Conflict Resolution Strategies as Determinant Of Teachers' Morale in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated the influence of conflict resolution strategies on the morale of teachers in selected schools in Ikenne, Ogun State, Nigeria. Two research questions and five null hypothesis guided the study. Research design of the *ex-post facto* type was employed. Two hundred and fifty (250) teachers were drawn from both public and private primary and secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area through stratified random sampling technique. The conflict resolution strategies scale by Rahim (1983) with 32 items and the Purdle Teacher Opinionaire by Rempel and Bentley (1967) with 16 items were used to obtain information from the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while multiple linear regression analysis and t-test were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a high level of teacher morale amongst teachers in Ikenne. There was a significant combined influence of conflict resolution strategies on teachers' morale. Compromising, competing and avoiding individually and significantly predicted teacher morale with competing contributing the highest (65.4%) followed by avoiding (54.8%) and lastly by compromising (54.6%). The result also showed that teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area use compromising often in resolving their disagreements. No significant difference existed on the influence of conflict resolution strategies on teacher morale based on school ownership.The study recommends that teachers in this study area should keep on using compromising as a conflict resolution strategy since its use has really contributed to a high level of moral amongst them.

Key Words: Compromising, Competing, Avoiding, Teacher Morale, Ikenne Local   Government Area

I. INTRODUCTION

Employees in every organization have expectations from the organization that employed them. One of such expectations is that their needs; both emotional, physical, social, psychological and others will be met. When worker's needs are met, they have the joy and fulfilment in doing their jobs which boosts their morale and ginger them into contributing their faithful quota to the effectiveness of that organization. It is obvious that employees' morale is high when they perceive that the work environment will meet their needs and this can lead to better performance. However, when workers feel that their efforts are not appreciated or that the environment is not able to meet their needs, then they have negative feelings and are unhappy about their jobs. When their morale is low, performance is also adversely affected.

The school is the foundation upon which the future leaders are equipped to contribute to national development. Hence, it is important to boost the morale of school personnel because Jjosvold (2008) strongly believe that it is in so doing that institutional success is guaranteed. Observation shows that there are conflicts in the schools today and schools in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State are not an exception. It is true that conflicts are unavoidable because the school is made up of individuals with different outlooks in terms of mental, physical and emotional make-up and people with different personalities and priorities working together in the same environment are prone to experience conflict (Khan, Nawaz, Akhtar &Abbasi, 2014), yet there should be an objective measure accepted by the groups at conflict, put in place to resolve these disagreements among teachers in order to raise their morale and enhance standard and quality academic delivery.

Employeemorale describes the totality of the outlook, attitude, satisfaction and confidence that workers feel at work (Arunchand&Haree, 2013). According to Nicole (2011) employee morale refers to job satisfaction, outlook and feelings of well-being an employee possesses at work. In that wise, an employee's morale

determines his job performance (Ndulue&Ekechukwu, 2016) and low morale may lead to reduced concentration, dissatisfaction, poor customer service, missed deadlines, high turnover, absenteeism and increased conflicts at work (Richards, 2018; DeFranzo, 2013). Suffice it to mention that there are various aspects of the work organization that can affect the morale of workers. Khaled and Galal (2015) observed that one of suchfactors is conflict and the way they are resolved in work environment.The Webster's Dictionary defined conflict as a sharp disagreement or opposition of interests or ideas. Conflict among humans is not new as it has been in existence since the creation of man. This is confirmed by Khaled and Galal(2015) who record that conflict can be traced as far back as creation as recorded in the Holy Bible when Cain killed Abel. The implication of this is that there is no setting that is free of conflict. Hence, conflict has been described as the life of an organization and is therefore inevitableand may lead to stress and anxiety which produces negative behaviours among employees which may severely affect their morale and the performance of the organization in question (Kassim & Ibrahim, 2014).Conflict adversely affects not only the workplace productivity or performance, but also has harmful effect on the health and well-being of the workers (Khaled &Galal, 2015). Sometimes, conflicts are associated with depression among employees, dissatisfaction with life, overreaching and psychological morbidity (Lagat, 2013).

The school organization can only achieve its set objectives through teachers whose morale are high. Teachers with high morale will be able to carry out their duties with professionalism and satisfaction in terms of teaching, maintenance of discipline and classroom management, punctuality to work and class etc. Individuals expect that the place where they work will give them not only financial support but also boost their morale hence, it becomes important that effective conflict resolution strategies are used in handling the disputes, disagreements and quarrels that occur each day among teachers and administrators in the schools. This is important since the morale of teachers and administrators will definitely affect their relationships with co-workers and students which may at the long run affect the way they teach or relate with the students because if their morale is low, definitely they will find it difficult to provide quality delivery in terms of teaching leading to poor academic performance among the students.

Highly satisfied teachers whose morale are high are often happy doing their jobs, yet in the discharge of their duties, conflict may set in as they interact with students or pupils, fellow staff, principal or head teacher, management or even the parents or community. Edet, Benson and Williams (2017) submit that such conflict may be between student and student, student and staff, staff and staff, principal and staff or school and community. The way the teachers handle these conflict have a lot to contribute to their morale. When conflicts are not well managed, teachers may not effectively carry out their duties resulting to poor maintenance of classroom discipline, lateness to class, delay in submitting student results, poor assessment of students etc. Edet, Benson and Williams (2017) opine that ineffective principals' conflict resolution style can lead to disruption of the school system and poor teachers' job effectiveness. However, when conflict are well managed, school personnel morale will be high leading to harmonious working relationship as opposed to anarchy and disunity among staff when they are not objectively handled.

In order to provide solution to this problem, several researchershave carried out similar studies in Nigeria such as Eboka (2017), Ehineni (2017), Edet, Benson & Williams (2017) and several others, yet only a few have been conducted combining morale and conflict resolution hence the justification for this study on conflict resolution strategies (competing, avoiding and compromising) as determinants of teachers' morale in selected public and private primary and secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria.

II. CONCEPT OF MORALE

Employee morale refers to the job satisfaction, outlook and feelings of well-being an employee has within a work setting (Nicole, 2011). Employee morale has shown to have an effect on employee's performance, determine the totality of an organization's financial stability and can lower concentration, lead to missed deadlines and poor customer service (Ehineni, 2017). Inability to resolve disagreements leading to employees' morale have resulted to increase in workplace conflict, increased turnover rates and higher costs associated with selection and training replacement of staff (Khalil, 2013). Teacher morale has been defined by Eboka (2017) as the professional interest and enthusiasm teachers display towards the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation. According to Eboka (2017), it could be the mental and emotional attitude of teachers towards their task that has a direct effect on the enthusiasm, confidence, loyalty and interest displayed in performing their jobs.

The workers morale is known to have the basic requirement for a successful organization (Khalil, 2013). When it is negative, it could lead to complacency and inattention to duties which is detrimental to organizational effectiveness (Barmao, 2012) but when it is positive, it creates conducive and functional work environment and pushes employees towards achieving common goals, they feel good about each other and have a sense of accomplishment. This is moreso when their efforts at work are appreciated and they are consulted in

decision making whereas when morale is threatened by conflict which is not well resolved, there would be distrust, resentment as well as emotional and physical strain on their well-being (Dontigney,2018).

2.1 CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

Conflict is as old as man himself (Khaled &Galal (2015)). The Webster's Dictionary defines conflict as a sharp disagreement or opposition of interest or ideas. According to Balay (2006), conflict refers to incompatible activities, behaviours or actions. It is an important feature of working life because in every work organization, there are individuals with different orientations, background, expectations etc. Therefore, conflict varies from person to person depending on an individual's level of tolerance. While some individuals are easily provoked, others are not hence some people are more prone to conflict than others (Khaled&Galal (2015). Barmao (2013) opines that conflicts which are in form of disagreements between individuals vary from mild disagreement to a win-or-lose, emotion packed confrontation. Since conflict is an important feature of working life, conflict resolution strategies are important for the effective functioning of an organization as well as for personal, cultural and social development of the individual (Balay, 2006; Barmao, 2013).

Causes of conflict in the workplace especially in the school setting are many and varied. According to the Human Resources EngagementReport (2018), poor communication, different values, differing interests, scarce resources, personality clashes and poor performance are some of the causes of conflict. Baimao (2013) identified lack of initiative of head teachers, forced participation in resolving conflicts, poor management styles and head teachers lack of skill in resolving conflict. Others include incompatible goals, differences of values and philosophies over shared resources, pay, condition of service, resistance to change etc (Olu& Dupe, 2013).

Balay (2006) submits that conflicts can be well managed in order to produce harmony and success in an organization. When conflicts are well managed, employees are motivated, their morale boosted and organizational growth is enhanced. Losa-Iglesias and Becerro de Bengoa, (2012) expresses that conflicts are not bad in themselves since they can assist in solving problems, improving effectiveness and strengthening interpersonal relationships at work. However, when conflicts are poorly managed, they can generate more conflict, negatively affecting organizational success.

Edet et al (2017) defined conflict resolution strategies as techniques designed to facilitate conflict resolution by enabling the principal resolve conflict by involving teachers affected by the conflict to change their views, gain from the conflict and be effective in their job performance. Conflict resolution strategies are therefore interventions designed to reduce or settle conflicts. Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016) say they are essential in every organization in developing a problem solving attitude while an ineffective resolution style leaves employees with low morale, decreased productivity, loss of skilled personnel, loss of man hours, absenteeism, lowered employee commitment to work, health challenges due to stress and depression.

Various styles of resolving conflict abound in organizations. According to Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016), compromise as a conflict resolution style enables each party in the conflict situation to surrender certain interests and values in order to make peace. However, the demerit of this style is that the problem may reoccur in another form or situation. Fadipe (2010) and Parker (2012) are of the opinion that this method is suitable when the parties to the conflict are in the same power position. Despite the above mentioned disadvantage, the Human Resource Engagement Report (2018) opine that compromise is one of the most productive ways of addressing conflict since there is no winner or loser.

The competing conflict resolution style is a strategy that enables an individual to firmly pursue his own goals despite the resistance of others (Human Resource Engagement Report, 2018). This style involves a win-lose approach occurring when the other party (probably the manager or executive) acts in an assertive way to achieve his own ends without seeking the consent of other employees. The competing style could prove effective in emergency situations when prompt action is needed. However, it could lower the morale of employees since the other party uses his or her power to decide the outcome of a conflict despite the view of others.

The avoiding style has been described by Huan and Yazdanifard (2012) as a strategy that does not intend to make the conflict go away but rather pushes it underground for it to resurface again. It is evident that people who use this style pretend as if everything is alright. They try to ignore the presence of the conflict.Avoidance simply means to avoid discussing the issue or problem explicitly. Balay (2006) describes it as not openly dealing with or discussing the problem. Conclusively, the work of Dontigney (2018) found that administrators who use competing and avoiding style are more likely to cause high levels of conflict in their schools while the same studies discovered that female teachers use compromising often to resolve their conflicts.

2.2 TEACHERS'MORALE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

It has been established that conflict is inevitable in every human organization most especially in the school setting. Dontigney (2018)report that it is part of a normal working life however, when it occur, it lowers

morale, increases absenteeism and decreases productivity and according to Johansen (2010), managers spend about 25% of their time resolving conflicts at the work place. These conflicts come in various ways and are also handled in diverse manners. Ichan, Nawaz, Akhtar and Abbasi (2014) explain that conflicts occur anytime. That means that there is no definite frequency and time period for their occurrence but are random and continuous in nature, therefore they have strong effect on employee's morale and determine to a great extent their job satisfaction (Losa-Iglesias &Becerro de Bengoa, 2012). Employees need a harmonious working relationship which boosts their morale leading to quality delivery (Montoro-Rodriguez & Small, 2006) and since conflicts arise often to shake this harmony, it is important that teachers and other school administrators find amicable and objective styles of settling them.

2.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The main objective of this study is to examine if the conflict resolution strategies (avoiding, compromising and competing) will determine teachers' morale in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. Specifically, the study aims at:
i)   Determining the combined influence of the conflict resolution strategies on teachers' morale in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State
ii)   Examining the relative influence of avoiding, compromising and competing on teachers' morale in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State
iii)   Assessing if there is any significant difference of the influence of conflict resolution strategies on teacher morale based on school ownership (public and private).

2.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
i)   What is the level of teacher morale in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State?
ii)   Which conflict resolution strategy is mostly utilized by teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area in resolving their disagreements?

2.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS
1.   There is no significant combined influence of conflict resolution strategies (compromising, competing and avoiding) on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State
2.   Compromising will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State
3.   Competing will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State
4.   Avoiding will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State
5.   There is no significant difference on the influence of the conflict resolutions strategies on teachers' morale in private and public schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State.

III. METHODOLOGY
This study adopted the descriptive research design of the Ex-post Facto type becausevariables were not manipulated rather the influence of already existing independent variables(conflict resolution strategies) on the dependent variable (morale) were observed. 250 schoolteachers from both public and private secondary and primary schools in Ikenne LocalGovernment Areaof Ogun State, Nigeria were selected through stratified random samplingmethod as participants.

Conflict was measured using the Conflict Resolution Strategies scale developed by Rahim (1983) which comprised of compromising, competing and avoiding scales. The scalesconsist of 13, 10 and 9 items respectively making a total of 32 items with a 5 point response ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree e.t.c with a reliability index of 0.67 for both private and public workers for competing; compromising has 0.57 and 0.61 while avoiding has 0.74 and 0.69 respectively as reported by Khaled and Galal (2015). Teachers' morale was measured with the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire developed by Rempel and Bentley (1967). The scale was adapted and items relevant to the present study was used making a total of 16 items with four response format ranging from disagree to agree with a reliability coefficient of .96.
The data collected was analysed usingmean, standard deviation, multiple linear regression analysis and t-test while the level of significance was set at 0.05%.

IV. RESULTS
Table 1: Demographic information

S/N			Frequency	%
1	School type	Public	78	31.2
		Private	172	68.8
2	School status	Primary	127	50.8
		Secondary	123	49.2
3	Gender	Male	107	42.8
		Female	143	57.2

Table 1 presents demographic information of the participants. The table shows that 68.8% of the participants were from private school and 31.2% were from public school. About half 50.8% were primary school teachers and 49.2% were secondary school teachers. More than half (57.2%) were females and 42.8% were males.

4.1 Research Question One: What is the level of teachers' morale in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State?

Table 2: The level of Teacher Morale

S/N	Item	A	PA	PD	D	Mean	SD
1	Teaching enables me to make my greatest contributions to society	197(78.8)	38(15.2)	12(4.8)	3(1.2)	3.72	.611
2	I love to teach	180(72)	52(20.8)	11(4.4)	7(2.8)	3.62	.703
3	Teaching gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction	179(71.6)	56(22.4)	5(2.0)	10(4.0)	3.62	.720
4	My students regard me with great respect and seem to have confidence in my professional ability	181(72.4)	50(20)	11(4.4)	8(3.2)	3.62	.720
5	I really enjoy working with my students	178(71.2)	54(21.6)	11(4.4)	7(2.8)	3.61	.704
6	As a teacher, I think I am as competent as most other teachers	183(73.2)	45(18)	8(3.2)	14(5.6)	3.59	.803
7	I enjoy working with student organizations, clubs and societies	169(67.6)	64(25.6)	10(4.0)	7(2.8)	3.58	.703
8	My students appreciate the help I give them with their school work	164(65.6)	69(27.6)	12(4.8)	5(2.0)	3.57	.681
9	I find my contacts with students, for the most part, highly satisfying and rewarding	151(60.4)	83(33.2)	7(2.8)	9(3.6)	3.50	.724
10	I would recommend teaching as an occupation to students of high scholastic ability	156(62.4)	66(26.4)	19(7.6)	9(3.6)	3.48	.787
11	If I could plan my career again, I would choose teaching	154(61.6)	58(23.2)	16(6.4)	22(8.8)	3.38	.946
12	I feel competent and successful in my present position	142(56.8)	69(27.6)	21(8.4)	18(7.2)	3.34	.910
13	To me, there is no more challenging work than	123(49.2)	63(25.2)	19(7.6)	45(18)	3.06	1.136

	teaching							
14	If I could earn as much money in another occupation, I would stop teaching	101(40.4)	57(22.8)	33(13.2)	59(23.6)		2.80	1.202
15	Most of the actions of students irritate me	84(33.6)	58(23.2)	44(17.6)	64(25.6)		2.65	1.191
16	The stress and strain resulting from teaching students make teaching undesirable for me	66(26.4)	65(26)	43(17.2)	76(30.4)		2.48	1.180
	Grand mean						**3.5014**	**0.5183**

Note: Cut-off point=2.5 (A+PA) was used for the purpose of interpretation

Table 2 shows the responses of teachers to questions on morale. As indicated in the Table, the mean for the teacher morale was 3.5 with a standard deviation of .51 indicating an acceptable distribution of responses within the sample. Majority of the teachers agreed that teaching enables them to make their greatest contributions to society ($\bar{X}$ =3.72), they love to teach ($\bar{X}$=3.62), and teaching gives them a great deal of personal satisfaction($\bar{X}$ =3.62) and that their students regard them with great respect and seem to have confidence in their professional ability($\bar{X}$ =3.62). Moreover, most agreed that they really enjoy working with their students($\bar{X}$ =3.61), thought that they were as competent as most other teachers as a teachers ($\bar{X}$ =3.59), enjoyed working with student organizations, clubs and societies($\bar{X}$ =3.58), that their students appreciate the help they gave them with their school work($\bar{X}$ =3.67), found their contacts with students, for the most part, highly satisfying and rewarding($\bar{X}$ =3.50) and would recommend teaching as an occupation to students of high scholastic ability($\bar{X}$ =3.48). Also, most partially agreed that they would choose teachingif they could plan their career again($\bar{X}$ =3.38), felt competent and successful in their present position($\bar{X}$ =3.34), there is no more challenging work than teaching($\bar{X}$ =3.06) and that if they could earn as much money in another occupation. They also partially agreed that they would stop teaching($\bar{X}$ =2.80), most of the actions of students irritate them ($\bar{X}$ =2.65) and that the stress and strain resulting from teaching students make teaching undesirable for them ($\bar{X}$ =2.48). In whole, teachers' morale in Ikenne local government is high (mean=3.5014, SD=.51838).

4. 2.Research Question Two: Which conflict resolution strategy is mostly utilized by teachers in Ikenne LGA?

Table 3: Conflict Resolution Strategies

S/N	Conflict Resolution Strategies	SA F(%)	A F(%)	U F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	Mean	SD
	Competing							
1	I am usually firm in pursuing my goals	104(41.6)	109(43.6)	9(3.6)	13(5.2)	15(6.0)	4.10	1.093
2	I try to win my position	59(23.6)	135(54)	12(4.8)	25(10)	19(7.6)	3.76	1.147
3	I always lean towards a direct discussion of the problem	46(18.4)	110(44)	33(13.2)	46(18.4)	15(6.0)	3.50	1.162
4	I fight for a good outcome for myself.	47(18.8)	104(41.6)	23(9.2)	59(23.6)	17(6.8)	3.42	1.227
5	I attempt to get all concerns and issues immediately out into the open.	38(15.2)	106(42.4)	35(14)	58(23.2)	13(5.2)	3.39	1.150
6	I push my own point of view	19(7.6)	132(52.8)	22(8.8)	64(25.6)	13(5.2)	3.32	1.095
7	I usually insist on my point of view	29(11.6)	119(47.6)	21(8.4)	60(24)	21(8.4)	3.30	1.197
8	I do everything to win.	40(16)	92(36.8)	35(14)	62(24.8)	21(8.4)	3.27	1.235
9	I put forward and	26(10.4)	72(28.8)	22(8.8)	84(33.6)	46(18.4	2.79	1.319

	discuss problems for my own gain.					)		
10	I want to suppress those who oppose me.	32(12.8)	67(26.8)	15(6.0)	77(30.8)	59(23.6)	2.74	1.405
	Mean and SD						**3.36 00**	**.8387**
	Avoiding							
11	I try to avoid creating unpleasantness for myself.	58(23.2)	140(56)	13(5.2)	20(8.0)	19(7.6)	3.79	1.118
12	I can give up some of my claims for the benefit of the group.	40(16)	160(64)	12(4.8)	20(8.0)	18(7.2)	3.74	1.054
13	I try to avoid upsetting my colleagues.	33(13.2)	159(63.6)	17(6.8)	24(9.6)	17(6.8)	3.67	1.044
14	I try to soothe the other person's feelings and preserve our relationship	35(14)	119(47.6)	29(11.6)	43(17.2)	24(9.6)	3.39	1.202
15	I try to please others.	22(8.8)	141(56.4)	14(5.6)	57(22.8)	16(6.4)	3.38	1.121
16	I usually avoid pushing my own point of view.	31(12.4)	120(48)	24(9.6)	50(20)	25(10)	3.33	1.214
17	I try to avoid a confrontation about differences.	22(8.8)	134(53.6)	16(6.4)	57(22.8)	21(8.4)	3.32	1.165
18	I sometimes avoid taking controversial positions regarding an issue.	22(8.8)	122(48.8)	37(14.8)	49(19.6)	20(8.0)	3.31	1.125
19	I usually postpone conflict until I have enough time to think about it.	19(7.6)	114(45.6)	29(11.6)	61(24.4)	27(10.8)	3.15	1.192
	Mean and SD						**3.45 24**	**.6721**
	Compromising							
20	I feel that differences are not always worth worrying about.	56(22.4)	146(58.4)	21(8.4)	20(8.0)	7(2.8)	3.90	.934
21	I try to solve problems with mutual agreement.	29(11.6)	180(72)	21(8.4)	11(4.4)	9(3.6)	3.84	.822
22	In order to make a decision, I would prefer to take into account the ideas	42(16.8)	161(64.4)	15(6.0)	24(9.6)	8(3.2)	3.82	.933

	that others have.							
23	In approaching negotiations, I try to be considerate of the other person's wishes.	29(11.6)	176(70.4)	24(9.6)	9(3.6)	12(4.8)	3.80	.868
24	I consider finding common and acceptable solutions for problems.	36(14.4)	163(65.2)	19(7.6)	10(4.0)	22(8.8)	3.72	1.049
25	I try to reach a common solution in a quarrel.	29(11.6)	169(67.6)	12(4.8)	18(7.2)	22(8.8)	3.66	1.064
26	I usually take into account the approaches of others in problem-solving.	27(10.8)	159(63.6)	25(10)	24(9.6)	15(6.0)	3.64	1.002
27	I try to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us.	20(8.0)	167(66.8)	29(11.6)	17(6.8)	17(6.8)	3.62	.971
28	I strive whenever possible towards a fairly good compromise	26(10.4)	158(63.2)	29(11.6)	20(8.0)	17(6.8)	3.62	1.007
29	I emphasize that I have to come to a compromise	31(12.4)	130(52)	36(14.4)	39(15.6)	14(5.6)	3.50	1.073
30	I insist we both must give up some of our assertions	27(10.8)	145(58)	25(10)	30(12)	23(9.2)	3.49	1.124
31	I prefer to be in agreement with my colleagues in order to please them.	25(10)	132(52.8)	24(9.6)	54(21.6)	15(6.0)	3.39	1.111
32	I try to find a position that is intermediate between my position and that of the other person.	14(5.6)	149(59.6)	28(11.2)	32(12.8)	27(10.8)	3.36	1.119
	Mean and SD						**3.64 40**	**.6686**
	Grand mean and SD						**3.35 00**	**.4267**

Note: Cut-off point=3.5 (SA+A) was used for the purpose of interpretation

Table 3 shows the responses of teachers to questions on conflict resolution strategies. As indicated in the Table, the mean for the conflict resolution strategieswas 3.35 with a standard deviation of .42 indicating an acceptable distribution of responses within the sample. In terms of competing, Table 4.3 shows that majority of the participants agreed that they were usually firm in pursuing their goals ($\bar{X}$ =4.10), tried to win their position ($\bar{X}$ =3.76), always leaned towards a direct discussion of the problem ($\bar{X}$ =3.50). Moreover, majority were undecided about whether they fought for a good outcome for themselves($\bar{X}$ =3.42), attempted to get all concerns and issues immediately out into the open($\bar{X}$ =3.39), pushed their own point of view ($\bar{X}$ =3.32), usually insisted on their point of view ($\bar{X}$ =3.30), did everything to win($\bar{X}$ =3.27), put forward and discussed problems for their

own gain ($\bar{X}$ =2.79) and whether they wanted to suppress those who oppose them($\bar{X}$ =2.74).In whole, competing was not highly utilized as a conflict resolution strategy among teachers in Ikenne local government (mean=3.3600, SD=.83877).

In terms of avoiding, teachers agreed that they tried to avoid creating unpleasantness for themselves ($\bar{X}$ =3.79), could give up some of their claims for the benefit of the group($\bar{X}$ =3.74), tried to avoid upsetting their colleagues($\bar{X}$ =3.67). Also, most of the teachers were undecided about whether theytried to soothe the other person's feelings and preserve their relationship($\bar{X}$ =3.39), tried to please others($\bar{X}$ =3.38), usually avoid pushing their own point of view($\bar{X}$ =3.33), tried to avoid a confrontation about differences($\bar{X}$ =3.32), sometimes avoid taking controversial positions regarding an issue($\bar{X}$ =3.31) and usually postpone conflict until they have enough time to think about it($\bar{X}$ =3.15). In whole, avoiding was not highly utilized as a conflict resolution strategy among teachers in Ikenne local government (mean=3.4524, SD=.67210).

On compromising, teachers agreed that they felt that differences were not always worth worrying about ($\bar{X}$ =3.90), tried to solve problems with mutual agreement ($\bar{X}$ =3.84), would prefer to take into account the ideas that others have, in order to make a decision ($\bar{X}$ =3.82), tried to be considerate of the other person's wishes, in approaching negotiations($\bar{X}$ =3.80), considered finding common and acceptable solutions for problems($\bar{X}$ =3.72), tried to reach a common solution in a quarrel ($\bar{X}$ =3.66), usually took into account the approaches of others in problem-solving ($\bar{X}$ =3.64), tried to find a fair combination of gains and losses for both of us ($\bar{X}$ =3.62), strived whenever possible towards a fairly good compromise ($\bar{X}$ =3.62), emphasized that they had to come to a compromise ($\bar{X}$ =3.62) and insisted they both must give up some of their assertions ($\bar{X}$ =3.49). Furthermore, most teachers were undecided about whether they preferred to be in agreement with their colleagues in order to please them ($\bar{X}$ =3.39) and found a position that is intermediate between their position and that of the other person ($\bar{X}$ =3.36).

In the whole, compromising was highly utilized as a conflict resolution strategy among teachers in Ikenne local government (mean=3.6440, SD=.66862).

4.3 TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS
4.3.1 Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of conflict resolution strategies (compromising, competing and avoiding) on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. This was tested using multiple linear regression analysis and the result is displayed on Table 4.

Table 4: A summary of linear regression analysis showing the influence of conflict resolution strategies (compromising, competing and avoiding) on teachers' morale

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	2.089	.244			
conflict resolution strategies	.422	.072	.347	5.830	.000

R =.347, R² =.121, **Adj. R² =.117, F(1,248)=33.984**

Table 4 showed the influence of conflict resolution strategies on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. The results in the table showed that conflict resolution strategies hadsignificant influence on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State ($F(1,248)=33.984$, $p<.05$). This implies that conflict resolution strategies were predictive of higher level of teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State (β =.347, $p<.05$).
Furthermore, the results revealed that conflict resolution strategies contributed 12.1% to the teachers' morale (R^2 = 0.121, P<.05). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant influence of conflict resolution strategies (compromising, competing and avoiding) on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun Stateis rejected.

4.3.2 Hypothesis Two: Compromising will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. This was tested using multiple linear regression analysis and the result is displayed on Table 5.

Table 5: A summary of linear regression analysis showing the influence of compromising on teachers' morale

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	1.413	.123			
Compromising	.573	.033	.739	17.276	.000

R =.739, R² =.546, **Adj. *R² =.544*, *F(1,248)=298.464***

Table 4 showed the influence of compromising on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. The results in the Table showed that compromising had a significant influence on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State $(F(1,248)=298.464, p<.05)$. This implies that compromising was predictive of higher level of teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State $(\beta =.739, p<.05)$.

Furthermore, the results revealed that compromising contributed 54.6% to the variance in teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State $(R^2 = 0.546, P<.05)$. Therefore, the hypothesis that compromising will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State is rejected.

4.3.3   Hypothesis Three: Competing will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. This was tested using multiple linear regression analysis and the result is displayed on Table 6.

Table 6: A summary of linear regression analysis showing the influence of Competing on teachers' morale

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	1.964	.091			
Competing	.457	.026	.740	17.337	.000

R =.654, R² =.428, **Adj. *R² =.425*, *F(1,248)=185.321***

Table 6 showed the influence of **competing** on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. The results in the Table showed that **Competing** was a significant predictor of teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State $(F(1,248)=185.321, p<.05)$. This implies that competing was predictive of higher level of teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State $(\beta =.654, p<.05)$.

Furthermore, the results revealed that competing contributed 65.4% to the variance in teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State $(R^2 = 0.654, P<.05)$. Therefore, the hypothesis that competing will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State is rejected.

4.3.4 Hypothesis Four: Avoiding will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. This was tested using multiple linear regression analysis and the result is displayed on Table 7.

Table 7: A summary of linear regression analysis showing the influence of avoiding on teachers' morale

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	Sig
(Constant)	1.964	.091			
Avoiding	.457	.026	.740	17.337	.000

R =.740, R² =.548, **Adj. *R² =.546*, *F(1,248)=300.557***

Table 7 showed the influence of avoiding on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. The results in the Table showed that avoiding had a significant influence on teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State $(F(1,248)=300.557, p<.05)$. This implies that avoiding is predictive of teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun $(\beta =.740, p<.05)$.

Furthermore, the results revealed that avoidingcontributed54.8% to the variance in teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State ($R^2 = 0.548$, P<.05). Therefore, the hypothesis that avoiding will not significantly influence teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun Stateis rejected.

4.3.5   Hypothesis Five: There is no significant difference between private and public schools based on conflict resolutions strategies and teachers' morale in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. This was tested using T-test and the result is presented in table 8.

Table 8: T-Test Summary showing Mean Difference between private and public schools based on conflict resolutions strategies and teachers' morale

Dependent Variable	School type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	Mean Diff.	T	Sig.	Remark
Conflict resolutions strategies	Private	78	3.3934	.43256	248	.06312	1.076	.463	Not significant
	Public	172	3.3303	.42387					
Teachers' morale	Private	78	3.4868	.47389	248	-.02122	.314	.459	Not significant
	Public	172	3.5080	.53854					

As the result in Table 8 showed, significant difference does not exist between private and public schools in conflict resolution strategies and teachers' morale with means 3.3934 and 3.3303 and 3.4868 and 3.5080 for private and public schools respectively. An independentt-test showed that the difference between the two groups was not significant (t= 1.076, df=248, t=.314, df=248, p>.05).

V. DISCUSSION

The study investigated the influence of conflict resolution strategies on teachers' morale in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Hypothesis one investigated the combined influence of conflict resolution strategies on teachers' morale in the selected schools. The findings of this analysis showed that conflict resolution strategies made significant contribution to teachers' morale. This finding is similar to that of Hosseinpour and Pahlevani (2016) which agreed that avoiding, compromising and competing conflict resolution strategies have significant relationship with organizational health. This is true since morale is one of the components of organizational health.   This study also supports that of Montoro-Rodriguez and Small (2006) which found that nurses psychological morale are influenced by conflict resolution strategies used by their hospital. Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016) in their studies found a significant relationship between conflict resolution styles and employee morale as well as Olu and Dupe (2013). On the contrary, Muhammad and Mana (2013) and Henry (2009) did not see any contribution of conflict resolution strategies on employee morale. The implication of this result is that in every human setting, disagreement must arise and how they are resolved will definitely affect the mood and emotion of workers thereby determining their countenance as well as morale which impacts on their performance. The school setting is composed of teachers, administrators and students from different cultural background, ages and religion and the style used in settling disputes must definitely affect their level of satisfaction with their jobs as well as their morale.

Hypothesis two was rejected implying that compromising was predictive of teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State.This means that compromising influenced the morale of teachers in Ikenne with a variance of 54.6%. Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016); Losa-Iglesias and Becenode-Benoga (2012); Hosseinpour and Pahlevani (2016) all had similar results in their different studies whereas Akuffo (2015) discovered a relationship between compromising and workers counter productive work behaviour but the relationship was positive implying that the use of compromising leads to an increase in employees counter productive work behaviour which is an outcome of lowered employee morale.In this study however, compromising contributed least (54.6%) to teachers' morale even though it appeared to be the style mostly utilized by teachers to settle their differences. In a study conducted by Kassim and Ibrahim (2014), compromising was also mostly used by employees. This is not surprising as the result of analysis on the level of teachers morale in Ikenne showed clearly a high level. Compromising therefore, has been found to contribute more to employee commitment and satisfaction since it seems to foster a more cooperative and prolonged relationships among teachers leading to high morale.

The result of analysis of hypothesis three revealed that competingwas a significant predictor of teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. The results revealed that competing ccontributed highest (65.4%) to the variance in teachers' morale even though it is the least utilized

style among teachers in Ikenne. This means that the use of competing as a conflict resolution style significantly affects the morale of teachers to a greater extent in Ikenne hence care should be employed in the use of competing since it has much to do with the teachers morale bearing in mind that competing as a style does not have concern for the other party in conflict which may lower morale and when morale is low, the teacher may not be effective on his/her job, neither will he or she be able to contribute happily towards achievement of the goals of the school. Studies with similar results are Losa-Iglesias and Beceno de Benoga (2012); Hosseinpour and Pahlevani (2016). Contrarily, Ndulue and Ekechukwu (2016) discovered that competing contributed positively to employee performance in terms of improvement on their morale while Kassim and Ibrahim (2016) found a negative but significant relationship between competing and employee morale.

Additionally, the rejection of hypothesis four indicates a significant influence of avoiding on the teachers' morale in selected schools in Ikenne Local Government Area, Ogun State. Of the three conflict resolution styles studied, avoiding ranked second with a variance of 54.8% on its contribution to teachers' morale.This agrees with Johansen (2010) who saw avoiding as a strong predictor of teacher morale. Since avoiding is a strong predictor of the level of morale among teachers in Ikenne and since research has shown that avoiding as a style is related to ineffective management which leads to refusal and low morale among employees, teachers should not be encouraged to use this style. In like manner, Kassim and Ibrahim (2016) found avoiding having a negative relationship with morale in their studies. Akuffo (2015)'s findings deviates from the above mentioned as it found that avoiding had a negative contribution to counter productive work behaviour implying that the more workers use avoiding style to resolve conflict the less they are likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviour and since it is assumed that workers with high morale do not engage in behaviours that would mar organizational success, it then means that when workers neglect the conflict and do nothing about them, with time the disagreement will die off and employees will be less likely to have lowered morale or engage in negative behaviours.

Finally, hypothesis five was accepted and it was concluded that a significant difference does not exist between private and public schools in conflict resolution strategies and teachers' morale. This outcome is not surprising as unresolved conflict may affect employees' satisfaction, loyalty and morale in any given organization be it public or private (Huam & Yuzdanifard, 2012). This then implies that no matter the school ownership, conflict and the strategy used to resolve them influence teachers morale in Ikenne in the same way.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION
The findings revealed that conflict resolution strategies influences the morale of teachers in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. Specifically, competing influenced their morale most while theyuse compromising as a conflict resolution tool more often than competing and avoiding. The study recommends that teachers in this study area should keep on using compromising as a conflict resolution strategy since its use has really contributed to a high level of moral amongst them.

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