

Principals and Political Appointees Conflicts in the Implementation of Educational Policy in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State

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Abstract: The study focused on Principals and Political Appointees' Conflicts in the Implementation of Educational Policy in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. Three specific purposes with three corresponding research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study consisted two hundred and twenty-six (226) secondary school principals and twenty-seven (27) political appointees making a total of 253 respondents. The census population were used as the sample size. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the subjects. The reliability of the instrument yielded 0.75 using Cronbach Alpha technique. Mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) were used to answered the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that: Conflicts between political appointees and the principals in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools are caused by differences in personal behaviour and the involvement of management committees in school supervisory functions. Secondly, Intra-personal conflict, role conflict, overt and personalized conflict are types of conflicts that exist in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools. Based on the findings, the study recommended that: Government should respect technical rationality (Professionals) in education on the process of appointing political appointees, this will help in reducing the causes of conflicts in the implementation of education policy. Secondly, principals and political appointees should view the existence of various types of conflicts and try to them through it through the use of technical experts over management strategies.

Keywords: Conflict, Educational Policy, Implementation, Political Appointees & Secondary Education

Date of Submission: 20-12-2020

Date of Acceptance: 03-01-2021

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Nigeria secondary educational system has undergone reforms in an attempt to key into UNESCO guideline for Education for All (EFA) objectives. Rapid reforms of the Nigerian educational system at all levels compounded by rapid policy changes and the shrinking economy have constituted constraints to educational development in the country, hence, there are series of disparities, declining standard and quality of education in our educational system (Chinwe, 2013). Nigeria has also witnessed several curriculum reforms, which started at pre-independence period.

After independence, the hope for educational reform policies continued to rekindle. The National Curriculum Conference held in Lagos in September 1969, recommended changes in the system from 6-5-2-3 to 6-3-3-4 system, that is, a child is expected to spend six years in the primary school, three years in the junior secondary and three years in the senior secondary and four years in the university (Ogbonnaya, 2003). Education policy consists of the principles and government policies in the educational sphere as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of education systems in a given State (Hornby, 2008).

Implementation of educational policies implies the process of carrying out set objectives / plan and programmes of a given state/nation. It is the process of performing educational task, an activity or programme. Egonmwan (2018) described implementation as the stage where the preparations made earlier, the plans, designs and analysis proposed are tested to see what they really are. So, effective implementation is the actualization of educational objectives account for effective educational administration.

Educational institutions at all levels train politicians and politicians take part in initiating policies and programs in education. It is a notable fact that it is through the political process that educational policies are

initiated and implemented (Diera, 2013). Educational politics involves decision making through which decisions are taken on allocation of resources to education, approval and location of educational institutions (school mapping), allocation of funds, provision of infrastructures and equipment, recruitment, posting of staff and students to schools and departments are subject to debate among political appointees and Board of Governors and members of each level of education in Nigeria. Those who are appointed by government to represent her in educational issues in a state are expected to work together with school principals for the actualization of educational goals. Political appointees are basically government officials appointed by the state Governor and approved by the State house of assembly in a democratic regime (Ude, 2016). Political appointees as an appointed individual into political position carry out educational jurisdiction functions for specific year. Political appointees into education are government representative on educational matters.

Principals and political appointees in Ebonyi State such as Commissioner for Education, Secondary Education Board (SEB), Secondary Education Board Members, Chairman, Special Adviser (SA) on Education, Permanent secretary, Local Government Areas secretaries, members of the education Board, Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) are educational administrators of the state whose roles cannot be overemphasized in the organization and administration of secondary schools. They play vital and crucial roles in the administration of secondary schools. They work hand in hand for the smooth running of Secondary Schools. Nevertheless, it has been observed that in Ebonyi State there arise conflict in the implementation of educational policy in the administration of secondary schools between political appointees and the school principals.

Conflict is a common occurrence in life, it involves human beings with varied interests, goals and aspirations. Conflict in schools can be misunderstanding or disagreement among students, teachers and principals with political appointees over allocation of resources (Egonmwan, 2012 and Nwite, 2007). Conflict is therefore a social problem or product of interaction between or among people. It can occur between people who have something in common/uncommon. It implies disagreement in opinions, opposition of interest as a result of individual differences, characteristics and values (Nwite, Nwofia, Eze-Anyim, Oko and Nnamdi, 2020). Conflict arises where there are competitions between or among individuals for either tangible or intangible things and occurs in various dimensions in schools (Amoh, 2010). Many conflicts occur because individuals/groups have different value systems with regard to such subjects as religion, personal belief, social diversity, principles or actions. Each group thinks that their values are more acceptable than those held by the other. However, opposing views, needs and drives are natural part of daily lives.

Conflict as a mutual hostility in inter-human relationships, manifests in form of insult, name-calling, defamation of character or blackmailing, sarcasm, false accusation, withdrawal of services, salaries, fringe benefits or incentives, strikes, demotion, boycott of classes, violent demonstrations, open violence or killing (Dirra 2013). In this view conflict is inevitable in any organizational setting and leadership. Leadership is the key to the progress, success and survival of any group. It is one of the commonest characteristics of all the species of the animal kingdom, because whenever any of the species are in a group, a leader often emerges (Ukeje, in Dirra 2013).

Politically, Nigerian state is unstable; this makes the appointees not to know their stand; from one educational policy to another and this causes serious conflicts in the implementation of educational policy. The State Ministry of Education, the organ responsible for the administration, financing and control of education at the state level is headed by a commissioner for education who in most cases have little or no education bias. The commissioner is usually appointed by the state governor and approved by the state house of assembly in a democratic regime.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature to this study was organized under conceptual, theoretical and available empirical studies among principals and political appointees on conflicts and the implementation of education policy in secondary schools. Conflict is seen as opposition or hostility and incompatible which is at variance with other people's opinion or views (Adelokun, 2015). Okolo (2015) posit that conflict is essentially a social phenomenon that has creative and destructive manifestations. Conflict is inevitable in any human organization, schools inclusive. Njoku (2014) argued that conflict is regarded as a normal concomitant of group existence. It is seen as an endemic feature of work relationships. This suggests that conflict is bound to occur in work place because of different pleasures within it.

Conflicts is a common occurrence in life and society. Organizations such as schools and colleges have conflict potentials since they are collection of people with diverse personalities. According to Hocker and Owens-Ibie (2010) conflict is the interaction or an expressed struggle between two interdependent parties who perceived incompatible goals, scarce rewards, limited resources or interference from the other party in achieving their goals. Conflict as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control each other. The incompatibility or difference exist in reality, perceived by the parties involved. Imhabekhai and Oyitso (2001) argue that:

Conflict is a disagreement that generates antagonism and opposition in the relations between person, groups and organizations. It does occur when some persons because of differences interfere with in terms of obstruction, counter-reaction and opposition, the attainment of the goals and interest of others. It is different from competition albeit health, positive competition which is a contest for some prized values but rather involves attempts by each other to obtain it(p.90).

This implies divergence of interests, goals and aspirations of people in any organization which invariably breeds conflicts, threats and intolerance. From administrative point of view, conflict is a state of opposition, disagreement or incompatibility between two or more parties, often characterized by physical violence (Dunham, 2010). Conflicts are inherent and inevitable in all organizations, educational institutions inclusive since such organizations consist of human beings. Sociologically, conflict is a condition of disagreement involving at least two parties such as employer and employees (Onoyase, 2011). Obi (2014) sees conflict as a social condition in which two or more persons or groups cannot have the same thing at the same time. Obi presented conflict as a form of interaction among parties that differ in interests, perceptions and preferences. According to him, conflict is conceived as a mutual hostility at inter-personal, inter-human, inter-group, inter-ethnic, inter-cultural and international level. He further asserted that mutual hostility can be verbal, physical or emotional depending on the nature of the conflict in question. Gugel (2007) posit that;

Conflict is a social condition in which at least two parties (individuals, groups, states) are involved (a) pursue different incompatible aims in relation to the originating point or who pursue the same aim but one which can only be achieved by a single party and/ or (b) who attempt to use different incompatible means in relation to the originating point in order to achieve a specific aim (.P.42)

Deductions made from Gugel indicates that conflict is a social problem; disagreement in opinions, interests, sociological, psychological and cultural. From human relations point of view, Bacal (2010 and Onoyase, 2011) described conflict as being good, bad or ugly. For him conflict is good when it stimulates members of the organization to increase their knowledge, skills and contributions to organizational innovation and productivity and bad when embedded in the notion that organizations are created to achieve goals by creating structures that perfectly describe job responsibilities, authorities and other job functions in a bad light (that is, it results to low productivity). Conflict also implies mutual hostility, differences, disagreements, opposition thesis and antithesis resulting to man's inhumanity to man, use of violence, strike action, turning into point of crisis which can escalate to the level of psychological warfare, physical or naked war (Ude, 2015). Conflict as an incompatibility of goals or values between two or more parties in a relationship combined with attempts to control each other and antagonistic feelings towards each other. To this end, the incompatibility of difference do exist in reality or may only be perceived by parties involved. Hence, the opposing action and hostile emotions are very real distinct features of human conflict in school administration.

Stretching further, Ikediashi (2016) viewed conflict as opposition of persons or forces that give rise to some tension. Thus, it is a disagreements or opposition between groups, individuals or between the organization and individuals or groups of individuals. Therefore, conflict may be destructive for employers and employees when it reduces organizational commitment (Thomas, Bliese and Jax 2005). Owunwa and Obiukwu (2016) defined conflict as a dispute or struggle between two parties that is characterized by open expression, hostility or internal interference in the goal attainment of the opposition inaction of another person and group of persons/parties. Conflict is equally a mental or spiritual struggle within, often unconscious, resulting from the opposition, clashing or variance of opposed principles, statements, arguments and the simultaneous functioning of mutual exclusive impulses, desires. Okeke (2007) conflict as the violent collision, a struggle, a battle or mental struggle which can be destructive in any organization. From administrative point of view, Odewing (2011) argued that conflict is an obstacle to achieving a desired goal. He further assented that it does not always take two to be in conflict because some times we are in conflict within ourselves. Owen (2013) argued that conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive in compatible goals, scarce rewards and interference from the other party in achieving their goals. Obiukwu (2012) maintained conflict is seen as a situation where persons or groups disagree over means or ends and try to establish their views in preference to others. Here conflict is an opposition or antagonistic interaction between two or more parties. Conflict is a form of socialization and a certain amount of discord, inner-divergence and outer controversy originally tied up with the very elements that ultimately hold the group together. Okoro (2017) affirmed that conflict is mutual interference of past actions and reactions in a social system. It involves opposite needs in action at the same time, such as the apparent incongruous between the human needs of teachers in school system.

Potentials for conflict depends on how incompatible the goals of the entities are, the extent to which required scarce resources are utilized and the degree of interdependence of role activities among those participating in school organization as voluntary agencies (Obi, 2014). Therefore, the chances of conflict are

small among groups who have their own resources respectively and perform entirely different roles directed towards completing of separated goals. Thus, conflict is bad when it is disruptive to organizational processes; it is good when it becomes necessary “tonic” or catalyst to the development of an organization. The above definitions go a long way to buttress the fact that conflict in interpersonal relationship that could be functional or dysfunctional. Obviously, it should be pointed out that in all these definitions conflict is inherent and inevitable in every organization, schools inclusive. Therefore, conflicts that occur in organizations need not be destructive provided the energy associated with conflict is harnessed and directed towards problem solving and organizational improvement.

Types

Conflicts manifest in different ways and at different levels of the organization. Conflict manifestations in organizations such as schools, with intrapersonal, inter-personal, inter-departmental, inter-organizational and community-related conflicts among others.

Intra-personal Conflict: This deals with crises emanating from inside the human personality. It is internal to the individual and difficult to analyze. It concerns how the individual takes in processes and produces communications. When an individual loses control of his intra-personal processes, there is a danger of conflict interaction. Some symptoms of this include aggression, excessive thinking, short temper, avoidance and shouting (Obi, 2014).

Inter-Personal conflict: This involves mutual hostility between two people, when two people in the same organization have incompatible needs, goals or approaches in their relationship (Fisher, 2000). Organizations such as schools are made up of individuals with various background training, ethnic and religious affiliation and gender. Thus, this type of conflict can occur between teachers and principals, teachers and fellow teacher, teachers and students. The heterogeneous group work together in pursuit of similar organizational goals makes conflict inevitable (Bacil, 2006).

Intra-Unit/section/Departmental Conflict: This is conflict interaction that involves members of unit, section, department in an organization. It may arise as a result of workload problems, high handedness, lack of trust among members of the group and insubordination. It could occur between members of a group and supervisors or heads of units (Bacil, 2006).

Inter-Unit/section/Departmental Conflict: This occurs between collections of people such as departments, decision making group in the same organization, union and management (Fisher,2000). It can arise as a result of inter-personal conflict, differences in perception and competition for scarce resources. This type of conflict can occur between two departments in a school such as Business and Educational Foundations departments over the use of computer equipment/facilities.

Inter-Organizational Conflict: This type of conflicts is basically an organizational conflict which based on inter organizational issues.

Community-Related Conflict: Conflict interaction is between an organization and its host community. Factors that precipitate this type of conflict include unmet expectations of the community on job placement for members of the community, violation of social-cultural values, environmental problems which emanate from activities like noise, emission of effluents and dangerous gases, (Bacil, 2006). Obi (2014) identified overt, covert and situational conflicts as type of conflict in school setting.

Overt and Covert conflict: Indicated when there is official refusal of one staff group to accept the validity of another group’s work whether or not it has merit or value for organizational goals. This happens when one group commands more power than the other. Inversely, covert conflict is indicated when one staff group refuses to provide another with information required for its work. An instance is a teacher who refuses to enter the students’ scores in the result sheet for form master to compute the result. This is related to sequential interdependence. Generally, conflict can either be overt or covert.

Situational Conflict: One finds himself in this type of conflict unintentionally because of ethnic, religious or tribal bias. For instance, this type of conflict exists where some people in organization such as teachers are denied their position or rights because of tribal affiliation. This is related to inadequate evaluation mechanism.

Obi (2004) also, categorized conflict into simple, pseudo and ego conflicts that manifest in school organization.

Simple Conflict: This arises when two people or two groups of people know each other’s goals but neither side can attain its personal desires without blocking the goals of the other person or group, in this sense conflict is seen as occurring when a group thinks its attempt to achieve its goal are being blocked by another group. *Pseudo Conflict:* This type of conflict occurs in a situation of ineffective communication. Thus, poor communication has earlier been identified as a cause of conflict. *Ego Conflict:* This occurs when people’s egos are threatened or denied security. The individual involved will try to protect his ego which he cherished at all cost and can use any means to suppress an opposition.

Others include: role conflict. This involves very real differences in task definitions, expectations or responsibilities between individuals who are interdependent in a social system. It occurs within the individual; and spread structurally across organizational units. Role conflicts arise from a number of sources. They are inconsistencies of multiple concurrent roles, clash of expectations and values, sending inconsistent role expectations to role incumbent and conflicts within roles (Adenokun, 2015).

Inconsistencies of Multiple Concurrent Roles: Implies inter-role conflict which results when a person has multiple roles within an organization. Take for instance a school principal who is supposed to manage judiciously the meager resources of a school, is at the same time the director of a contracting business that supplies food and school equipment. The objective of his principal role will be inconsistent with his contractor role and he will probably not perform one of them adequately. Thus, his interest in the supply business will make it difficult for him to award contracts objectively.

Clash of Expectations and Values: Role conflicts may occur when there is a conflict between the institutional expectations and the values of significant people within the society. For instance, a school head may recognize the institutional need for qualitative academic programme and so provide adequate facilities for both theoretical and practical work to give a balanced programme. He may at the same time realize that there is a pressure from the community for public performances in drama, music and athletics. The head will have a role conflict because satisfying the cultural values for performance clashes with the demands for serious academic work. Thus, his own value system will determine which role he will regard as salient.

Ejeh (2009) conducted research on the management of secondary schools and the interference of political office holders in Kogi State. The purpose was to examine the extent to which politics affects staff personnel, school community administration, community administration, financial administration and resource allocation to schools. The sample comprised of 50 principals and 50 vice principals drawn from the population 329 schools in Kogi State. The researcher employed a simple descriptive survey design, seven research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The major findings show that; there is interference by government functionaries and influential members of the community who are in good book of the government on the management of secondary schools; recruitment of staff influenced by political considerations, embezzlement of school funds by political agents.

Okolo (2015) conducted research on effective conflict resolution strategies as perceived by parents, teachers and members of the Board of Governors in Enugu State. The purpose of the study was to determine effective conflict resolution strategies in school organization. One research question and one null hypothesis formulated guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Using disproportionate stratified random sampling procedure, five (5) schools were selected from each of the six education zones. The instrument used for the study was questionnaire presented on a 4-point Likert type scale. The reliability of the instrument 0.92 was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis. The finding of study showed involvement of law enforcement agents cannot be a strategy for effective resolution of conflict in school organization.

Njoku (2014) conducted a research on the role of teachers on the resolution of conflict in secondary schools in Owerri Education zone of Imo State. The purpose of the study was to identify the role teachers play in conflict resolution in secondary schools in Owerri Education zone of Imo State. Five research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The research design was descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of 2314 respondents. A sample of 240 teachers were drawn using proportionate random sampling. The research questions were answered using mean and standard technique, while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at an alpha level of 0.05. It indicates that the PTA is very important and helpful in resolution of conflicts in schools especially where political appointees are involved.

Theoretical Framework

1. Social System theory. Social behavior/system theory using Nomothetic Ideographic Model was propounded by Getzels and Guba in 1957. They viewed an organization as a social system where task achievement is based on participatory efforts of every member in the organization each with specific role to play and that the roles are to be coordinated by the head of the organization. In an established organization like the school system, positions are arranged in a hierarchical order. Thus, in secondary schools, the principal is at the head. The vice principals (administration, academics and special duties) serve the subordinates to the principal. The Deans of studies are subordinates to the principals through the VC., with teachers with different grades are in various departments. This kind of arrangement, Getzels and Guba believed that there would be conflict of interests when some people are expected to submit to other people's command. Therefore, in any organized group such as secondary school, conflict is inevitable between the principal and the vice-principals or dean of studies or head of department; principal and the teachers. Moreover, the position of the principal as a leader expects him to attend to the needs of his staff members and at the same time being the representative of his employer at work

towards the achievement of the organizational goals. In this case, he may be caught between satisfying his staff's demand and striving to achieve the goals of the organization and sometimes the staff appears unnecessarily too demanding and even insubordinate owing to the backing of political appointees in the school system.

Therefore, conflict in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary school is likened to this model of conflict theory because conflict occurs when the principal who is in leadership position directs the implementation of policy in the administration of secondary schools. The principal expect political appointees who political oversees the running of secondary schools to make policies in line with Government directive and if this is not done conflicts arise, hence the need for this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Conflict is inevitable and unavoidable in any given establishment, organization or institution. Evidences abound that conflicts are prevalent in the implementation of education policies in secondary school administration in Ebonyi State. The interaction among the school principals and political appointees of education in the interpretation, implementation/execution of educational polices seems to create doubts in people's minds as to whether they are living up to expectations. Indeed, the relationships between these agencies have led to confusion and conflicts in the schools. The devastating effects of conflicts in school administration need not to be looked down. Many secondary schools within the state experience unhealthy competition for limited resources, recognition, power tussle, over lapping responsibilities among staff and students (Nwofia 2018). For instance, school conflict has led to physical fights, quarrels, use of abusive words and scolding among some principals, teachers, appointees and students. These often at mines lead students displaying miscreant behaviour in the school. Teachers also show non-dedication to their duties.

Principals encounter challenges in the discharge of their managerial duties as most the political appointees and influential members of the community who are in the good books of the government through their position influence staff discipline when school principal reported cases of staff misconduct, because of the fact that staff is connected to top official in government such report will turn against the principal. Bribery in the area of executing school project remains another issue that leads to conflict as some constructors through the influence of political appointees' agents embezzle funds allocated for improving school plants. Atimes fund is diverted for a different purpose without the knowledge of the school principal. The issues of transferring principals to another schools also creates a lot of misunderstandings, disagreement, resistance between the principal and political appointees because of differences in value and interest by different group, that is to say that the principal may wish to retained in a particular school may not be the wish of the political appointees due to differences and interest in value (favoritism) this often results to conflict that affects the administration of secondary schools in the state.

The process of appointing political personnel who make policies on education is usually not judicious and the personnel appointed in most cases may have little or no knowledge of education and education policies. General accepted principle has it that, one cannot give what one does not have. Furthermore, the involvement of appointees "senior Assistant (SA), special senior Assistant (STA), Technical Assistants (TA) and Special Technical Assistant (STS) or management committees members into supervisory functions in the secondary school system degredate the position of the school principals in Ebonyi State and this remains an alarming problem that retards educational development and programmes in the State. Thus, questions then are: (a) what are causes of conflicts between political appointees and principals in the implementation of education policy? (b)What are the types of conflict that exist between political appointees and principals in the implementation of education policy?. Based on this, this research work investigated conflict between political appointees and principals in the implementation of education policy in administration of secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. According to Uzoagulu (2011) the design, data are usually collected, organized, analyzed and then described as there exist without interfering with them. The area of the study was Ebonyi State. The choice of the state for the study was based on the researcher's observed consisted conflict manifestations in schools in Ebonyi State and several reported causes of conflicts in schools by Secondary Education Board (SEB) hence, researchers' zeal to assist in conflict resolution for healthy school management.

Statistical information obtained from Secondary Education Board (SEB, 2019) shows that there are Two hundred and twenty-six (226) secondary school principals in Ebonyi State with (27) Political Appointees who serve as Special Assistant (SA) Senior Special Assistant (SSA), Technical Assistant (TA) Commissioner and Board members.

The sample for this study comprised of all the 253 secondary school principals and political appointees in Ebonyi State. The census population of (253) were study.

The instrument for data collection was researcher developed questionnaire titled Conflict between Political Appointees in the Implementation of Education Policy in Secondary School Administration Questionnaire (CPAIEPQ). The research questions were answered on individual item basis using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings

This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of data collected in the field for the study. The data analysis reflected the three research questions and null hypothesis formulated for the study.

Research Question One: What are the causes of conflicts between political appointees and the principals in the implementation of education policy in secondary school administration in Ebonyi State?

From the data presented on table 1, all the principals and political appointees agreed on the causes of conflict in the implementation of education policy on the administration of secondary schools in Ebonyi State. But both principals and political appointees disagreed on item 3(x=1.66) that differences in interest by different individuals in mode of school administration causes conflict while item 11 (x=2.08) political appointees disagreed that lack of support for educational innovation causes conflict. The agreement between principals and political appointees were demonstrated by the mean values of each item and cluster mean. The grand mean of 2.72 and standard deviation of 0.71 for principals and 2.87 grand mean and 0.74 standard deviation for political appointees. This indicate that both principal and political appointees are of the opinion that conflict in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools are caused by differences in personal behaviour bring about conflict in the implementation of Educational Policy, political appointees inability to assist the schools in providing instructional resources, gap in communication between the administrators brings conflict, poor management style by the principal of the school causes conflicts, diversion of funds map out for project execution in the school, issue of generational gap causes conflict, changes in offer of appointments and involvement of management committees in school supervisory functions.

Table 1: Mean Rating of Principals and Political Appointees on the Causes of Conflict in the Implementation of Education Policy in the Administration of Secondary Schools.

		PRINCIPALS N=208					
POLITICAL APPOINTEES N=24							
S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	DEC.	X	SD	DEC.
1.	Differences in personal behaviour bring about conflict in the implementation of Educational Policy	3.50	0.68	Agree	2.79	1.02	Agree
2.	Political Appointees inability to assist the schools in providing instructional resources	2.77	0.78	Agree	2.66	0.91	Agree
3.	Differences in interest by different individuals on the mode of school administration	1.57	0.62	Disagree	1.66	0.63	Disagree
4.	Disparities in the perception of goals of the school.	2.92	0.88	Agree	3.04	0.75	Agree
5.	Gap in communication between the administrators brings conflict.	3.29	0.67	Agree	3.37	0.71	Agree
6.	Poor management style by the principal of the school causes conflicts.	3.16	0.75	Agree	3.20	0.77	Agree
7.	Diversion of funds map out for project execution in the school	3.47	0.69	Agree	3.33	0.56	Agree
8.	Issue of generational gap causes conflict	3.18	0.58	Agree	3.41	0.50	Agree
9	Changes in offer of appointments	3.25	0.61	Agree	3.20	0.65	Agree
10	Involvement of management committees in school supervisory functions	3.23	0.94	Agree	2.87	0.89	Agree
11	Lack of support for educational innovation	2.87	0.71	Agree	2.04	0.75	Disagree
Cluster Mean		2.72	0.71	Agree	2.87	0.74	Agree

Key: Dec-Decision

Research Question Two:

What are the types of conflicts that exist between political appointees and the principals in secondary school in Ebonyi State?

Data on table 2 showed that, all the principals and some political appointees agreed that conflicts exist in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools. However, political appointees disagreed with item 14 ($x=1.87$) that situational conflict occurs between principals and political appointees in the administration of schools. This disagreement is expressed by the mean value of 1.87 (political appointees) which falls below 2.50, the ratings for items 12,13,15 to 18 exceed 2.50 for both principals and political appointees. So, items 12,13,15-18 on the side of the principals have average mean of 3.22 with standard deviation of 0.77 to 2.95 and standard deviation of 0.71 respectively. This shows that: Intra-personal conflict, situational conflict, ego conflict, role conflict, overt and personalized conflict are types of conflicts that exist in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools.

Table 2: Mean Rating of Principals and Political Appointees on Types of Conflicts that Exist in the Implementation of Education Policy in Administration of Secondary Schools

		PRINCIPALS N=208			POLITICAL APPOINTEES N=24		
S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	DECISION	X	SD	DECISION
12.	Intra-personal conflict exists between principals and political appointees (within themselves).	3.27	0.77	Agree	2.79	1.02	Agree
13	Differences in background with regards to educational levels attained between political appointees and the principals	2.96	0.85	Agree	2.79	0.97	Agree
14	Situational conflict occurs between principals and political appointees in the administration of schools	3.53	0.73	Agree	1.87	0.33	Disagree
15	Ego conflict (when people's egos are threatened) exists between political appointees and the principals in the administration of schools	3.11	0.74	Agree	3.12	0.74	Agree
16	Role conflict that is clash of expectation and values exists between political appointees and the principals in the administration of schools	3.23	0.86	Agree	3.54	0.65	Agree
17	When there is official refusal of one to accept the validity of another (overt and covert conflict).	3.12	0.77	Agree	3.20	0.77	Agree
18	Differences in motives (personalized conflict).	3.37	0.72	Agree	3.45	0.50	Agree
Cluster Mean		3.22	0.77	Agree	2.95	0.71	Agree

Research Question Three:

What are the influence of conflicts between political appointees and the principals in the administration of secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Table 3, revealed that both the principals and political appointees agreed that conflicts reduces the quality of decision making in the schools, conflicts can lead to negative emotions and stress in the administration of schools, conflicts encourage leaders to voice new ideas facilitating innovations and change, gap in communication exists which can affect work co-ordination between principals and political appointees in

school administration, conflicts brings about students poor performance in secondary schools, it leads to rioting among teachers and this influences school administration and that result to fighting among staff in secondary schools in Ebonyi state with the mean scores of the principals as: items 19(x=3.05), 20(x=2.37), 21(x=3.32), 22(x=3.18), 23(x=3.23), 24(x=3.14), 25(x=2.54) and 26(x=3.14) while the political appointees mean scores of 19(x=3.00), 20(x=2.95), 21(x=3.29), 23(x=2.75), 24(x=2.79), 25(x=3.00) and 26(x=3.04) respectively. Only item 22(x=2.33) recorded disagree on the side of the political appointees. The cluster mean of 2.97 and 3.04 respectively for principals and political appointees, since the mean is greater than mean score 2.50 set, this shows that conflicts influences the administration of secondary schools.

Table 3: Mean Rating of Principals and Political Appointees on the Influence of Conflicts in the implementation of Education Policy on Administration of Secondary Schools

APPOINTEES N=24		PRINCIPALS N=208			POLITICAL		
		X	SD	DEC.	X	SD	DEC.
S/N	ITEMS						
19	Conflicts reduces the quality of decisions in the schools	3.05	0.78	Agree	3.00	0.65	Agree
20	Conflicts can lead to negative emotions and stress in the administration of schools	2.37	1.05	Agree	2.95	0.90	Agree
21	Conflicts encourage leaders to voice new ideas facilitating innovations and change.	3.32	0.79	Agree	3.29	0.75	Agree
22	It can result in negative stereo-type and work group divisions (click groups formations).	3.18	0.73	Agree	2.33	0.96	Disagree
23	Gap in communication exists which can affect work co-ordination between principals and political appointees in school administration	3.23	0.75	Agree	2.75	1.03	Agree
24	Conflicts brings about students poor performance in secondary schools	3.14	0.81	Agree	2.79	0.93	Agree
25	Conflict leads to rioting among teachers and this influences school administration	2.54	1.12	Agree	3.00	1.02	Agree
26	Fighting among staff and political appointees influence school administration	3.14	0.77	Agree	3.04	0.75	Agree
Cluster Mean		2.97	0.86	Agree	3.04	0.86	Agree

Key: Dec= Decision

4.2 Hypothesis 1

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings score of school principals and political appointees on causes of conflict in the implementation of education policy in Ebonyi state. Summary of result presented on table 3 indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of secondary school principals and political appointees on causes of conflict in the implementation of education policy in Ebonyi state. But item 1 and 11 were significant with average mean of t-calculated of 1.59. The t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value, of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld.

Table 4: t-test of difference in the mean responses of Principals and Political Appointees on Causes of Conflict in the Implementation of Education Policy.

S/N	Category of Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	df	Alpha	t-cv	Decision
1	Principals	208	3.50	0.68	4.61	230	0.05	1.96	S
	Political Appointees	24	2.79	1.02					
2	Principals	208	2.77	0.78	0.62	230	0.05	1.96	NS
	Political Appointees	24	2.66	0.91					
3	Principals	208	1.57	0.62	0.66	230	0.05	1.96	NS
	Political Appointees	24	1.66	0.63					
4	Principals	208	2.92	0.88	0.60	230	0.05	1.96	NS
	Political Appointees	24	3.04	0.75					
5	Principals	208	3.29	0.67	0.55	230	0.05	1.96	NS
	Political Appointees	24	3.37	0.71					
6	Principals	208	3.16	0.75	0.24	230	0.05	1.96	NS
	Political Appointees	24	3.20	0.77					
7	Principals	208	3.47	0.69	0.96	230	0.05	1.96	NS

	Political Appointees	24	3.33	0.56						
8	Principals	208	3.18	0.58	1.83	230	0.05	1.96	NS	
	Political Appointees	24	3.41	0.50						
9	Principals	208	3.25	0.61	0.35	230	0.05	1.96	NS	
	Political Appointees	24	3.20	0.65						
10	Principals	208	3.23	0.94	1.76	230	0.05	1.96	NS	
	Political Appointees	24	2.87	0.89						
11	Principals	208	2.87	0.71	5.40	230	0.05	1.96	S	
	Political Appointees	24	2.04	0.75						
	Average				1.59			1.96	NS	

Key: S=Significant, NS= Not Significant

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Under this section, the discussions of findings were basically on the three questions and a null hypothesis that guided the study.

Respondents on research question one, established that the causes of conflicts in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools are: differences in personal behaviour bring about conflict in the implementation of educational policy; political appointees inability to assist schools in providing instructional resources; gap in communication between the administrators; poor management style by the principal of schools; diversion of funds mapped out for project execution in the school by either the school or interpersonal; issue of generational gap causes conflict; changes in offer of appointments and involvement of management committees in school supervisory functions are the causes conflicts. The result of the test of hypothesis one further buttressed these findings because there was no significant difference between the opinion of principals and political appointees with regard to factors responsible for conflict in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools. This finding is in consonance with Obi (2014) and Nwankwo (2019) who identified two major causes of organizational conflicts include behavioural/nonstructural and structural based conflict.

The second research question which elicited information on types of conflicts that exist in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools, the respondents disagreed that situational conflict is a type of conflict that exist in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools. However, both principals and political appointees agreed that conflicts exist in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools; Intra-personal conflict, situational conflict, ego conflict, role conflict, overt and personalized conflict are types of conflicts that exist in the implementation of education policy in the administration of secondary schools. While result indicates that there is significant difference between the mean rating scores of Principals and Political appointees with regard to types of conflicts that exist in implementation of secondary schools in Ebonyi State. The above findings are in agreement with Nakpodia (2000, and Nwofia 2015 and Nwite, Nwofia, Ezeanyi, Oko and Nnamdi 2020) who discovered that conflict manifestation in organizations such as schools include intrapersonal conflict, personalized conflict, overt and covert conflict and situational conflicts. This has suggested that the above are the types of conflicts that exist in the implementation of education policies in the administration of secondary schools in secondary school administration.

The third research question, attempts to find out the influence of conflicts between political appointees and the principals in the implementation of education policies in secondary school administration, the respondents (principals and political appointees) agreed that conflicts reduces quality of decisions in the schools, lead to negative emotions and stress in the administration of schools, encourage leaders to voice new ideas facilitating innovations and change, gap in communication exists which can affect work co-ordination between principals and political appointees in school administration, brings about students poor performance in secondary schools, it leads to rioting in schools. Only item 22 recorded disagree on the side of political appointees but conclusion was based grand mean which shows that conflicts influences the administration of secondary schools while the hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean rating scores of Principals and Political appointees on the influence of conflicts in the administration of secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

The finding of the above is consistent with that of Okolo (2015), who maintained that conflicts could increase both solidarity and hostility among groups performing functions in an organization especially schools, and it invariably affects actions. Decisions, reactions, programmes and processes in school organization if it erupts.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings and discussions, the following conclusions were drawn. Conflicts are inevitable in any human organization schools inclusive. It exists to welcome new ideas and understanding between parties. Conflicts can be constructive and unconstructive in nature. That is when conflict is managed effectively it brings about changes, development and in all, understanding among parties. Individual differences, gap in communication are the major sources of conflicts in the implementation of education policies in secondary school administration.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations is made.

- (1) Government should respect technical rationality (Professionals) in education on the process of appointing political appointees, this will help in reducing the causes of conflicts in the implementation of education policies.
- (2) Principals and political appointees should view the existence of various types of conflicts and try to avert it through the use of technical experts over management strategies
- (3) Principals and political appointees should be open minded in the face of conflict situation for effective administration of secondary school system.

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Oko Ndubuisi Ogbonna, et. al. "Principals and Political Appointees Conflicts in the Implementation of Educational Policy in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 25(12), 2020, pp. 36-47.