# CREATIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACHES: PREDICTORS OF SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human interaction, and Nigerian Colleges of Education are no exception. Internal and external crises between staff and management have continued to challenge the system's stability and productivity. This study therefore examined creative conflict management approaches as predictors of sustainable organisational culture in Colleges of Education in Cross River State. A descriptive survey design of correlational type was adopted, and a convenience sample of 428 respondents comprising administrators, academic and non-academic staff, and education policy makers was selected. A self-developed and validated instrument, Creative Conflict Management Strategies (CCMS), with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.83 to 0.88, was administered. Three research questions guided the study, and one hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that organisational culture in the Colleges of Education is sustainable despite frequent conflicts, particularly between non-teaching staff and administrators (over 90 percent), and between non-teaching staff and government. Major causes of conflict included non-payment of salaries and bonuses, imposition of decisions, inadequate facilities, management's failure to honour agreements, and allegations of corruption. The consequences included disruption of academic calendars and delayed promotion arrears. Results further indicated that avoidance and forced methods were the most commonly used conflict management styles. However, rulemaking ($r = 0.514$), integrated conflict management ($r = 0.855$), and conflict transformation ($r = 0.775$) significantly predicted sustainable organisational culture, jointly accounting for 80.6% (Adj. $R^2 = 0.806$) of the variance. The study concluded that integrated conflict management, conflict transformation, and rulemaking are effective creative approaches for sustaining academic, teaching, and research culture. It recommended that college administrators adopt these strategies to enhance productivity and institutional harmony.

**Key words:** _Conflict management, Sustainable productivity, Organizational culture &Colleges of Education_

## Introduction

The nature of Colleges of Education (CoE) as academic organisations necessitates a harmonious environment for staff and management to achieve their missions. Organisational culture directly affects an organisation and its employees, influencing turnover and job performance. This workplace environment, formed by employee interaction, provides

*Creative Conflict Management Approaches: Predictors of Sustainable*
*Organisational Culture in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria*

Samuel Ibanne Andor &
Aniah Solomon Agwanyang
Edeh Stephen Olenye

collective identity, values, and beliefs beyond personal aspirations (Bartell, 2017). When behaviour is guided by culture, actions are better understood by management. A strong work culture and organisational culture are crucial for development and facing global challenges; a healthy culture signifies a healthy organisation (Drucker, 2019). Organisational culture at CoE encompasses the values and beliefs of stakeholders (administrators, faculty, students, board members, support staff), based on tradition and communicated verbally and nonverbally (Bartell, 2017). These values and beliefs profoundly influence decision-making and shape individual and organisational behaviours, conveyed through stories, language, and institutional norms (Camar and Freeman, 2016). Tertiary institution culture reflects an organisation's personality, evident in various aspects from campus aesthetics to staff commitment and leadership effectiveness. CoE management increasingly recognizes organisational culture's vital role in staff productivity and institutional development. CoE possess distinctive cultural characteristics (Bartell, 2017). A lack of understanding of this culture can breed conflict, leading to crises that disrupt smooth administration.

Conflict, according to Corn (2013), stems from dissension over stakeholders' interests, values, and goals. Simpao (2017) defines conflict as a process where one party perceives another negatively regarding their interests, viewing it as a struggle for resources, power, status, beliefs, and desires, often caused by differing impulses. Conflicts typically affect creativity, innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness, altering attitudes. While a flexible organisation benefits from conflict by adapting norms (Simpao, 2017), many conflicts can be detrimental. Conflict has both positive and negative effects (Iravo, 2018), categorized as constructive (leading to innovative solutions) or destructive (resulting in prolonged strikes, violence, property destruction, and weakened educational quality)—a common issue in Nigerian higher institutions (Odembo, 2021). Keinde (2018) notes that positive conflicts can offer reconciliation and learning opportunities, enhancing educational standards (Agwu, 2019). However, poor management can lead to negative consequences like hate, missed deadlines, depression, reduced teamwork, and distrust (Odembo, 2021). Unresolved conflicts consume time, energy, lead to bad decisions, and correlate with stress, low productivity, and turnover.

Conversely, conflict can stimulate significant changes and new products/services, motivating better solutions and fostering unity. Conflicts serve as valuable learning situations, offering insights. Understanding conflict management styles is crucial for effective negotiation (Watson & Hoffman, 2019; Ebele & Paul; 2020; Oloyede, 2019). Educational administrators spend substantial time managing conflict, emphasizing its importance for productivity and innovative decision-making in learning organisations.

The multicultural contemporary world presents identity crises threatening sustainable human development, making dialogue essential for global peace (Oloyede, 2019). Efficient conflict management is fundamental to societal development, but Nigerian higher institutions often experience the opposite. These institutions face organisational conflicts and insecurity that compromise their organisational culture and hinder their purpose. Conflict exists at every academic level; while negative, it can also drive institutions from stagnation to effectiveness through conflict management (Holton, 2018). Conflict management involves timely implementation of strategies, skills, and processes to leverage positive aspects and limit negative ones (Oloyede, 2019; Ogunode & Paul, 2023). Its effectiveness depends on styles that suit the organisation and provide long-term advantages (Mukhtar, 2018; Ogunode et al., 2024). Management needs creative skills to manage conflicts effectively, considering the conflict's nature, parties' positions, and relationships (Montes, Rodriguez, & Serrano, 2017).

While no single approach is universally best, creative approaches offer lasting solutions, create value, and establish flexible educational structures (Mukhtar, 2018; Opara et al., 2020). Such creative approaches in this study include defining acceptable behaviours

through rule making, integrated conflict management approach, and conflict transformation approach. Defining acceptable behaviours through rule making (Odembo, 2019) is a proactive approach where administrators establish orders and behavioural standards to prevent conflicts via job descriptions, clear frameworks, hierarchies, and team building (Odenwa, 2018). Formal rules are crucial for prevention, coordination, and guidance (Odey, 2016).

Conflict management through an integrated approach offers a lasting solution to internal and external conflicts in Nigerian CoE (Odenwa, 2018). This involves conflicting parties jointly working towards non-mutually exclusive goals, optimizing resource utilization, and engaging in problem-solving for mutual benefit (Ihekoronye et al., 2020; Montes, Rodriguez & Serrano, 2017). The focus is on solving the collective problem by integrating issues to create combined value. Effective integrated conflict management systems provide multiple resolution options and systemic support to promote conflict competence (Mukhtar, 2018).

Conflict transformation redirects conflicting issues to maximize gains from potentially destructive situations. This comprehensive approach addresses personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions of conflict, leveraging its potential for positive change (Watson and Hoffman, 2019). Rather than just resolving, conflict transformation embraces differences, fostering healthier communication for growth, relationship building, violence reduction, and increased participation. This open-ended process offers opportunities for constructive change that reduces violence, enhances justice, and addresses real-life human relationship problems (Yttaq, 2020). It emphasizes understanding less visible relational aspects for effective change.

Unfortunately, Nigerian college stakeholders often resort to competing, avoiding, compromising, or authoritative approaches, offering only temporary solutions (Simpao, 2017). Parties prioritize group ego over integrating and transforming situations for the struggling system. Yet, Gibson (2019) notes that conflict is raw material for transformation. New approaches are essential for managing these endemic conflicts. A 21st-century education system, aiming for national development and global competitiveness, cannot rely on outdated methods. As global education transforms, the Nigerian colleges of education system can benefit. This study thus investigates 21st-century creative approaches to conflict management—defining acceptable behaviour through rule making, integrated conflict management approach, and conflict transformation—in sustaining the organisational culture of the Nigerian colleges of education system.

**Statement of the problem**

Conflict is an inevitable feature of human interaction and colleges of education in Cross River State are not excepted as there are both internal and external crisis that affect organisational culture of colleges and the productivity of staff and students' academics. These crises often result to conflicts ranging from conflict between academic staff and administrators, students versus academic staff, students versus school authorities, non-academic staff versus administrators for different reasons such as poor conditions of service among others. These conflicts have given rise to incessant many months' strikes which delay graduation and may affect the standard education and quality of teachers as products of the colleges of education; this has implications on educational system as well development of the nation.

While conflicts are building blocks for innovations, stakeholders in CsOE seem to always adopt some ineffective strategies such as victimization, and other autocratic measures which in most cases are counterproductive. These strategies often worsen and deepen conflict which lead to prolong disruption of academic activities with students at the receiving end.

*Creative Conflict Management Approaches: Predictors of Sustainable Organisational Culture in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria*

*Samuel Ibanne Andor &*
*Aniah Solomon Agwanyang*
*Edeh Stephen Olenye*

These circumstances potentially permit lingering of conflict in colleges of education system. Therefore, this study examined the predictive contribution of conflict management approaches such as defining acceptable behaviour through rule making, integrated conflict management approach and conflict transformation make to sustainable colleges of education culture in Nigeria.

**Research questions**
The following research questions were answered in the study:
1. What are the causes of conflict in colleges of education in Cross River State?
2. What are the effects of conflict on colleges of education in Cross River State?
3. What are the most commonly used conflict management strategies in Cross River State colleges of education?

**Hypotheses**
A null hypothesis was stated and tested at 0.05 level of significance
There is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (defining acceptable behaviour through rule making, integrated conflict management approach and conflict transformation) to the dependent variable (sustainable colleges of education culture)

**Methodology**
This study adopted a descriptive research design of correlation type. This design was preferred because it is more economical and would allow the researcher to use representative sample to make inference of situation. It is useful for opinion and attitude studies; it depends basically on questionnaire and interview as means of data collection.
The population of this study comprised all the three colleges of education administrators, academic and non-academic staff in Cross River State. The colleges of education in Cross River State included:

**Table 1:** Population of staff in Cross River State colleges

| Colleges | Academic staff | Non-academic staff |
|---|---|---|
| Federal College of Education, Obudu | 309 | 515 |
| Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa | 204 | 286 |
| Steady Flow College of Education, Ikom | 122 | 210 |
| **Total** | **635** | **1011** |

**Source**: Registrar offices in the three colleges of education 2021

**Table 2:** Sample distribution

| Colleges | Administrative staff | | Academics staff | | Nonteaching staff | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Population | Sample | Population | Sample | Population | Sample |
| Federal College of Education Obudu | 52 | 36 (69%) | 309 | 87 (28%) | 515 | 98 (19%) |
| Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa | 39 | 24 (62%) | 204 | 51 (25%) | 286 | 52 (18%) |
| Steady Flow College of Education, Ikom | 25 | 16 (64%) | 122 | 13 (11%) | 210 | 37 (18%) |

| | | | 14 | 14 (100%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education Policy Makers, Cross River State | | | 14 | 14 (100%) |
| **Total** | **76** | **151** | **187** | **187** |

**Source**: Registrar offices in the three colleges of education 2021

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. The instrument was a 56 item self-developed questionnaire titled: Creative Conflict Management Strategies Questionnaire (CCMSQ). This instrument consisted of sections A and B. Section A required the respondents to supply their demographic information such as sex and type of respondents and school. Section B was divided into subsection 1 and 2. Subsection 1 consisted of 20 hypothetical statements requiring the respondents to rate their opinions across a 4-point scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree to allow for better understanding of the situation. This was used to test the hypothesis. Subsection 2 consisted of 27 items requiring the respondents to rate the frequency of the occurrence for the analysis of the research questions. The instrument was validated using inter-rater method of validity. The instrument was presented to three experts in Education management and Test and Measurements, University of Calabar and University of Ibadan, to vet the instruments appropriately. The instrument was finally presented to the supervisor for final vetting by making necessary changes before they pilot testing to establish reliability. The Cronbach Alpha reliability method (internal consistency) was used to establish the reliability of the instrument for this study. The CCMSQ was administered to 10% (43) of the sample (428) from the 2 Colleges of Education in Akwa Ibom State which was not part of the population of the study. The instrument was administered and retrieved within one week. The responses were coded and analysed with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The analysis of CCMSQ produced reliability coefficients that ranged from 0.83 to 0.88 respectively.

Descriptive statistics of charts and percentages was used to analyze the demographic data of the participants and answer research questions, while inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was also used to test the hypothesis.

**Results and Discussion of Findings**
This section presents the findings of the study based on the research questions and hypotheses. The analysis focused on identifying the major causes of conflict, the types of conflict management approaches adopted, and how these influence sustainable organisational culture in Colleges of Education in Cross River State. The responses from the 428 participants were analysed and presented in tables for clarity.

**Research question 1:** What are the causes of conflict in Cross River State colleges of education? This section explores the major factors responsible for conflicts within Colleges of Education in Cross River State. The analysis highlights staff perceptions of the underlying causes of disputes between management and employees. These conflicts often arise from issues related to welfare, decision-making, and institutional management practices. Table 3 presents the respondents' views on the specific causes of conflict in the colleges.

**Table 3: Causes of conflict in Cross River State colleges of education**

| S/NO | Item | Not at all | Rarely | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Non-payment of salaries as at when due | N=23 5.4% | N=29 6.8% | N=234 54.7% | N=142 33.1% |
| 2 | Imposition of decisions on employees by the administrators | N=7 1.6% | N=2 0.5% | N=223 52.1% | N=196 45.8% |

*Creative Conflict Management Approaches: Predictors of Sustainable Organisational Culture in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria*

*Samuel Ibanne Andor &
Aniah Solomon Agwanyang
Edeh Stephen Olenye*

| 3 | Inadequate provision of physical amenities such as electricity and water | N=5 1.2% | N=3 0.7% | N=231 53.9% | N=189 44.2% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Refusal of management to honour agreements reached with workers union | N= 12 2.8% | N=9 2.1% | N=219 51.2% | N=188 43.9% |
| 4 | Allegation of corruption against school administrators | N=31 7.3% | N=34 7.9 | N=194 45.3% | N=169 39.5% |

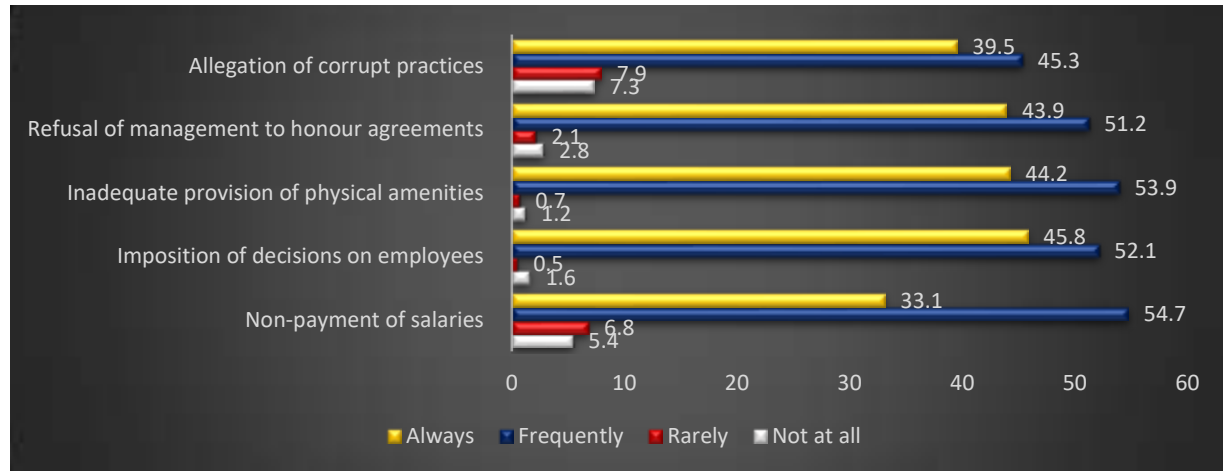**Total respondents = 428**



Figure 1 Causes of conflict in Cross River State colleges of education

The Table 3 and Figure 1 show that conflicts that mostly plague colleges of education in Cross River State include non-payment of salaries and bonuses, imposition of decisions on employees, inadequate facilities, refusal of management to honour agreements allegation of corrupt practices among others. This is evident from the data analysis observing that over 80 percent of the respondents affirmed that these are the areas that frequently and always cause conflict in Cross River State colleges of education.

**Research question 2:** What are the effects of conflict in Cross River State colleges of education?
This section presents the responses of participants on the perceived effects of conflicts within Colleges of Education in Cross River State. The analysis focuses on how frequent conflicts between staff and management influence institutional operations, staff morale, and academic activities. The results summarized in Table 4 highlight the major consequences of conflict as identified by respondents.

Table 4: Effects of conflict in Cross River State colleges of education

| S/NO | Item | Not at all | Rarely | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Low productivity among staff | N=3 0.7% | N=6 1.4% | N=213 49.8% | N=206 48.1% |
| 2 | Inability to achieve the goals and objectives of the institution | N=142 33.2% | N=123 28.7% | N=81 18.9% | N=82 19.2% |
| 3 | Incessant strikes | N=23 5.4% | N=31 7.2% | N=204 47.7% | N=170 39.7% |
| 4 | Loss of lives and properties | N=279 65.2% | 146 34.1% | N=2 0.5% | N=1 0.2% |
| 5 | Delay in pay and promotion of salaries | N=36 8.4% | N=32 7.5% | N=257 60% | N=103 24.1% |

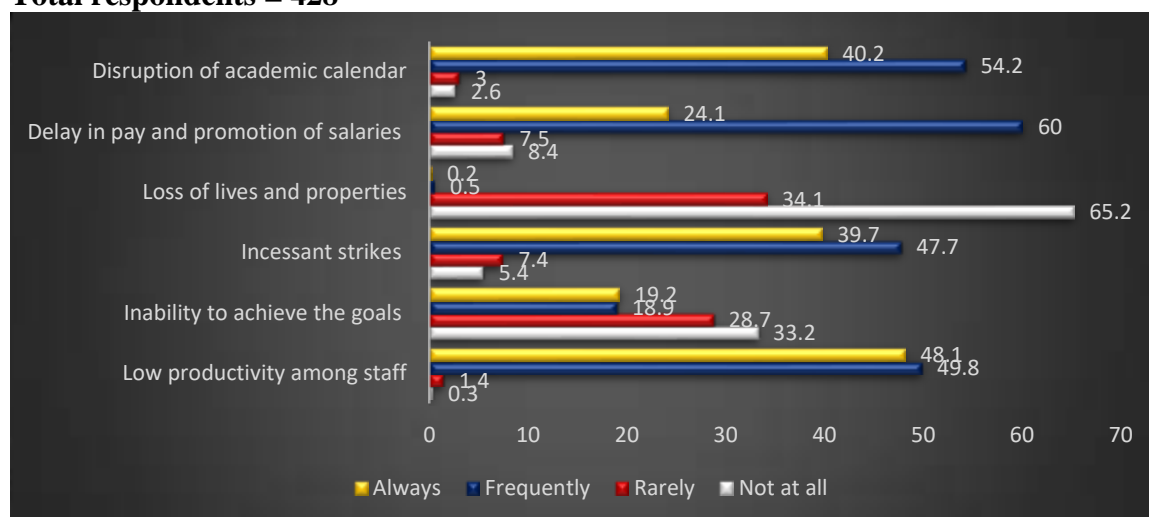| 6 | Disruption of academic calendar | N=11 2.6% | N=13 3% | N=232 54.2% | N=172 40.2% |

**Total respondents = 428**



Figure 2: Effects of conflict in Cross River State colleges of education

The Table 4 and Figure 2 above show that conflicts in Cross River State colleges of education are characterized by disruption of academic calendar with an overwhelming percentage of over 90 of the respondents affirming this statement. These conflicts are also characterized by frequent strikes and delays in pay and promotion of salaries. However, non-achievement of goals and loss of lives and property are the least effects of these conflicts in Cross River State colleges of education.

**Research question 3** What are the most commonly used conflict management strategies in Cross River State colleges of education? This section examines the conflict management approaches frequently adopted by staff and administrators in Colleges of Education in Cross River State. The analysis identifies the strategies most often used to handle disputes and maintain institutional harmony. Table 5 presents the respondents' views on the conflict management methods commonly applied within the colleges.

Table 5. Commonly used conflict management strategies in Cross River State colleges of education

| S/NO | Item | Not at all | Rarely | Frequently | Always |
|------|------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|
| 25 | Avoiding | N=12 2.8% | N=9 2.1% | N=205 47.9% | N=202 47.2% |
| 26 | Competition | N=86 20.1 | N=101 23.6% | N=99 23.1% | N=142 33.2% |
| 27 | Forced method | N=15 3.5% | N=11 2.6% | N=217 50.7% | N=185 43.2% |
| 28 | Distributive method | N=43 10% | N=60 14% | N=173 40% | N=152 35.5% |
| 29 | Rulemaking | N=21 4.9% | N=18 4.2% | N=222 51.9% | N=169 39% |
| 30 | Compromise | N=91 21.3% | N=104 24.3% | N=119 27.8% | N=114 26.6% |
| 31 | Integrated approach | N=358 | N=24 | N=25 | N=21 |

*Creative Conflict Management Approaches:  Predictors of Sustainable*
*Organisational Culture in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria*

*Samuel Ibanne Andor &*
*Aniah Solomon Agwanyang*
*Edeh Stephen Olenye*

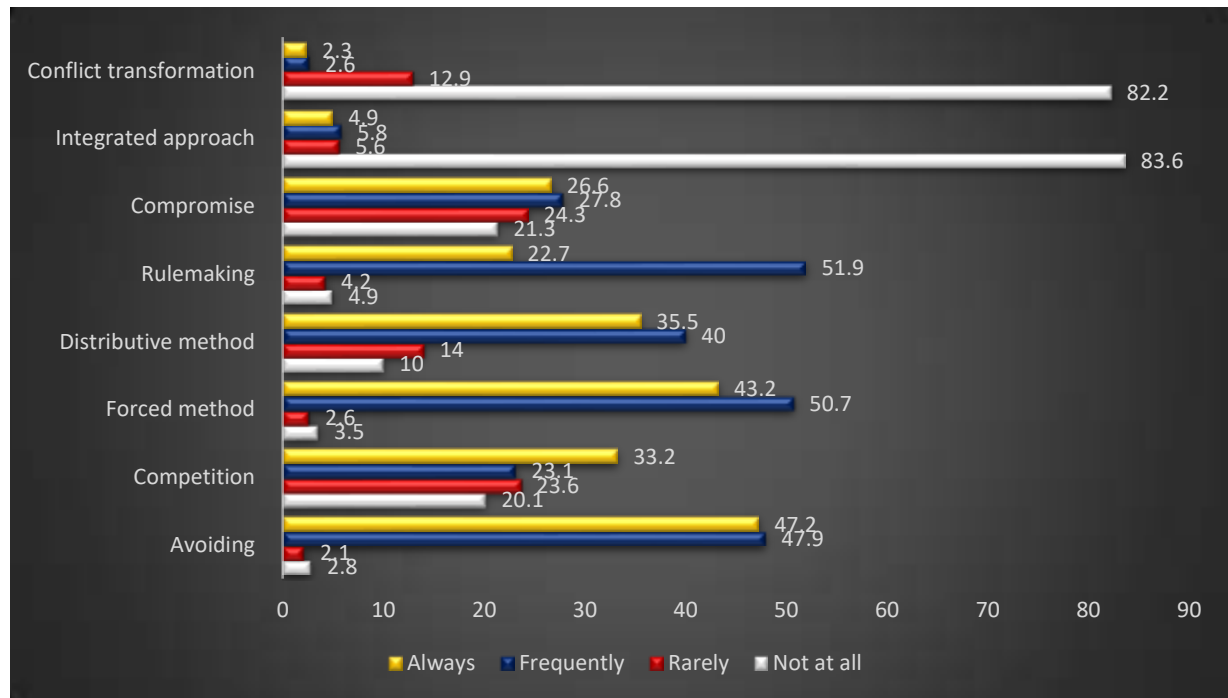| | | 83.6% | 5.6% | 5.8% | 4.9% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | Conflict transformation | N=352 | N=55 | N=11 | N=10 |
| | | 82.2% | 12.9% | 2.6% | 2.3% |

**Total respondents = 428**



Figure 3: Commonly used conflict management strategies

The analysis in Table 5 and Figure 3 showed that conflict transformation is one of the least methods of managing conflicts in colleges of education in Cross River State. This inference is made observing that 82.2 percent of the respondents affirmed that conflict transformation is not used at all in managing conflict in the colleges. Also, integrated approach of conflict management is the least method used as affirmed in the current study. It is observed from the analysis that 83.6 percent of the respondents agreed that integrated approach is never used in managing conflict in the colleges. It is also seen from the analysis that avoiding, forced method and rulemaking at mostly used in conflict management in the colleges.

**Hypothesis 1** There is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (defining acceptable behaviour through rule making, integrated conflict management approach and conflict transformation) to the dependent variable (sustainable colleges of education culture)

**Table 6:** Summary of multiple regression analysis showing relative contribution of the independent variables (Rulemaking, integrated conflict management approach and conflict transformation) to the dependent variable (sustainable colleges of education culture)

| Variable | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | (B) | Std. Error | Beta | T | Sig. |
| Constant | 20.411 | .546 | - | 21.577 | .000 |
| Rulemaking | .809 | .039 | .621 | 25.109 | .000 |
| Integrated  conflict  management | .915 | .048 | .811 | 28.823 | .000 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| approach | | | | | |
| Conflict transformation | .900 | .041 | .735 | 26.031 | .000 |

Table 6 reveals that there is a significant contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. There is a high correlation coefficient between (Rulemaking, integrated conflict management approach and conflict transformation) to sustainable colleges of education culture. That is, sustainable college of education culture has a relationship contribution to Rulemaking, integrated conflict management approach and conflict transformation. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contribution of the independent variables, Integrated conflict management approach ($\beta = 0.915$, t=28.823, p<0.05) indicates most potent contributor to the prediction, followed by Conflict transformation ($\beta = 0.900$, t=26.031, p<0.05) and Rulemaking ($\beta = 0.809$, t=25.109, p<0.05) has the least contribution to sustainable colleges of education culture. It implies that there is a significant relative contribution of the independent variables (defining acceptable behaviour through rule making, integrated conflict management approach and conflict transformation) to the dependent variable (sustainable colleges of education culture). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Discussion of findings**
The findings of the current study identified several causes of conflicts in colleges of education including but not limited to non-payment of salaries, bonuses and allowances as at when due, allegation of corrupt practices in financial issues among others. The frequency of conflict arising from these factors varies. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of the study conducted by Kalu and Juto (2018) which reported that the causes of conflicts in South-west colleges of education according to the order of frequency as non-payment of salaries as at when due; sudden change in the college policy; non-implementation of government circulars on staff welfare and communication gap between the management and workers. It is interesting to notice obvious similarities in the findings of the current study and Kalu and Juto. Non-payment of salaries as at when due tops the chart in both findings providing a clear indication that non-payment of salaries, bonuses and allowance is the leading cause of conflict in colleges of education. The findings of Ajason and Gaja (2018) are also in support of the current findings. Ajason and Gaja reported in line with the current findings the causes of conflicts in colleges of education by further highlighting three major root sources of these conflict. These included (i) the interpersonal disagreements that arise when one person is experiencing individual stress; (ii) the problems resulting from role conflict, a condition that occurs when there is a clash over one's role in the organisation and (iii) the power struggles that pit persons and groups against one another to achieve their own selfish objectives.

Bangari (2016) corroborated the findings of the current study when the author reported several causes of conflicts in colleges of education in Nigeria to include corruption allegations against management; improper power assignment; discriminatory application of college rules and regulations; and miscomprehension of duties. Though the current study did not include improper power assessment, however the findings of both studies reported frequent corruption allegations against college managements. The author further reported that these conflicts result when the external pressures from forces outside the enterprise that breed internal pressures as the system seeks to adapt. To further buttress the findings of the current study, Bangari also reported that this could be due to misunderstandings and disagreements from differentiation, i.e., the clashes that arise because people approach common problems from different orientations; and also, the interdependence requirements for collaboration which, if not extensive and balanced between the parties, cause communication and

*Creative Conflict Management Approaches: Predictors of Sustainable*
*Organisational Culture in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria*

*Samuel Ibanne Andor &*
*Aniah Solomon Agwanyang*
*Edeh Stephen Olenye*

interaction breakdowns which, in turn, if critical, lead to more intensive conflicts. Corroboration from the findings of other studies provided strong evidence to support the data analysis of the current findings observing that over 80 percent of the respondents affirmed that these are the areas that frequently and always cause conflict in Cross River State colleges of education.

The Major effects identified in the current study included frequent disruption of academic calendar and low productivity with over 90 percent of the respondents affirming this statement. The findings reported that conflicts in the colleges are often mismanaged which result in prolong disagreements between one union and the government. When these crises linger and there is breakdown in dialogue, strike results. Often these strikes disrupt academic calendar which make graduation dates of student unpredictable. The findings of the current study are supported by the findings of Nasari and Khari (2017) which affirmed that in this changing society and particularly in colleges of education and other tertiary institutions, conflicts are inescapable especially among individuals, groups and organisations mostly colleges of learning. The conflicts can be managed through a procedure, styles and having the right skills known as conflict management. Once the conflicts are not resolved, employee performances are affected which leads to industrial action sometimes which affects the productivity of the staff and disrupt academic calendar.

Dara and Kenna (2017) published findings that support the current findings by reporting that employee performance is affected when conflicts are many and this affects how the employee perform in the work environment. The author in his findings buttressed the current study that conflicts usually affect the creativity and innovation, efficiency and effectiveness of the employees, there's also change in attitude and many others. Few conflicts are easily handled than when they are many which can be bad in the long run since conflict is seen to have both positive and negative effects in the organisation performance.

The current findings also reported that non-achievement of goals and loss of lives and property are also the effects of these conflicts in Colleges of education in Cross River State. Though the current study reported that regardless of these conflict in colleges of education Cross River State, the colleges still achieve their set goals and objectives. These findings are not supported by the findings of Kende and Akon (2016) which reported that conflicts in colleges of education often result in nonachievement of the college goals. This stark disagreement might be explained partly due to the fact that Kende and Akon's study was conducted only in private colleges unlike the current studies. Most private colleges have fragile sustainability because they are mostly individual or partnership venture which could breached with slightest infringement. The current findings also identified loss of lives and property as effect of conflicts in colleges of education. Huna and Luku (2018) supported the current findings reporting loss of lives and property as a major destructive effect of mismanaged conflicts in colleges of education and other institution of higher learning in Nigeria.

The findings of the current study identified different commonly used conflicts management strategies in colleges of education. Such identified strategies included avoiding, competition, forced, rulemaking among others methods of managing conflicts. The findings of this study are supported by Dara and Kenna (2017) who reported that the common conflict management strategies in colleges of education and other institutions of higher learning included rulemaking, avoidance and forced methods. They tend to be agreement in the findings of the current study and Dara and Kenna' findings because rulemaking is one of the most used strategies in both studies. Also, in line with the current findings Koda (2017) reported that avoiding style was the most dormant of all the other styles in most organisations. The probable reason for its dominancy is because individuals would rather run from the problem than to cooperate, come up with ideas and solve the conflict. However, **its**

noted that the avoiding style is less effective in some places like institutions of higher learning because the problem keeps heating up again and again which would affect organisational culture and productivity of staff in educational organisations.

The findings from testing the hypothesis that guide the current study shows that rulemaking, integrated conflict management approach and conflict transformation have predictive relative and composite contribution to sustainable colleges of education culture with a coefficient of multiple correlation (R) of 0.899 and a multiple R Square of 0.808. This means that 80.6% (Adj. $R^2$ = 0.808) of the variance in the sustainable colleges of education culture is accounted by the independent variables, when taken together $p<0.05$. Also, using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contribution of the independent variables, the current findings show that Integrated conflict management approach ($\beta$ = 0.915, t=28.823, $p<0.05$) indicates most potent contributor to the prediction, followed by Conflict transformation ($\beta$ = 0.900, t=26.031, $p<0.05$) and Rulemaking ($\beta$ = 0.809, t=25.109, $p<0.05$) in this order. These findings are supported by several other findings from extant researches. For instance, Newman and Odeh and Ogi (2019) in their study provided an empirical evidencewhich reported that school personnel often got engaged in destructive conflict because of many of them have no adequate orientation on acceptable behaviours and rules guiding certain situations that often resulted to destructive conflict. It can be inferred from the current findings that instead of educational administrators to wait to resolve or manage a conflict, it is more productive and creative to prevent future conflicts by developing diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts before they arise or possibly handle it at early stages before escalating to unmanageable level. To promote productivity in any organisation, it is important that educational administrators make creative efforts to provide written and unwritten acceptable organisational behaviours. Also, orientation programmes could be provided for all newly recruited staff either in groups or individually and also efforts should be made by the management to organize seminars/workshops on organisational conflict management from time to time for the employees where rules and penalties are reinforced for better compliance. Such creative efforts would enable employees learn about conflict and how it can be effectively managed for individual and organisation effectiveness. These findings are also in line with the report of Simpao (2017) which stated that integrated conflict management approach relatively predict sustainable organisational culture where principal administrators in the private tertiary institutions believed that conflicts in schools could be effectively managed and maximize with the use of effective integrated approach to create a combined whole solution to the institution's conflicts.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**
No management of institution including colleges of education's management of any nation committed to sustainable development and productivity would permit lingering internal and external educational conflicts to deteriorate to the extent that service delivery becomes dysfunctional over long periods of time and institutions shut down due to industrial disputes. Conflicts can be managed through a set of right procedures and strategies to maximize its benefits and prevent the destructive aspects of it. It recommended among others that:

- A 21st century creative conflict management approaches be employed in handing crisis in the Colleges of Education in Nigeria
- College management team should constantly be trained on creative and global best management practice to prevent conflict in educational institutions
- Resources should be properly managed to motivate staff, boost their productivity and enhance organisational culture in CsOE.

*Creative Conflict Management Approaches: Predictors of Sustainable*
*Organisational Culture in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria*

Samuel Ibanne Andor &
*Aniah Solomon Agwanyang*
*Edeh Stephen Olenye*

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