

**Perceptions of Secondary School Principals and Teachers on the Influence of Conflict Resolution Strategies on School Effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the perspectives of principals and teachers on the influence of conflict resolution strategies on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 1,343 which consisted of principals and teachers. The sample of the study is 291. The selection of this sample is recommended by the research advisor table (2006). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Conflict Resolution Strategies and School Effectiveness Questionnaire (CRSSEQ) which was validated by experts in test and measurement, and the Department of Educational Foundations of the University of Calabar. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while an independent samples t-test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The results of the analysis showed that principals and teachers perceived conflict resolutions of avoidance and accommodation as influencing school effectiveness. There was no significant difference between the opinions of principals and teachers on conflict resolution strategies in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. The study concluded that conflict resolution strategies significantly influence school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. It was recommended that school heads should always use avoidance and accommodating conflict resolution strategies in solving differences among staff in the school to enhance a high level of productivity among them and enhance a high level of school effectiveness.

**Keywords: Conflict, Resolution, Strategies, School, Effectiveness.**

## **Introduction**

There is no doubt that education is a resource for equipping the individual to become a useful member of society. It is the foundation of all societies, as well as the veritable tool for positive societal change. Organizations such as the school must therefore set and attain goals, define objectives, and mobilize the resources to obtain them. It must also seek to integrate all its separate parts and maintain a certain level of social solidarity. In the school situation, it requires the loyalty of the teachers and principals to maintain a strong internal culture and value system. To achieve this, schools must operate in an environment conducive to and not prone to conflict. Thus, conflict is unavoidable and could occur at both individual and collective levels, since the values, interests, attitudes, and goals of individuals differ. Conflicts exist at every level in the society, of which the school system is not exempted

According to Oluber, Abdulkareem, Alabi and Adeyanju (2017) conflict is a disagreement over an issue. Waters (2005) defined conflict as a form of interaction between parties that differ in interests, perceptions, and preferences. According to Kanu (2019) conflict is bound to occur among the people and is capable of producing hatred, fighting, keeping of malice, quarrelling, and so on. Conflict could lead to poor commitment and ineffectiveness in organizations such as the school. For instance, it may result in principals not carrying out their administrative roles effectively, teachers going late to school and getting involved in unproductive activities such as absenteeism, and inability to perform instructional delivery effectively. Conflicts could have some consequences for people, including employees at workplaces.

While some scholars believe that conflict has a negative impact, others believe that conflict could have a positive impact, and yet some others believe that conflict could have both negative and positive consequences. For instance, while Obasan (2011) posited that conflict is destructive and capable of impeding the stability and profitability of an organization, Awan and Saeed (2015) opined that conflict may be beneficial to an organization as it brings about radical change in the organizational power structure, enriches interaction and can also lead to increase in productivity. Avoiding conflict, discouraging it or allowing chronic unhealthy conflict to remain unresolved can be disastrous to organizational health and could lead to ineffectiveness in organizations including the school system. For the school system to remain effective, conflict must be properly managed.

School effectiveness does not only involve the academic achievement of students but also the responsiveness of the school to the community, school environment, and activities of staff. School effectiveness is the level of contemporary goal attainment of a school. According to Ostroff and Schmitt, cited in Bello (2016), school effectiveness involves several components such as administrative functioning, leadership behaviours, teachers' morale, level of trust, culture and climate, parental involvement, community support, teachers' commitment, loyalty, and satisfaction of teachers. A school is considered effective when it consistently improves its success history through teachers, principals, and students' attitudes to a superlative performance. The concept of school effectiveness refers to the extent to which a school can achieve its goals and objectives in terms of student learning, development, and well-being. Teachers and students behave well in an effective school, but the reverse is the case in ineffective schools. What produces this difference could be their way of commitment and school climate, which could also be a factor in conflict resolution.

The school heads must therefore set and attain goals, define objectives, and mobilize the resources to obtain them, and must seek to integrate all its separate parts, working to maintain a certain level of social solidarity. In the school situation, it requires the loyalty of the teachers and principals to maintain a strong internal culture and value system (Bello, 2016). Some indicators of school effectiveness include strong and effective principal leadership, sustained focus on instruction and learning, a safe and positive school climate, and high expectations for all students and staff, among others. A school is therefore considered effective when it consistently improves its success history through teachers, principals, and students' attitudes to a superlative performance. Staff and students behave well in an effective school, but the reverse is the case in ineffective schools. What produces this difference could be the way and manner conflicts are resolved.

Conflict resolution is seen as the way and manner supervisors use in managing, controlling, and settling disputes among teachers and students to ascertain educational goals and objectives. Roman and Zhimin, in Kanu (2019) define conflict resolution as the process of trying to find a solution to a conflict. Ideally, conflict resolution is collaborative, problem-solving, a comparative talking-together process that leads to choosing a plan of action that all feel good about. Conflict resolution involves the reduction, elimination, or termination of all forms and types of conflict.

The process of managing conflict includes the explicit interplay of knowledge types, attitudes, and abilities that aim at productivity in organizational operations, as well as encouragement by the management of the organization (Majola, 2013). The main goal of conflict management approaches is to completely prevent the escalation of negative or destructive linked conflict and to do so at all costs. A social process that includes all stakeholders must articulate competent and effective conflict management systems for this to be carried out successfully (Aja, 2013). When conflict is managed well, it can be a highly effective means of identifying and resolving tough workplace challenges, often resulting in improved relationships and solutions, Armstrong (2019). Observation has shown that most of these issues which lead to poor commitment and dwindling job performances of teachers and school staff may be attributed to the strategy adopted by the school supervisors in the resolution of conflicts. Thus, there are various conflict resolution strategies such as accommodating, compromising, avoidance, effective communication, and arbitration, among others. The choice of the supervisors in using any of these conflict resolution strategies will vehemently influence the extent to which teachers prepare and present their lessons, use teaching materials, manage their classrooms, use instructional materials, and involve themselves in curricular activities. However, this study focused on avoidance and accommodating conflict resolution strategies.

Avoidance occurs when the cooperation and persistence of satisfying one's personal needs is very low. The avoidance style of conflict management is used when there is a tendency for people or groups in conflict to withdraw from the conflict situation or remain neutral. It is characterized by behaviour that either ignores or refuses to engage in the conflict. While avoidance is considered a negative strategy that shows low concern for both parties' interests, it is sometimes a strategic reason. Especially when the relationship is short-term and the issue is not important or when the situation has the potential to escalate to violence. Avoidance may include saying the issue isn't significant enough to spend time on or saying there isn't enough time to do the topic justice (Moriarty, (2017). The goal of using avoidance is to delay. It is appropriate to use this style when there are issues of low importance, to reduce tensions, or to buy time. Avoidance is also appropriate when you are in a low power position and have little control over the situation, when you need to allow others to deal with the conflict. Or when the problem is symptomatic of a much larger issue, and you need to work on the core issue.

Overuse of the avoidance style can result in a low level of input, and decision-making, and allow issues to fester, which can produce a breakdown in communication between team members (Okoth, 2012). People who overuse avoidance cannot speak frankly without fear of repercussions. Underuse of the avoidance style results in hostility and hurt feelings. In addition, work can become overwhelming because too many issues are taken on at once, resulting in an inability to prioritize and delegate. When avoidance is underused, a team member may deny that there is a problem and allow their hurt feelings to prevent communication. Kehinde, in Amie, Ogan, and Eziri (2021) opine that when using this conflict mode, a person knows there is a conflict, and decides not to deal with it by ignoring and being non-committed by withdrawing from the issues or interaction. Hossein and Nassar (2010) stated that avoidance involves neglecting the conflict or denying the availability of conflict as one seeks neither own concerns nor others. One method of doing this is changing the subject and putting off a discussion until later. The avoidance strategy becomes functional when one party believes the other cannot face confrontation.

Ajudeonu and Ossai (2022) conducted a study on conflict resolution strategies and the effective management of public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The study used a descriptive research method. The research population consisted of 473 principals and 14,482 teachers from 473 public high schools in Delta. Using simple random sampling, the sample size was 50 principals and 250 teachers. This study was based on two research questions and two hypotheses. A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used as a data collection tool. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the study questions, and the hypotheses were tested using a Z-test with a significance level of 0.05, whereas the acceptance level scale was 2.50 for the research questions. The results indicate that conflict resolution strategies for effective management of secondary schools include adaptation and avoidance approaches

Kagucia and Poipoi (2014) researched the effect of the Avoidance Conflict resolution strategy on employee performance in Kenyan Public Universities. The study was conducted in seven public universities. Specific objectives were to establish the effect of avoidance strategy on employee performance in Kenyan Public Universities. Also, to determine the effect of the organizational factors on the relationship between avoidance conflict resolution strategy and performance of employees in the public universities in Kenya. Designs employed were descriptive survey and Karl Pearson Moment Correlation. Target population was 5189 teaching staff from seven Kenyan

public universities. Stratified Random Sampling was used to obtain a sample size of 519 employees. Primary data collection was through questionnaires, while secondary data were collected through document analysis. Content validity of the data collection instruments was established by assessing by experts. Cronbach's alpha score was computed to establish the document's reliability. The alpha score was 0.845. Descriptive statistics such as means, percentages, and frequency counts were used, while inferential statistics involved the use of Karl Pearson's moment Correlation. The results indicated that the avoidance strategy had a positive effect on employee performance. It was concluded that the avoidance conflict resolution strategy affects the employee performance and that organizational factors moderate the relationship between avoidance and employee performance.

An accommodating style of conflict management involves neglecting one's concerns to satisfy the concerns of others. Cavanagh (2016) made it clear that this Strategy is regarded as the acceptance that the preservation of pleasant interpersonal affairs is more significant than forming disagreements among colleagues. Individuals adopting an accommodating style of conflict management have a high want for recognition and support from others. The accommodating individual is more apt to take a middle of the road attitude when an inescapable conflict emerges. These individuals tend to use apologies or humour or express their desires hastily rather than coming straight to the problem. Kraybill (2015) refers to accommodating as a harmonizing conflict response. The author further maintained that the harmonizing style has a low focus on the agenda and a high focus on the relationship. Individuals will often use this style when they want to fit in with the other party. When this style is overused, the individual will eventually become depressed due to the fact of always giving the other party what they want and always losing what is important to the individual. Accommodation is a means of carrying everybody along in the activities of the organization. People seem to have that natural joy in working for their organizations when they are told to make their contributions, they feel valued, and they feel decisions are not just imposed on them by their superiors. While this may be seen as a weak or productive position, there are situations when this approach is preferable and will gain more for a person than taking a strong position, especially during the management of the change process. It can be both a productive and unproductive strategy in the give-and-take process. Individuals who tend to be accommodating prefer the harmony, goodwill, and reciprocity that are often associated with this behavior trait and feel that it serves them well most of the time. People who are

normally accommodating must develop the wisdom to know what choices to make in a given situation and learn to deal with stress and conflict in productive ways

Edo and Omunakwe (2021) researched principals' conflict resolution strategies and effective management of secondary schools as perceived in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Two objectives, research questions, and hypotheses, guided the study. The population consisted of 866 principals and teachers. The sample size consisted of 471 respondents using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers and was validated by two experts in Educational management and one Business Education expert. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument, and a coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to analyze the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses. Findings from the study showed that Principals' conflict resolution strategies for effective management of secondary schools include avoidance and accommodation approaches.

Kanu (2019) conducted a study on Administrator's conflict resolution techniques and Teachers' Job effectiveness in Calabar South L.G.A of Cross River State. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprises all the five hundred and fifty-three (553) teachers in the nine public secondary schools in Calabar South LGA. A sample of one hundred and eight (108) teachers were randomly selected from five (5) out of nine(9) public secondary Schools. The instruments used for data collection were a structured Questionnaire titled Administrative Conflict Resolution Techniques and Teachers Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (ACRTTJEQ). Data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that administrators' use of avoidance, compromise, accommodation, and collaboration techniques have a significant influence on teachers' job effectiveness in the Calabar South Local government area of Cross River State. Based on the result, it was recommended that principals should apply avoidance techniques, Compromise, accommodation, and collaboration techniques in resolving issues among teachers.

Omar (2014) carried out research titled "Influence of Conflict Resolution on Teachers' Effectiveness in Secondary Education in Zamfara State, Nigeria". The objectives of the research were to examine accommodation conflict resolution in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State and to determine compromise conflict resolution in senior secondary schools in Zamfara State. A descriptive survey research design was used, the population of the study was 10,999 comprising

male and female teachers from both private and public schools. The sample of the study was 350. A stratified and proportionate sampling technique was used to select the sample. The questionnaire was used to collect data. The chi-square statistical tool was used. The research found that accommodation is the simplest method of resolving conflict between teachers in the school in Zamfara State.

The goal of conflict management research in schools is to enhance learning and group outcomes, such as organizational performance or effectiveness (Mongezi, 2018). Conflict among school personnel can be very destructive if not handled appropriately. It becomes imperative to carry out this study to ascertain the perceptions of principals and teachers on the influence of conflict resolution strategies on school effectiveness in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

Teacher's job effectiveness has been observed to be on the decline over the years by stakeholders in the education sector. Concerned government officials and other agencies had openly lamented about the poor implementation of education in the country. This has manifested in poor job delivery among the teachers and consequently poor academic performance of the students especially in external examinations, malpractice, indecent dressing, and general indiscipline. Some blame is placed on poor supervision of teachers' instructional delivery and conflict between teachers and their administrators, as well as with students.

Government in recent times has built and renovated secondary school classroom blocks and teachers' offices. It promoted teachers and increased their salaries, provided a conducive working environment for them, improved their condition of services, and organized regular workshops, and seminars, to engender school effectiveness. Thus, one expects secondary school principals, teachers, and other school personnel to be highly motivated and effective in discharging their duties effectively, but the reverse seems to be the case, especially in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. The researchers have observed that one of the problems that could impede school effectiveness in the area may be conflict among school personnel. In some cases, there are incessant open confrontations among principals, teachers, and others. These conflicting situations may be anti-progressive and deserve the use of conflict resolution strategies to bring them under control. This study therefore sought to investigate the perceptions of secondary

school principals and teachers on the influence of conflict resolution strategies on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of secondary school principals and teachers on the influence of conflict resolution strategies on school effectiveness in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the difference in the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State.
2. Ascertain the difference in the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of accommodation conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in the Ikom education zone of Cross River State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the research:

1. What is the difference in the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom education zone of Cross River State?
2. What is the difference in the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of accommodation conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in the Ikom education zone of Cross River State?

### **Research hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study:

**H<sub>01</sub>** There is no significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in the Ikom education zone of Cross River State.

**H<sub>02</sub>** There is no significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of accommodation conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom education zone of Cross River State.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This research design permits the researcher to study a small sample and later generalize the findings to the entire population

(Osuala, 2005). The population of the study is thousand three hundred and forty-three (1,343) which consists of forty-four (44) principals and a thousand, two hundred and ninety-nine (1,299) teachers of public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. All forty-four principals were used as a sample because their population is manageable, while two hundred and ninety-one (291) teachers were drawn as a sample for the study at a 95% confidence level and 5.0% margin of error. The selection of this sample is based on the recommendation of a Research Advisor (2006) who suggested that for a population of 1200 to 1499 subjects, 291 subjects of the total population should be used as a sample. The research advisor's (2006) table sample size indicates that, where the exact population for a study is not there, the next higher population with its corresponding sample size should be picked. A questionnaire titled Conflict Resolution Strategies and School Effectiveness Questionnaire (CRSSEQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in test and measurement and Educational Management from the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar. The questionnaire had two (2) sections, sections A and B. Where section A dealt with the demographic information of respondents while section B contained 6 (6) items each in two clusters of A and B, totalling twelve (12) items. The questionnaire was structured on a point rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agreed (SA), agreed (A), Disagreed (SD), and Strongly Disagreed (SD), with values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, where mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, with 2.50 set as the benchmark. An independent samples t-test was used to test all the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

## **Results**

**Research Question One:** What is the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in the Ikom education zone of Cross River State?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of the Perception of Principals and Teachers on the Influence of Avoidance Conflict Resolution Strategy on School Effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.**

S/ N	Item statement	n	Principals			Teachers			
			Mea n	Std. Dev	Decisio n	n	Mea n	Std. Dev	Decisio n
1.	Non-confrontation is used as a strategy for avoiding conflict.	4 4	3.59	0.62	Agreed	29 1	3.55	0.58	Agreed
2.	Withdrawal oneself helps to resolve conflict.	4 4	3.30	0.76	Agreed	29 1	3.40	0.71	Agreed
3.	Delaying decisions related to the conflict helps in conflict resolution.	4 4	3.27	0.87	Agreed	29 1	2.85	0.96	Agreed
4.	Changing the subject helps in avoiding conflict for effective school management.	4 4	3.32	0.56	Agreed	29 1	3.23	0.54	Agreed
5.	Pretending as if the conflict doesn't exist helps in conflict management.	4 4	3.32	0.71	Agreed	29 1	3.26	0.63	Agreed
6.	Allowing others to make decisions helps in conflict management for school effectiveness.	4 4	3.30	0.88	Agreed	29 1	3.25	0.79	Agreed
	<b>Cluster Mean / Standard Deviation</b>	<b>4 4</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>29 1</b>	<b>3.26</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 1 shows mean and standard deviation ratings of responses to the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State. The result shows that Principals have a mean rating of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 0.73; while teachers have a mean rating of 3.26 and a standard

deviation of 0.70. This implies that principals rated the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness higher than the teachers. However, The cluster mean of 3.35 for principals and 3.26 for teachers which is above the 2.50 set as a benchmark shows that they both agreed that avoidance conflict resolution strategy influences school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.

**Research Question Two:** What is the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of accommodation conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, cross River State?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of the Perception of Principals and Teachers on the Influence of Avoidance Conflict Resolution Strategy on School Effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.**

S/ N	Item statement	n	Principals			Teachers			
			Mea n	Std. Dev	Decisio n	n	Mea n	Std. Dev	Decisio n
1.	Effective communication to ensure that everyone understands each other helps to resolve conflict.	4 4	3.75	0.44	Agreed	29 1	3.56	0.54	Agreed
2.	Understanding the emotions and needs of each party helps to resolve conflict.	4 4	3.52	0.55	Agreed	29 1	3.37	0.55	Agreed
3.	Being willing to adapt and find compromises helps to resolve conflict for effective school management.	4 4	3.59	0.58	Agreed	29 1	2.40	0.58	Agreed
4.	Involvement as a neutral person to facilitate discussion helps to resolve conflict for effective school management.	4 4	3.02	0.95	Agreed	29 1	3.12	0.73	Agreed
5.	Negotiation to find common ground helps to resolve conflict for	4 4	3.59	0.58	Agreed	29 1	3.64	0.54	Agreed

	effective school management.								
6.	Active listening to both parties helps to build trust and resolve conflict for effective school management.	4	3.39	0.69	Agreed	29	3.51	0.63	Agreed
		4				1			
	<b>Cluster Mean / Standard Deviation</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>Agreed</b>
		<b>4</b>				<b>1</b>			

Table 2 shows mean and standard deviation ratings of responses to the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State. The result shows that Principals have a mean rating of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.63; while teachers have a mean rating of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 0.60. The result shows that both principals and teachers agreed that avoidance conflict resolution strategy influences school effectiveness. The result also shows that principals have a higher mean of 3.48 than teachers, with a mean of 3.27. However, the cluster mean of 3.48 for principals and 3.29 for teachers which is higher than the 2.50 set as a benchmark shows that they both agreed that avoidance conflict resolution strategy influences school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.

Hypotheses Testing

$H_{01}$  There is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.

**Table 3: Independent Samples t-test of Significance of Difference between Perception of Principals and Teachers on the Influence of Avoidance Conflict Resolution Strategy on School Effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.**

	<u>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</u>		<u>t-test for Equality of Means</u>			
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
<b>Equal variances assumed</b>	1.623	.204	1.893	333	.059	.09362
<b>Equal variances not assumed</b>			1.692	53.018	.097	.09362

The result of the independent-samples t-test in Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference between principals’ and teachers’ perception of the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, cross River State ( $t = 1.893$ ,  $df = 333$ ,  $p = 0.59$ ). Since the p-value is more than the level of significance set for the study (0.05), the hypothesis is therefore retained. Thus, there is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the influence of avoidance conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness. This implies that both principals and teachers perceive that avoidance conflict resolution strategy significantly influences school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.

**Hypothesis Two:**

**H<sub>02</sub>** There is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the influence of accommodation conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.

**Table 4: Independent Samples t-test of Significance of Difference between Perception of Principals and Teachers on the Influence of Accommodation Conflict Resolution Strategy on School Effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.**

	<u>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</u>		<u>t-test for Equality of Means</u>			
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
<b>Equal variances assumed</b>	.913	.340	.892	333	.373	.04543
<b>Equal variances not assumed</b>			.847	54.919	.401	.04543

The result of the independent-samples t-test in Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference between principals’ and teachers’ perception of the influence of accommodation conflict resolution strategy on school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State ( $t = 0.892$ ,  $df = 333$ ,  $p = 0.373$ ). Since the p-value is more than the level of significance set for the study (0.05), the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between principals and teachers on the influence of accommodation conflict resolution strategy on school

effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State is retained. This implies that both principals and teachers perceive that accommodation conflict resolution strategy significantly influences school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State.

### **Discussion of findings**

The result of research one and the corresponding hypothesis indicated that avoidance conflict resolution strategy significantly influences school effectiveness in Ikom Education, Cross River State, Nigeria. This implies that avoidance strategy is an effective means of identifying and resolving workplace conflicts, which may invariably result in improved relationships between school personnel. This finding agrees with that of Ajudeonu and Ossai (2022) who found that conflict resolution strategies for effective management of secondary schools include adaptation and avoidance approaches in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The finding further corroborates that of Kagucia and Poipoi (2014) who discovered that avoidance strategy had a positive effect on employee performance in Kenyan public universities and concluded that avoidance conflict resolution strategy positively affects employee performance and that organizational factors moderate the relationship between avoidance and employee performance. The finding is also in line with the view of Moriarty (2017) that avoidance is characterized by behavior that either ignores or refuses to engage in the conflict.

The findings in research question two and the corresponding hypothesis indicate that also show that accommodation conflict resolution strategy significantly influences school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State. The finding implies that the use of an accommodating strategy helps to resolve conflicts and enthrones peace in the school system. The finding lends credence to that of Edo and Omuakwe (2021) who found that that Principals' conflict resolution strategies for effective management of secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, River State include avoidance and accommodation approaches. The finding is also in tandem with that of Kanu (2019) who found that accommodating conflict resolution strategy had a significant influence on teachers' effectiveness in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The finding also supports the view of Kraybill (2015) that accommodating has to do with harmonizing conflict response, which has a low focus on the agenda and a high focus on the relationship.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concluded that conflict resolution strategies as perceived by principals and teachers significantly influence school effectiveness in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. It, therefore, follows when school heads and managers effectively employ avoidance and accommodation strategies in the resolution of conflicts. It will enthrone the needed peace, tranquillity, and cordial work environment needed by members of staff to carry out their assigned responsibilities, which invariably will lead to school effectiveness.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations:

1. Principals should always use avoidance conflict resolution strategies in solving differences between and among school personnel to enhance a high level of productivity among them and enhance school effectiveness.
2. Principals should also employ accommodating conflict resolution strategy in solving differences between and among school staff and students, which helps in considering the parties involved and findings mutually beneficial solutions and hence brings about school effectiveness.

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