



EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF PARENT-TEACHER CONFLICT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study investigates the educational management of parent-teacher conflict in selected secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. It explores the causes of conflict, the strategies adopted by school authorities, and how educational management practices influence conflict resolution. The study employed a survey design, targeting principals, vice principals, teachers, and parents from three schools: Lily Pinnacle Secondary School, Kings High School, and Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School during their PTA meetings. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data, which was analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with a 2.5 cut-off mark. The findings reveal that communication gaps, disagreement over disciplinary methods, and lack of inclusive decision-making are key sources of conflict. Although schools rely on PTA meetings and open-door policies to manage conflicts, there is a notable absence of structured mechanisms such as mediation committees and staff training. The study concludes that transparent, participatory educational management practices can significantly reduce parent-teacher tensions. It recommends improved communication, policy reforms, and the institutionalization of conflict resolution frameworks. The research highlights the critical role of inclusive leadership in fostering school harmony and improving educational outcomes.

Introduction

The smooth functioning of secondary schools depends heavily on collaborative partnerships among key stakeholders—especially parents and teachers. When these relationships are

harmonious, they enhance school climate, student performance, and general administrative effectiveness. However, in many Nigerian secondary schools, parent-teacher interactions are often marked by tension, misunderstanding,

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and conflict. These conflicts, if not adequately managed, can undermine the goals of educational institutions and affect students' well-being and academic progress (Nwokeocha, 2021).

Parent-teacher conflict arises from various sources, including poor communication, lack of transparency in decision-making, differing expectations regarding student discipline and performance, and limited parental involvement in school governance (Ofoegbu & Ede, 2022). Educational managers, particularly principals and vice principals, are expected to serve as mediators and facilitators of stakeholder relationships. Their ability to resolve conflicts effectively reflects the quality of leadership in the school and determines the overall organizational climate (Abah & Ogbonnaya, 2021).

In recent years, the increasing autonomy granted to school principals in Nigeria has also placed greater responsibility on their ability to manage both internal and external conflicts. This has led to the need for more strategic approaches to conflict management, rooted in participatory leadership, emotional intelligence, and stakeholder inclusion (Onukwube, 2023). PTA meetings have become crucial spaces where tensions either escalate or are diffused depending on how school management approaches issues raised.

Furthermore, the decentralization of educational governance in Nigeria has intensified the roles of school managers in engaging parents directly. This shift has created a gap in professional

training, as many teachers and administrators lack formal knowledge in conflict resolution and communication dynamics (Okolie & Agbo, 2024). Consequently, many parent-teacher interactions become reactive rather than proactive, with schools often addressing problems only after they escalate.

Research in educational administration has shown that conflicts are not inherently destructive; rather, when properly managed, they can foster growth, innovation, and stronger relationships (Adebayo & Umeh, 2023). The role of educational management, therefore, is not merely to suppress conflict but to channel it constructively. Principals, teachers, and PTA executives must embrace collaborative strategies such as mediation, consensus-building, and transparency in communication (Ike & Onwuka, 2022).

Moreover, contemporary scholars argue for a shift from authoritarian school leadership models to participatory and democratic styles, especially when dealing with parents and guardians. Involving parents in school policy development, academic planning, and discipline structures helps reduce the risk of misunderstanding and resentment (Ubah & Nnadi, 2021). This is in tandem with global trends in educational leadership, where it is recommended that the school be governed inclusively to pursue sustainable development.

Within Enugu State whereby different school systems around are run by individuals (private schools) or the schools that are run under a faith-



based system (Lily Pinnacle, Kings High School, and Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School, etc), the management of parent-teacher conflict is an important issue. Such schools usually vary in the organization of policies. However, each of them still leans on the regular involvement of PTA to ensure the alignment of the expectations of parents with the objectives of the school (Madu & Iloh, 2025). The conflicts can be used to master the comparative analysis of conflict dynamics and practices of conflict management due to this variety.

It is therefore a study on the education management of parent-teacher conflicts in the major secondary schools in Enugu State. It aims to capture the views of principals, vice principals, teachers, and parents on the causes, the means of managing, and the effects of such conflicts. Having established areas of improvement and good practice in established measures, areas of intervention shall be provided in the proposed study that aims to provide readings to the stakeholders involved in schooling on how to improve cooperation and conflict management in schools.

Finally, the study will add to the existing world of knowledge about school governance, especially in the African context, where school problems are usually aggravated by social and cultural, and systemic issues. Based on the data retrieved during PTA meetings, this paper sheds some light on how conflict can be converted into a model of turbulence and a basis of positive change in education.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in Enugu State, the relationship between parents and teachers is increasingly strained by recurring conflicts over school fees, student discipline, academic performance, and administrative decisions. These disagreements often surface during PTA meetings, where tensions sometimes escalate due to poor communication, lack of trust, and perceived authoritarianism from school authorities. Despite the critical role that parent-teacher partnerships play in promoting effective learning environments, unresolved conflicts continue to erode mutual respect and stakeholder collaboration. While school principals and vice principals are expected to manage these challenges, there is limited empirical evidence on how educational management structures address parent-teacher conflict in practice. Moreover, many teachers and administrators operate without formal training in conflict resolution or inclusive stakeholder engagement. This gap poses a threat to sustainable school development, especially in privately managed institutions with diverse parental populations. There is therefore an urgent need to assess the nature, causes, and management strategies of parent-teacher conflict from a multi-stakeholder perspective, and to propose workable solutions for effective educational governance.



Research Objectives

1. To identify the major causes of parent-teacher conflict in selected secondary schools in Enugu State.
2. To examine the strategies adopted by school principals and teachers in managing parent-teacher conflict.
3. To evaluate the impact of educational management practices on the resolution and prevention of parent-teacher conflict.

Research Questions

1. What are the major causes of parent-teacher conflict in the selected secondary schools?
2. What strategies are adopted by principals and teachers in managing parent-teacher conflict?
3. How do educational management practices influence the resolution and prevention of parent-teacher conflict?

Parent-Teacher Relationships in Secondary Schools

Parent-teacher relationships are foundational to effective educational delivery in secondary schools. These relationships serve as conduits through which academic expectations, discipline strategies, and student progress are aligned between the home and the school. Scholars assert that when teachers and parents communicate regularly and transparently, student outcomes are positively affected (Owolabi & Eze, 2021). The importance of building trust and mutual respect in these relationships cannot be overstated, as trust reduces tension and promotes collaborative

decision-making. In contexts where parents feel excluded from school decisions, especially those involving their children, conflicts are more likely to occur.

Effective parent-teacher relationships are rooted in consistent communication, mutual understanding, and shared values concerning student welfare. However, studies reveal that the majority of the secondary schools in Nigeria do not have formal arrangements that can support such collaboration (Okoye & Adebimpe, 2023). The joint planning and engagement activities are not institutionalized like many schools limit parent participation to these periodic PTA meetings. Such an intermittent relationship tends to curtail the knowledge that parents have of the current school policies as well as teacher expectations. The outcome is that there is a lack of connection leading to suspicion and the misinterpretation particularly where school actions are seen to be one-sided.

Besides, parental expectations in the operations of the school may also be influenced by the socioeconomic status and/or the cultural background of parents, which creates some tension where teachers do not acknowledge or even accommodate such differences. As an example, some parents think they can receive special treatment for their wards because they pay a high fee whereas other parents consider teachers as government employees who are obligated to follow their request (Chukwuemeka & Tella, 2022). In such situations, teachers may perceive these attitudes as disrespectful or



intrusive. This clash of perspectives is often left unaddressed, culminating in friction that could have been avoided through structured dialogue. Teachers also contribute to strained relationships when they communicate with parents only in crisis situations, such as disciplinary issues or poor performance. Scholars like Ede and Nwankwo (2021) emphasize the need for proactive engagement, where both positive feedback and constructive concerns are regularly shared. Parents tend to be more supportive when they feel informed and respected. Schools that adopt platforms for continuous communication, such as newsletters, digital apps, or parent-teacher forums, report fewer cases of parent hostility or misinformation. Additionally, the authority structure in many Nigerian schools remains largely hierarchical, with teachers assuming dominant roles in school-parent interactions. This limits the ability of parents to contribute meaningfully to their children's education beyond payment of fees and occasional volunteering (Ogunleye & Obasi, 2024). In contrast, modern educational practices advocate for shared responsibility, where teachers act as facilitators of parent involvement rather than gatekeepers. When parents are empowered to participate actively in school life, they feel more invested and cooperative. Another dimension is the emotional labor involved in maintaining healthy parent-teacher interactions. The workload associated with continuing administrations, large numbers of students, and the rigorous nature of the job

typically makes teachers too busy and exhausted to spend their time communicating with parents in a specific fashion (Iwu & Ekene, 2022). Alternatively, parents dealing with economic and domestic strains can interpret the outreach by teachers as unresponsive or insufficient. Such emotional strains add to the already unsound systems and cause tension to build up in relationships that turn into conflict.

Gender also plays a role in the relationship between teachers and parents because female teachers and mothers tend to be socialized according to being assigned the care of relationships. This may result in uneven emotional requirements where female employees are supposed to fix a misunderstanding situation or cheer up depressed parents with no effort (Nduka & Uche, 2023). Not only does this informal system of allocation of roles burden the women in the profession, but it also creates a gap in the official, policy-based system of engagement. In this way, communication and parental involvement training in gender sensitivity has to be an important accessory to educational management.

Finally, there are religious and cultural interests that tend to define the levels of parent-teacher relationships in faith-based educational facilities. In such places as the Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School, as an example, some staff may have one well-defined set of expectations in terms of discipline and moral instruction whilst others have quite different



expectations, namely parents. According to a study by Uzoho and Ejike (2025), in case disciplinary measures are justified by the sole use of the religious authority used by the school, parents might disobey such measures and refuse them as long as they do not coincide with the attitude of the parents. Such a dialogic, pluralistic school governance, therefore, plays a vital role in reinforcing such relationships.

Conflict in Educational Settings

Conflict is an inevitable feature of any social institution, and schools are no exception. In educational settings, conflict arises from differences in values, goals, communication styles, and power dynamics among stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, and administrators. According to Nwachukwu and Fadeyi (2022), conflict in schools can be both constructive and destructive depending on how it is managed. Constructive conflict encourages dialogue, exposes hidden issues, and often leads to improved systems. However, unresolved or poorly managed conflict results in tension, reduced morale, and impaired school performance.

In secondary schools, one of the most frequent sources of conflict is the mismatch between parental expectations and school policies. Many parents believe that their financial commitment to the school entitles them to a significant say in administrative decisions, which can clash with teachers' professional autonomy (Okafor & Sunday, 2023). On the other hand, some teachers perceive parental interference as

disruptive, especially when it questions their authority or discipline procedures. These tensions are often exacerbated by a lack of institutional guidelines on how and when parents should be involved in school decision-making. Consequently, the absence of clearly defined roles breeds misunderstanding and hostility.

Another prevalent source of conflict is the communication gap between home and school. Miscommunication or non-communication can lead to misinterpretation of school actions or student behavior. A study by Akubue and Ilodibe (2021) revealed that over 60% of parent-teacher disputes in southeastern Nigeria arose from poor communication or delayed feedback regarding students' academic or disciplinary issues. These lapses make parents feel sidelined or deceived, while teachers often defend their silence as a means of avoiding unnecessary confrontation. This cyclical misunderstanding leads to strained relationships and growing distrust.

Structural conflicts are also a concern in educational institutions, particularly those related to organizational hierarchy. Teachers may feel unsupported by school leadership when parents complain directly to principals without first discussing issues with them (Ononogbu & Chidiebere, 2024). Similarly, vice principals and administrative staff may feel undermined when principals bypass them in resolving external conflicts. This internal imbalance affects the cohesion of the management team and weakens the school's capacity to handle conflict



holistically. Effective educational leadership should ensure that all parties are respected and involved in the conflict resolution process.

Student-related issues also generate significant conflict between parents and teachers. Disagreements about disciplinary actions, academic placement, or special education needs often spark heated confrontations. According to Udeh and Nwosu (2023), emotional attachment to children makes some parents overly protective, especially when they perceive any form of correction as punishment. Teachers, however, view discipline as a necessary component of child development and classroom control. These opposing viewpoints frequently clash during PTA meetings or private consultations, escalating into interpersonal tension if not handled with empathy and care.

Cultural expectations can also fuel conflict in Nigerian schools. For instance, some parents expect their cultural values—such as respect for elders or traditional gender roles—to be enforced within the school, while teachers working in diverse environments may prioritize modern pedagogical practices. This cultural dissonance is particularly visible in multi-ethnic schools like Kings High School, where teachers and parents may differ on what constitutes acceptable student behavior (Ikenna & Diala, 2025). If left unchecked, these cultural mismatches can influence teacher-parent perceptions and provoke latent conflict.

Power imbalance is another underlying factor in school-based conflicts. In many cases, teachers

and school administrators occupy positions of authority and make unilateral decisions affecting students and parents. Parents, particularly those with less formal education, may feel disempowered and reluctant to voice concerns. As highlighted by Ekpe and Yusuf (2021), such silent tension may erupt in confrontational ways during PTA meetings or crises. This situation necessitates the development of democratic structures within schools where dialogue and shared decision-making become institutional norms rather than exceptions.

Finally, unresolved conflicts tend to create ripple effects throughout the school community. Not only do they affect teacher morale and parent trust, but they also shape students' attitudes toward education. Children are observant of adult interactions and may internalize conflictual patterns in their own behavior. Schools must therefore prioritize conflict resolution mechanisms that promote peace, respect, and accountability. Educational managers who invest in staff training, parent sensitization, and open communication channels stand a better chance of creating a conflict-resilient school culture (Amadi & Ifeanyi, 2024).

Educational Governance and Stakeholder Engagement

Educational governance refers to the structures, processes, and relationships through which decisions are made, implemented, and monitored in school settings. It encompasses leadership practices, stakeholder roles, accountability mechanisms, and institutional



cultures that guide how schools are managed. Stakeholder engagement, in this context, refers to the involvement of parents, teachers, students, and community members in shaping school policies and operations. According to Ogbodo and Umeh (2023), inclusive governance ensures that all stakeholders feel heard and valued, reducing the potential for conflict and fostering ownership of school outcomes. Governance that excludes stakeholders breeds apathy, resistance, and interpersonal strain.

In most of the Nigerian secondary schools, there is a complete top-down type of governance whereby decision making does not involve much of the teachers or parents but the principal and the proprietor of the school. The hierarchical style is likely to place the opinions of the most important stakeholders, including parents, on the periphery as well since their interests are frequently viewed as extrinsic and not a part of school operations (Afolayan & Ezenwa, 2022). Teachers can also be sidelined in circumstances when decisions are made by the administration without consulting them. Consequently, schools turn out to be authoritarian, and such dissent is not addressed constructively. This creates a culture of silence, loss of trust, and development of antagonism.

The most frequent organizational form of parent participation is the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) which is also expected to be a consultative and decision-making organ. Nonetheless, the research reveals that in numerous schools, the functions of PTA are

turned solely to mobilization of financial resources and support in terms of logistics, and there is negligible opportunity for communicating with each other or creating a policy (Nwankwo & Opara, 2021). This hinders the flexibility of parents to discuss meaningful issues on the curriculum selections, disciplinary action, or even improvement programs. Parents tend to use aggressive strategies when their voices have not been heard to show their disapproval, particularly, when they meet in PTA activities.

Conversely, there is also a possibility of the parents getting it wrong with their roles in school governance. Although the implication of stakeholders is highly important, it has to be tempered with the professional considerations that will enable educators to work within a sphere of autonomy and competence. Adedoyin and Ogu (2024) have pointed out that there are such parents who overstep their boundaries, trying to influence some decisions in academics or disciplines that recognize their wards. Such has been an invasion, especially in the private schools where parents who are clients of a school may also be parenting their children thus they have a feeling of invading the teachers who feel undermined or disrespected. The governance structures should consequently spell out what is expected of stakeholders in their roles.

The question of transparency is the focal point of educational governance and stakeholder involvement. The conflict can emerge when parents feel that school management cannot be



understood or is cavalier. According to Uchenna and Bassey (2022), in a study of 25 secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria, inaccessibility to financial accounts, unjustified policy decisions, and poor understanding of the communication process were some of the main factors that led to parent distrust. Other factors exacerbating tensions reported by teachers included inconsistent behavior of leadership and favoritism. These results are evidence of the necessity of transparent practices and open lines of communication between all actors in schools. Cultural and institutional influences also determine how stakeholder involvement in educational governance is influenced. In certain schools, especially the faith-based ones, the peculiarities of the administration grounded in religious values are present. This has the potential to build a feeling of collective moral vision but it can also make parents in diverse religious or cultural backgrounds feel left out or misrepresented (Ifeanyi & Bature, 2025). Governance structures need to thus consider diversity and establish inclusive mediums through which everyone is permitted to put their contributions without fear of bias or discrimination.

Teacher voice in governance is another critical but under-discussed area. While school heads are formally responsible for leadership, teachers are often the ones who engage directly with parents and students on a daily basis. Excluding teachers from governance decisions not only weakens policy implementation but also fuels

resentment, especially when they are left to enforce rules they did not help formulate (Ekene & Momoh, 2023). When teachers participate in governance, they develop a greater sense of accountability and are more likely to engage parents constructively.

Finally, the role of communication in governance cannot be overstated. Regular and structured communication ensures that all parties are informed and aligned with school goals. In the absence of consistent dialogue, assumptions and rumors can quickly escalate into conflict. Schools that institutionalize communication—through newsletters, online platforms, or joint meetings—experience fewer governance breakdowns and higher stakeholder satisfaction (Adegbite & Chikere, 2024). Thus, stakeholder engagement, when anchored in inclusive and transparent governance, becomes a proactive mechanism for conflict prevention rather than a reactive tool for damage control.

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory offers a compelling lens through which to examine the educational management of parent-teacher conflict. At its core, the theory posits that an organization functions most effectively when it acknowledges and responds to the needs, interests, and concerns of all its stakeholders—not just its primary agents or leadership (Freeman, as cited in Okoye & Alade, 2021). In the context of secondary education, stakeholders include teachers, students, parents, school



administrators, and the wider community. The theory challenges the traditional top-down model of school governance by advocating for shared responsibility and inclusive decision-making. This makes it highly relevant to conflict situations where certain groups—such as parents—feel marginalized or unheard.

Within schools, the stakeholder theory emphasizes the need to acknowledge the fact that parents are not just sources of finances and spectators in the learning process of their children, and they are also stakeholders in the process of their education. The nature of this role is normally compromised when transactional interactions are the basis of the PTA meetings. Having parents viewed as true stakeholders of school development and being involved in the dialogue process means that misunderstandings are less likely to occur (Chukwu & Amadi, 2022). The same applies to educators who feel they are powerless or not part of the governance system; they might have low morale or not be cooperative with the administrative decisions. Through stakeholder theory, fair participation is therefore encouraged whereby all parties are significantly involved in running the schools as well as resolving conflicts.

Moreover, according to the stakeholder theory, educational leaders must consider ethical principles of how to balance conflicts of interest fairly and openly. Vice principals and principals need to perform the role of a decision-maker as well as a mediator who initiates the formulation of dialogue between different actors with

different expectations. Its implication is on educational settings accepting stakeholder-informed practices, which, as Obasi and Ikechukwu (2023) assume, is likely to introduce a climate of trust and cooperation. This is especially relevant in countries that experience conflicts frequently and their stakeholders might have different cultural or religious affiliations or socioeconomic status. Solving the conflicts in a way that involves open communication and participatory governance will ensure that schools can produce long-term stakeholder loyalty and social cohesion.

Moreover, as part of the theory, primary and secondary stakeholders can be identified and analyzed. When dealing with parent-teacher conflict, both those who are the primary stakeholders (teachers, parents) are directly involved in the conflict, whereas other stakeholders (students, school board members, education authorities) are rather the second-hand victims. Understanding this chain of command is beneficial in anticipating the fallout of left unattended conflicts and the importance of preventing conflicts early on, as school administrators. According to Eze and Ugwueze (2024), when schools align their policies to the priorities of the stakeholders, it becomes less common to have situations with confrontation, the level of communication increases, and the results of the students improve.

After all, stakeholder theory is a diagnostic and prescriptive theory. It enables the diagnostics of the origin of parent-teacher conflict on the gaps



in governance and its disregard of stakeholders. Prescriptively, it promotes inclusive management practices whereby great emphasis is given to listening, mutual respect, and participatory structures. When transposed onto this study, the theory is appropriate in justifying the exploration of the role perceptions of principals, vice principals, teachers, and parents respectively, and how their interactions can be modulated to minimise the friction and establish a consensus. It is also consistent with the notion that handling drama in education is not merely about dampening out the drama but that by isolating various viewpoints, the creation of a healthier school society will occur.

Empirical Review

Okonkwo and Ibe (2019) conducted a study on conflict management approaches in the context of school administrators of 15 public secondary schools in Anambra State. Through survey design and structured questionnaires given to principals and teachers, the research findings indicated that the majority of the issues experienced between parents and the school were in disciplinary measures and fee regulations. It was discovered that schools where there were regular interactions with the parents and where the community forums were held encountered fewer challenges. The authors focused on the necessity of professional conflict resolution development of educational managers. Their results highlight the significance of prior inclusion of stakeholders

particularly when it comes to implementing school policy.

Adeyemi and Yusuf (2021) conducted a more recent study, which focused on understanding how educational leadership is involved in regulating parent-teacher conflict in Lagos secondary schools. By conducting interviews and focus group discussions with 20 school heads and 40 parents, the researchers found out that authoritarian leadership and the absence of transparency were the key areas that raised the issue of conflict. In the study, it was observed that the rate of conflict decreased drastically where there was inclusive governance when the school leaders had to receive input from parents in the case of disciplinary measures. This study confirms the correlation between leadership style and stakeholder perception within the environment of school settings and justifies the democratic models of conflict alleviation.

Nwachukwu and Ezeani (2022) carried out the research to identify the contributions of parental involvement to harmonization in schools in Ebonyi State using a quantitative research design. The research ran through a questionnaire that was distributed to 150 educators and 100 parents in 10 schools. The scholars found out that an increased degree of systematic parental association- e.g. joint workshops and planning regularly- was associated with a reduced frequency of manifest open conflict. But they also discovered that a lot of schools did not have any structures to organize this engagement, so there were ad-hoc reactive approaches to conflict. This



study shows the importance of institutionalizing the policies of engaging stakeholders in the management of schools.

Between the two elements of the staffing aspect of internal school and holistic characteristics, Bello and Ibrahim (2023) examined the concept of communication gaps as one cause of conflict within secondary schools in the northern part of Nigeria in their cross-sectional study. Their case study relied on the results of 300 survey participants (teachers and parents) and helped them uncover the fact that miscommunication or lack of communication (in case of either performance results or disciplinary action) frequently caused conflict. The evidence implied that schools using digital communication systems had minimal incidences of misunderstanding. The authors advised developing the capacity building of teachers in parent relations and communication. This piece of empirical work can be related to the current study because it suggests real-life concerns that can be addressed with scalable interventions that can be taken up in various school settings and environments.

Lastly, Uzoho and Nnadi (2024) researched stakeholder perception of the quality of governance in faith-based schools in southeastern Nigeria inclusive of Enugu state. Through the combination of methods, i.e., surveys, interviews, and document analysis, the researchers were able to identify that disputes were more common in those schools with high centralization of governance where parents were

not much involved in the decision-making process. An important aspect that was stressed in the study was that inclusive structures, i.e., PTA sub-committees and parent consultation units, enhanced the relational trust to a great extent. The theoretical assumption that the incorporation of stakeholders minimizes conflict and enhances accountability in the institution can be considered in support of the given work.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is appropriate for collecting and analyzing the views of a defined population on a specific social phenomenon—in this case, the management of parent-teacher conflict in secondary schools. The survey design enabled the researcher to gather data from a wide array of stakeholders including school principals, vice principals, teachers, and parents. The design was suitable for establishing patterns in perceptions and practices related to conflict and governance within school settings.

The population of the study comprised all principals, vice principals, teachers, and parents involved in the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) meetings of three selected secondary schools in Enugu State: Lily Pinnacle Secondary School, Kings High School, and Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School. These schools were purposively selected due to their diverse administrative structures (private, faith-based, and mission-run) and the regularity of their PTA engagements, which provided access to both educators and parents in the same setting.



The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher and validated by experts in educational management. The questionnaire included items covering the causes of parent-teacher conflict, current management practices by school authorities, and the perceived impact of educational governance on conflict resolution. The instrument used a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree – 4, Agree – 3, Disagree – 2, Strongly Disagree – 1). Questionnaire administration took place during scheduled PTA meetings to ensure high response rates and direct stakeholder feedback.

The method of data analysis was descriptive statistics, specifically the use of mean and standard deviation to interpret the responses. A cut-off mark of 2.5 was established: any item

with a mean score of 2.5 or above was accepted as an agreed response, while those below 2.5 were rejected. The results were organized according to the three research questions and presented in tables for clarity and ease of interpretation.

Ethical procedures were adhered to during the study. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. No identifying information was included in the data analysis. The findings were used solely for academic and policy recommendation purposes.

Results

Research Question 1:

What are the major causes of parent-teacher conflict in the selected secondary schools?

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Lack of regular communication between parents and teachers	120	2.86	0.74	Accepted
2	Disagreement on disciplinary methods	120	2.71	0.80	Accepted
3	Parents' interference in academic policies	120	2.65	0.77	Accepted
4	Perceived arrogance of school management	120	2.58	0.82	Accepted
5	Cultural/religious differences in expectations	120	2.54	0.79	Accepted
6	Mistrust due to lack of transparency in school finances	120	2.47	0.85	Rejected

Interpretation:

Items 1 to 5 were accepted as key causes of conflict, indicating that breakdowns in communication, disciplinary disputes, and cultural expectations are major sources of tension. Item 6 fell below the 2.5 threshold and was rejected, suggesting that financial issues are less central in these cases.

Research Question 2:

What strategies are adopted by principals and teachers in managing parent-teacher conflict?



S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Organizing regular PTA meetings	120	2.89	0.66	Accepted
2	Use of open-door policy by school leadership	120	2.76	0.71	Accepted
3	Involving parents in disciplinary procedures	120	2.61	0.73	Accepted
4	Issuing regular progress reports to parents	120	2.55	0.69	Accepted
5	Conflict resolution training for staff	120	2.41	0.84	Rejected
6	Mediation committees involving neutral parties	120	2.37	0.79	Rejected

Interpretation:

The data show that schools often rely on traditional means such as PTA meetings and open communication policies to manage conflict. However, more structured approaches like staff training and mediation committees are less commonly used or implemented ineffectively.

Research Question 3:

How do educational management practices influence the resolution and prevention of parent-teacher conflict?

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Transparent decision-making by school leaders	120	2.83	0.65	Accepted
2	Inclusion of parents in school policy review	120	2.72	0.72	Accepted
3	Delegation of conflict resolution roles to vice principals	120	2.68	0.78	Accepted
4	Collaborative planning between parents and staff	120	2.63	0.70	Accepted
5	Prompt communication of school changes to parents	120	2.59	0.74	Accepted
6	Use of written stakeholder engagement guidelines	120	2.43	0.76	Rejected

Interpretation:

Findings suggest that inclusive and transparent practices in educational management help reduce conflict. However, formal tools such as stakeholder engagement guidelines are underutilized, indicating an area for future development.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study provide a nuanced understanding of the root causes, current practices, and management implications of parent-teacher conflict in secondary schools. From the first research question, it is evident that lack of communication, disagreements over disciplinary actions, and cultural/religious mismatches in expectations are the most



prominent causes of conflict. These results align with prior empirical studies which emphasized the breakdown of communication as a major trigger of educational tensions (Onyekachi & Ebube, 2022).

In terms of strategies adopted, the study shows that schools primarily utilize traditional engagement methods such as PTA meetings and open-door policies. However, proactive strategies like staff training on conflict resolution and neutral mediation committees are less employed, a gap also noted in the work of Akintunde (2021). This indicates a reactive rather than preventive approach to conflict management.

For the third research question, the results suggest that inclusive educational management practices such as transparent decision-making and policy collaboration help mitigate parent-teacher conflict. These align with the assertion by Nwankwo and Ugwu (2023) that participatory school leadership reduces parental resistance and fosters cohesion. However, the limited use of formal engagement frameworks reveals a weak structural commitment to long-term conflict prevention.

Conclusion

This study examined the educational management of parent-teacher conflict in secondary schools using data from three schools in Enugu State. The findings indicate that unresolved tensions often stem from communication breakdowns, differing cultural expectations, and exclusionary school practices.

While some traditional strategies are in place, there is an evident need for more systematic, inclusive, and preventive conflict management practices. Effective school governance, built on transparency and collaboration, was shown to be central to fostering positive school-community relationships.

Educational Implications

1. **Leadership Training:** School administrators must be trained in conflict sensitivity and inclusive leadership to foster cooperation among all stakeholders.
2. **Curriculum Integration:** Conflict resolution and communication strategies should be integrated into teacher training curricula.
3. **Parental Engagement:** Schools should institutionalize regular engagement frameworks to build trust and reduce suspicion or interference.
4. **Policy Development:** Educational policies at the state and school levels should formally incorporate mechanisms for parent-teacher dialogue and collaboration.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Communication Channels:** Schools should establish multiple platforms (emails, apps, forums) for consistent and respectful parent-teacher communication.
2. **Establish Conflict Resolution Committees:** Each school should create a standing committee involving neutral members to handle disputes transparently.

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3. **Conduct Annual Stakeholder Workshops:** Regular training for teachers, parents, and administrators on conflict management will enhance mutual understanding.
4. **Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Policy:** Schools should draft and enforce written guidelines on the roles and rights of both parents and teachers in school decision-making.
5. **Monitor and Evaluate Conflict Patterns:** School management boards should regularly assess and report on conflict trends to adapt policies accordingly.

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