significant was 2.50. Any response above 2.50 is positive and acceptable, while any response below 2.50 is not acceptable (Emaikwu, 2012).

3.4.2 Validation of the Instrument

To establish the validity of the instrument (questionnaire), the researcher subjected it to a face and content validation by giving it to an expert in Educational Administration and Planning, Faculty of Education, National Open University of Nigeria.

The expert critically examined each of the items and made comments on their suitability or ambiguity and corrected grammatical mistakes. Unclear statements, wrongly conceived ideas, missing information, and other observed errors were corrected by the expert. His comments, suggestions and corrections were used to modify the instrument for the supervisors' approval, after which the final copies were produced. After the validation of the instruments, the validity index scored was 0.61. See Appendix II.

3.4.3 Reliability of Instruments

The reliability of the validated instrument was tested through a pilot study.

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument for the study, the validated instruments will be administered to 112 teachers from 5 schools. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient will be used to compute the reliability coefficient in order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Pallant (2004) considers Cronbach's Alpha analysis suitable for checking the reliability of instruments with a Likert-type rating scale. Since the calculated coefficient is above 0.5. The coefficient of reliability was 0.86.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation will be used to answer the research questions. The decision was based on mean in order to provide a numerical value for rating scale of responses. Hence, a response of 4 was used for Strongly Agree (SA), 3 represents the value Agree (A), 2 for Disagree (D) while 1 was for Strongly Disagree (SD).

Chi-square analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Chi-square was considered appropriate for this study because it is a parametric statistic for treating data. It permits the researcher to determine whether a significant difference exists between the observed and the expected number of cases in each category based on a null hypothesis. Data generated for the study will be analyzed on the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4. Findings

4.1 How do Administrators use of dialogue influence conflict management in public secondary school in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State?

The data that provide answer to the research question are presented on Table 3

Table 3: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the influence of administrators' use of dialogue on conflict management in public secondary school in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State.

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
11.	Dialogue between administrator and staff is my essential in managing conflict in schools	411	307	92	72	3.41	0.63	Agree
12.	The use of dialogue by administrator in managing conflict in schools	420	381	13	68	3.48	0.62	Agree
13.	Dialogue can be means of managing conflict by administrator in secondary schools.	310	412	77	83	3.44	0.61	Agree
14.	administrator use of dialogue in stopping conflict in secondary schools is essentials	328	487	10	21	3.35	0.71	Agree
15.	Dialogue with host community of the schools by administrator is another science may of managing conflict	388	412	51	31	3.56	0.56	Agree
Cluster mean and Standard Deviation						3.45	0.63	Agree

Source: Field Survey (2023).

Data presented in Table 3 showed that items 11-15 had mean scores of 3.41, 3.48, 3.44, 3.35 and 3.56 with corresponding standard deviations of 0.63, 0.62, 0.61, 0.71 and 0.56 respectively. Based on the boundary criteria for decision making it means all the mean scores on the items were rated above the mean cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.45 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviation scores of the respondents are small signifying homogeneity for the items raised. This implies that the respondents agreed that administrators use of dialogue influence conflict management in public secondary school in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State.

4.2 What is the influence of Administrators' use of counseling on conflict management in secondary schools in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State?

The data that provide answer to the research question are presented on table 4.

Table 4: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of the influence of administrators' use of counseling on conflict management in secondary schools in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
16.	Counseling by administrator reduces conflict in secondary schools	417	428	9	28	3.39	0.71	Agree
17.	By spelt out the penalty of offences to students reduces conflict in secondary schools	429	425	11	17	3.42	0.63	Agree
18.	Counseling both teachers and students by administrator help in reduces conflict in secondary schools.	366	494	14	8	3.39	0.66	Agree
19	Counseling by administrators brings about new orientation to both staffs and student of secondary schools.	404	455	14	9	3.51	0.56	Agree
20	Through counseling of students, a lot will be learnt and a lot will be achieved	401	471	4	6	3.38	0.65	Agree
Cluster mean and Standard Deviation						3.42	0.64	Agree

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Data presented in Table 4 showed that, item 16-20 had mean scores of 3.39, 3.42, 3.39, 3.51 and 3.38 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.71, 0.63, 0.66, 0.56 and 0.65 respectively. Based on the boundary criteria for decision making, it means that all the items were rated above the mean cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.42 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviation scores of the respondents are small signifying homogeneity for the items raised. This implies that administrators' use of counseling influence conflict management in secondary schools in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State.

4.3 Testing Research Hypotheses

In testing the hypotheses of this study, Chi-square statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented on table 5 and 6.

Hypothesis One: *Administrators' use of dialogue has no significant influence on conflict management in secondary schools.*

Table 5: chi-square Analysis of the influence of administrators' use of dialogue on conflict management in secondary schools

Opinion	N	St. error	Df (n-2)	Level of sig	Chi-cal	Sign	Decision
Not Significant	35						
		0.02	880	0.05	168.74	.000	Ho
Significant	847						
							Rejected
P =0.00							

Table 5 revealed chi-square of 168.74 at df =374, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result implies that administrators' use of dialogue has significant influence on conflict management in secondary schools.

Hypothesis Two: *The use of counseling by Administrators' has no significant influences on conflict management in secondary schools.*

Table 6: chi-square Analysis of the influence of the use of counseling by administrators' on conflict management in secondary schools

Opinion	N	St. error	Df (n-2)	Level of sig	Chi-cal	Sign	Decision
Not Significant	54						
		0.02	374	0.05	157.29	.000	Ho
Significant	828						
							Rejected
P =0.00							

Table 6 revealed chi-square of 157.29 at df =880, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Based on this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result implies that the use of counseling by Administrators' has significant influences on conflict management in secondary schools.

5. Discussion

The finding of this study revealed that Administrators' use of dialogue has significant influence on conflict management in secondary schools. This finding is in line with Clement (2002) who states that dialogue has been found very effective in managing conflict among individuals, human groups and nations as a whole. This is done by bringing the disputants into a conference table to identify the root causes of the conflict. He further states that dialogue took into considering the findings and implications of human interaction, dynamics and analysis. Dialogue considers the status of people involved in conflict to determine whether it can work or not. Also in agreement with the finding, Donald (2005) opines that negotiation dialogue strategy and the use of two different styles of using dialogue for resolving conflict is the best strategy with this strategy, the manager or principal deals with the cause of the conflict rather than the symptom, not only in solving the problem but in dealing with all future problem as well. He concluded that the school principal should note that not every attempt at problem solving will be automatically successful and encourage the attention of mediators. As consultant or facilitator, the mediator remains object. Open up and avenue for new ideas and encourages mutual understanding that can lead to a final resolution of conflict.

The finding also revealed that the use of counseling by Administrators' has significant influences on conflict management in secondary schools. This finding agrees with the views of Olayinka (2000) who saw counseling as the process whereby a person is helped to a face to face relationship in which one person helps another to resolve an area of conflict that has not been hitherto resolved. It is a helping relationship in which the counselor assists the client(s)/counselee in a personal confidential encounter to make appropriate decision(s) and choice(s). Similarly, Idowu (2006)

saw counseling as the process by which a person with a problem is helped by a professional counselor to voluntarily change his behavior, clarify his attitude, ideas and goals so that his problems may be solved.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that the use of dialogue and counseling strategies by school administrators plays a significant and positive role in enhancing conflict management in public secondary schools in Zone C Senatorial District of Benue State. The findings demonstrate that when administrators actively engage stakeholders through open communication (dialogue) and provide supportive guidance (counseling), conflicts are more effectively managed, leading to improved relationships among staff and a more stable school environment. The statistical evidence from the study further confirms that both dialogue and counseling are not only relevant but also indispensable tools for addressing disputes in the school system. Their effectiveness lies in promoting mutual understanding, reducing tension, and fostering cooperation among individuals involved in conflicts. Therefore, the study affirms that consistent application of dialogue and counseling strategies contributes significantly to achieving harmonious coexistence, enhancing administrative efficiency, and improving overall school effectiveness. School administrators who prioritize these approaches are better positioned to create peaceful and productive learning environments. Further study should be carried out on comparative analysis of conflict management between private and public schools in Benue state.

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