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**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPAL'S LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND  
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGER STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study assessed the relationship between principals' level of emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The study was guided by three objectives with corresponding three research questions and hypotheses. The study was guided by Mixed Model of Emotions by Goleman (1998), Bar-On Theory of Emotional Intelligence (1997) and Conflict Process Theory by Goldman (1966). The research design used for this study was the correlational survey research design. The total population of the study consisted of 2890 teachers. The sample size of the study consisted of 914 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was the 'Relationship between Principal's Level of Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management (TQRPLEICM). The instrument was duly validated and it yielded 0.64 as logical validity index. The instrument was pilot tested and the coefficient of internal consistency of 0.70 was obtained. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study indicated that there is a significant relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State, there was a significant relationship between principal's level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State and there was a significant relationship between principal's level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The study made three recommendations based on the findings. One of the recommendations of the study was that the Niger State Ministry of Education should organize regular training for principals through seminars and conferences to boost the level of their self-awareness component of emotional intelligence to help them become effective conflicts managers of their various secondary schools in the state.

**Keywords:** Principal, Emotional, Intelligent, Conflict, Management, Self-awareness and Empathy

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### **Introduction**

Emotional intelligence of a principal plays remarkable roles in maintenance of peaceful environment needed for enhancing effective teaching and learning. Secondary school system is made up of people thoughts, feelings and ethnic backgrounds, as a result, there is bound to be complex relationships as principal, teachers and students interact among themselves. In the process of interactions, conflict becomes inevitable due to the complexities of school members in terms of different thoughts, conceptions, believes, interests, needs and values. Conflict normally occurs as a result of different opinions and desires to achieve school goals (Rotimi, 2010). Despite the fact that conflict sometimes influences innovative ideas, creativity and positive change, its major effect may lead to waste of educational resources and human energy. As a result, conflict management becomes necessary to ensure that emergence of conflict do not prevent school from achieving its goals and objectives. Effective management of conflict in the school system requires principal with high level of emotional intelligence because the issues that usually influence conflicts are related to feelings, moods and emotions. Principal's emotional stability increases his power to manage difficult situations that may hinder the attainment of school goals and objectives (Ramana, 2013).

Emotional intelligence is the perception of feelings and moods in order to create emotion. It does not only facilitate better thinking but also helps an individual to be aware of one's own feelings and emotions. It also enhances emotions along with intelligence by harmonizing affections with emotions. In fact, emotional intelligence is the ability of a principal to be aware of his or her own feeling and others which help to maintain cordial relationship with staff and students. Feelings, moods and impulses influence how people act, think, behave, relate with other people and make effective decisions during normal and tense situations (Adeniyi & Omoteso, 2014). Emotional intelligence means the ability of an individual to be aware of his own feelings and that of others and to use the understanding of the information to guide his or her thinking, action and behaviour while relating with other people. Emotional intelligence is made up of evaluation and expression of emotion, regulation of emotions and the use of emotions to make reliable and effective decisions that would help to reduce human problems that could lead conflict. The indispensable nature of conflicts in the school system demands that principals need to understand the feelings, moods and the emotional status of staff and students in order to accommodate them when making school decisions in order to avoid unnecessary opposition that would cause conflict (Jimoh, 2017).

The major issues that influence conflicts in the school system may occur as a result of principals being over emotional over certain issues. Emotions contain information and influence thinking, as a result, principals need to incorporate emotions intelligently into their reasoning, problem solving, judging and relationship with staff and students to reduce frequent occurrence of conflicts (Tjan, 2012). Principals are expected to understand their own emotions, the emotions of staff and students as well as possessing the skills to manage relationships successfully. The ability to manage feelings and handle stress is an aspect of emotional intelligence that is very important for determining the effectiveness of a school manager. The inability of principals to understand their own emotions may lead them to embark on emotional outbursts in the school environment. Emotional outburst by principals may affect a school in terms of limiting the teaching efforts by academic staff, reduce the academic achievement of students, fuel conflict among teachers, influence rebellious attitude by staff against the school authority as well promoting students unrest and rampage that could render the school environment un conducive for effective teaching and learning that will facilitate sustainable development to take place (Michael, Anpe and Gambo, 2015).

Salovey and Mayer in 1990 grouped emotional intelligence it into five components as follows: self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, empathy and relationship management. The above dimensions of emotional intelligence are useful for effective management of conflicts in the school system. Self-awareness is key to realizing one's own strengths and weaknesses. Individuals with self-awareness skills are aware of their abilities and limitations, seek for feedback and learn from their mistakes and know where they need to improve and when to work with others who have complementary strengths. It is also one's awareness of his owns feelings and what he thinks about. Self-awareness could help emotionally intelligent principals to make appropriate decisions needed for effective conflict management in the setting, determine their roles in decision-making process. Through self-awareness, principals could be guided to identify their emotional ability and use it to make decisions that are devoid of frequent of frequent occurrence of conflict but rather promote peaceful working relationship among staff in the school environment. Self- awareness could help a principal to be fair towards his approach, actions and reactions. Such principals are great motivators and they know how to pursue ethical issues (Goleman, 2015).

Another component of emotional intelligence is self-management which consists of self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement, drive and initiative skills which help managers to develop good sense of judgement for peaceful management of conflicts. Self-management is the ability to control and manage impulses, inner feelings, behaviors, and actions. Self-management includes adaptability, innovation, and initiative in given situations; not being a self-manager leads to decreased

credibility and respect. When there is self-management of emotions, competence is demonstrated and creates the impression of transparency and integrity (Aremu & Tejumola, 2008). A principal with ability to manage his feelings and anger could be highly respected and trusted by both staff and students. Managers who are self-managed could make decisions that would minimize conflicts in the school system. Principals who control their feelings and impulses could create an environment of trust, fairness and they are models of resiliency. The modern school organizations are more complicated, filled with pressures and change, as a result, they require principals who will always remain calm and keep their emotions under control to successfully manage the schools. Social-awareness could help principals to understand the feelings of teachers and students and their reaction towards a particular issue. As a result, principals may be equipped to make decisions that will be devoid of conflict and promote peace in the school environment. Empathy is the consideration of other people's feelings especially when making decision. This implies that a principal who is empathic in nature is capable of identifying the thoughts, feelings and state of another person which sometimes help him or her to consider the feelings of the staff and students with emotional and psychological problems when making decisions that would help to reduce the rate of conflicts in the school system. Self-awareness aspect of emotional intelligence of a principal may help him or her to understand the feelings of the teachers and students and their reaction towards a particular issue. As a result, it may equip principals to make decisions that would be devoid of conflict, thereby promoting a peaceful school system (Salami, 2017).

In Niger State, principals are selected using emotional intelligence criteria; as a result, principals in the state are likely to have low level of emotional intelligence and such situation is dangerous to school management because principals with low emotional intelligence could easily become autocratic because they are less sensitive to other people feelings, opinions and thoughts when making decisions. Such principals could make decisions and impose them on teachers for implementation. Principals who impose decisions on teachers seem to have low level of emotional intelligence as they are less concerned about the needs, feelings, interests, aspirations and psychological nature of the staff, students and other stakeholders who are affiliated to their schools. Teachers under the control of a principal who is not sensitive to their views and creativities when making decisions may develop negative attitude towards teaching job because too much emphasis could be laid on job performance and decisions are always imposed on them (Adeniyi & Omoteso, 2014). The non-inclusion of teachers in decision making of school portrays the affected principals as incompetent in decision making and that would make teachers to feel discourage and get tired of teaching job. Such discouragement may lead to poor attitude to work among teachers and reduce the

academic performance among students. Emotional intelligence is the cornerstone of every decision a principal makes especially in solving problems, conflict management and making value judgments.

Conflict sometimes arises out of struggles over positions and scarce resources by different stakeholders in secondary schools. It is indispensable among a group of people because of the nature of human beings who differ in their value orientation, attitudes, levels of thinking and understanding. Conflict is bound to influence strange and unfriendly relationship in the school system. The major consequence of conflict in schools is the disruption of academic activities of the affected schools. When the school system and the activities are disrupted through conflicts, tension and misunderstanding could arise to reduce the morale and productivity of teachers especially when they perceive any form of injustice and unfair treatment of some staff by the principals (Iwowari, 2017).

Individuals with high emotional intelligence could understand conflict better, recognize it faster and direct it by the means of empathy and confidence resulting in a place in which employees have higher mental health. In this environment individuals feel valued, accepted, supported and relied, therefore, could have healthy relationships. Conflict management is recognition and control of conflict in a rational, fair and effective way. Conflict can be managed by utilizing skills such as effective communication, problem solving and negotiation. In view of the fact that our ability to manage conflict could change its result, first of all we should recognize and analyze it in order to distinguish initiation reasons (Adedokun, 2015).

Conflict could be described in different ways such as the art of certain people coming into collision against one another in terms of ideas, thoughts and feelings that may lead to opposition, disagreement, quarrelling and fighting. Conflicts normally create tension within a school especially when certain group of people feel that their needs or desires are likely to be denied. It is the state of disharmony that could be brought about by differences of impulses, feelings and desires. Conflicts in school system are normally manifested through strife, controversy, discord of action, antagonism, segregation, protest and confusion (Ajai, 2013). In secondary schools, certain factors like principals' leadership styles, principals' managerial behaviour, poor communication styles, poor school-community relationship and so on could lead to conflicts. Other issues that influence conflicts in secondary schools are inappropriate recognition of teachers by principals, non-involvement of teachers in decisions making, poor interpersonal relationships of principals with teachers and students. The occurrence of conflicts in any form as well as inappropriate management of such conflicts in secondary schools could hinder teachers' job effectiveness. When conflicts are not properly managed, they may degenerate into dangerous situations by creating tension that would reduce teachers'

morale in performing their teaching responsibilities to enhance effective teaching and learning. Teachers could be happy and remained stable emotionally to contribute towards the success of a school when there is no tension and excessive conflicts in the school system (Adedokun, 2015).

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict by promoting the activities that would enhance positive relationship among workers in an organization. It is the practice of recognizing and dealing with grievances and disputes in a rational, balanced and proactive manner. Conflict management is expressed in the principle that all conflicts may not necessarily be resolved but learning how to manage conflict could minimize its negative effects. Effective management of conflicts in secondary schools require the principals have good knowledge of specific skills that are related to self-awareness about human moods and communication skills. Aigbedion (2010) described conflict management as a preliminary step in the direction and process of conflict minimization in an organization. The issue of whether conflict needs to reach a stage of resolution or not depends on its effective is management. Conflict management procedures entail the adoption of several means such as establishment of good communication links, personal interactions of managers with subordinates, setting up of mechanisms to end or minimize violence and seeking commitment of the workers' solution to their personal problem. Billikof (2009) maintained that conflicts are bound to produce negative effects on teachers, students and the society at large. Efficient and effective handling of conflicts could enhance staff morale by inducing them to work harder.

Making reliable decisions in secondary schools under tense situations to minimize conflicts require principals with self-confidence, self-doubt and emotional stability. In Niger State, teachers are not subjected to emotional intelligence test before they are promoted to the position of principals, as a result, principals in secondary schools are faced with series of challenges which sometimes limit their ability to make reasonable decisions required to reduce conflicts in the school system. Conflicts in secondary schools that may occur due to principals' low level of emotional intelligence negative reaction by teachers towards a particular school policy, students' unrest, conflict between the community and school and so on. When the above issues arise in the school system, it is the responsibility of every principal to remain calm and make decisions that will ameliorate the situations (Nzomo (2012).

Every secondary school in Niger State consists of people with different needs such as students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and management staff who are expected to cooperate with one another to facilitate the attainment of stated goals. Every staff is expected to work towards effective teaching and learning. Both staff and students interact among themselves to ensure that they undertake their respective

responsibilities successfully. The interaction sometimes influences conflict among the stakeholders in different ways. In secondary schools in Niger State, conflicts normally arise as students fight among themselves, students fight with teachers, teachers disagree among themselves and management staff may take decisions that could be opposed by other staff and this could influence conflict (Nwafor, 2013). The frequent occurrence of conflicts in secondary schools require emotionally intelligent principals who also possess instructional knowledge, understand local, state, and federal guidelines, policies, and law, they also need to know why, when, and how to make decisions that would accommodate the feelings and moods of both students and staff to reduce the level of incessant conflicts in secondary school system. Principals in the 21st century are expected to manage people by considering their diverse needs, values interests and believes. People today are more independent, empowered, involved, outspoken, and service minded, therefore, requiring managers with positive interpersonal relationships. As such, this study is structured to find out the relationship between principals' level of emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Secondary schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century require principal that could manage the daily stressors of job and also manage the impulses, moods and feelings of teachers and students that may lead to conflicts in the school system. Secondary schools consist of people with complex dynamic and complex behaviour, this means principals must be able to articulate a vision for success, inspire others to embrace the vision, and have the ability to make decisions that would accommodate the varied needs of both staff and students.

Principals without the knowledge of self-awareness of their own feelings may likely have poor knowledge of social-awareness of other people especially in Niger State secondary schools where principals are appointed without any consideration given to the level of their emotional intelligence. In this situation, they would make decisions that may lead to conflicts and create tension within a school specifically staff members feel that their needs or desires are likely to be denied. Most secondary schools in Niger State witness strife, controversy, discord of action, antagonism, segregation, protest and confusion which demonstrate the presence of conflicts in the school system. The above conflict related issues may occur as a result of principal's low level of emotional intelligence that could be manifested through certain factors like poor principals' leadership styles, poor display of managerial behaviour, poor communication styles, poor school-community relationship and so on. Other issues that influence conflicts in secondary schools are inappropriate recognition of teachers by principals, non-involvement of teachers in decisions making, poor interpersonal relationships of principals with teachers and

students. The occurrence of conflicts in any form as well as inappropriate management of such conflicts in secondary schools could hinder teachers' job effectiveness and influence poor academic performance among students. When conflicts are not properly handled, they may degenerate into dangerous situations by creating tension that would reduce teachers' morale in performing their teaching responsibilities to enhance effective and learning. Teachers could be happy and remained stable emotionally to contribute towards the success of a school when there is no tension and excessive conflicts in the school system. The thrust of this study was to assess the relationship between principals' level of emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State?
2. What is the correlation between principal's level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State?
3. What is the relationship between principal's level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between principal's level of emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To determine the relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.
2. To ascertain the correlation between principal's level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.
3. To examine the relationship between principal's level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

- HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.
- HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between principal's level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between principal's level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

### METHODOLOGY

The study assessed the relationship between principals' level of emotional intelligence and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The study was guided by three objectives with corresponding three research questions and hypotheses. The study was guided by Mixed Model of Emotions by Goleman (1998), Bar-On Theory of Emotional Intelligence (1997) and Conflict Process Theory by Goldman (1966). The research design used for this study was the correlational survey research design. The total population of the study consisted of 2890 teachers. The sample size of the study consisted of 914 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was the 'Relationship between Principal's Level of Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management (TQRPLEICM). The instrument was duly validated and it yielded 0.64 as logical validity index. The instrument was pilot tested and the coefficient of internal consistency of 0.70 was obtained. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State?

**Table 1: Responses on the Relationship Principals' Level of Self-Awareness and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Niger State**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{X}$	Std. Dev. $\sigma$	Decision
1.	Principal handles tense situations with diplomacy to avoid fight among staff.	110	115	300	365	2.15	0.75	Disagreed
2.	Principal is skillful in managing negative feelings that promote disunity among staff.	95	130	285	380	2.05	0.70	Disagreed
3.	Principal does not quarrel or display his or her anger openly.	125	108	398	259	2.45	0.68	Disagreed
4.	Principal deals with staff politely to avoid provoking	150	158	302	280	2.10	0.80	Disagreed

	them towards revolting against school policies.								
5.	My principal assigns responsibilities staff without any form of partiality to avoid grievances that could induce crisis in the school system.	125	160	308	297	2.30	0.77	Disagreed	
6.	Principal handles disciplinary issues in a fairly manner to avoid tension in the school system.	155	117	363	255	2.25	0.85	Agreed	
7.	Principal possesses self-control skills that help him to avoid conduct that would lead to regular clashing with staff and students.	130	78	312	370	2.33	0.70	Agreed	
Aggregate Mean						2.23	0.75		

Scale Mean 2.50

Table 1 revealed that item 1 has the mean value of 2.15 with a standard deviation of 0.75 item 2 has a mean value of 2.05 with standard deviation of 0.70, item 3 has a mean value of 2.50 with standard deviation of 0.68, item 4 has a mean value of 2.10 with standard deviation of 0.80, item 5 has the mean value of 2.30 with standard deviation of 0.77, item 6 has the mean value of 2.33 with standard deviation of 0.85 while item 7 has the mean value of 2.33 with standard deviation of 0.70. The analysis of research question one showed that the aggregate mean of 2.23 is below the scale mean of 2.50. This therefore demonstrated that the respondents disagreed that principals possess the required the level of self-awareness for successful conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the correlation between principal’s level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State?

**Table 2: Responses on the Relationship Principals’ Level of Social-Awareness and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Niger State**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{X}$	Std. Dev. $\sigma$	Decision
8.	Principal encourages mutual relationship among staff to reduce frequent occurrence of misunderstanding in the school system.	120	125	270	375	2.01	0.71	Disagreed
9.	Principal maintains high level of interpersonal relationship with staff	105	140	255	390	2.22	0.79	Disagreed

	members which enable them to discuss their grievances freely with him.								
10.	Principal organizes social events on regular basis to promote unity and limit frequent occurrence of conflicts among staff.	135	118	368	269	2.30	0.60	Disagreed	
11.	Principal do not possess the required interactive skills to promote peaceful school atmosphere that is free from frequent conflicts with staff.	160	98	332	300	2.00	0.61	Disagreed	
12.	Principal does not encourage team spirit to reduce misunderstanding among staff.	130	140	318	302	2.02	0.58	Disagreed	
13.	Principal handles disciplinary issues in a fairly manner to avoid tension in the school system.	165	157	283	285	2.33	0.66	Agreed	
14.	Principal possesses self-control skills that help him to avoid conduct that would lead to regular clashing with staff and students.	140	98	372	280	2.40	0.75	Agreed	
Aggregate Mean						2.18	0.67		

Scale Mean 2.50

Table 2 showed that item 8 has the mean value of 2.01 with standard deviation of 0.71, item 9 has the mean value of 2.22 with standard deviation of 0.79, item 10 has a mean value of 2.30 with standard deviation of 0.60, item 11 has a mean value of 2.00 with standard deviation of 0.61, item 12 has the mean value of 2.02 with standard deviation of 0.58 and 13 has the mean value of 2.33 with standard deviation of 0.66 while item 7 has the mean value of 2.40 with standard deviation of 0.75. The analysis of research question two indicated that the aggregate mean of 2.18 is below the scale mean of 2.50. This therefore implies that the respondents disagreed that principals possess the required the level of social-awareness for effective conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**Research Question 3:** What is the correlation between principal’s level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State?

**Table 3: Responses on the Relationship Principals’ Level of Empathy and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Niger State**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean $\bar{X}$	Std. Dev. $\sigma$	Decision
15.	Principal encourages mutual relationship among staff to reduce frequent occurrence of	120	125	270	375	2.10	0.88	Disagreed

	misunderstanding in the school system.							
16.	Principal maintains high level of interpersonal relationship with staff members which enable them to discuss their grievances freely with him.	115	110	265	400	2.69	0.77	Disagreed
17.	Principal organizes social events on regular basis to promote unity and limit frequent occurrence of conflicts among staff.	105	138	378	269	2.55	0.68	Disagreed
18.	Principal do not possess the required interactive skills to promote a peaceful school atmosphere that is free from frequent conflicts with staff.	130	178	322	260	2.15	0.72	Disagreed
19.	Principal does not encourage team spirit to reduce misunderstanding among staff.	100	150	323	317	2.23	0.65	Disagreed
20.	Principal handles disciplinary issues in a fairly manner to avoid tension in the school system.	135	137	323	295	1.95	0.48	Agreed
21.	Principal possesses self-control skills that help him to avoid conduct that would lead to regular clashing with staff and students.	110	158	332	290	2.20	0.72	Agreed
Aggregate Mean						<b>2.18</b>	<b>0.70</b>	Agreed

**Scale Mean 2.50**

Table 3 showed that item 8 has the mean value of 2.01 with standard deviation of 0.71, item 9 has the mean value of 2.22 with standard deviation of 0.79, item 10 has a mean value of 2.30 with standard deviation of 0.60, item 11 has a mean value of 2.00 with standard deviation of 0.61, item 12 has the mean value of 2.02 with standard deviation of 0.58 and 13 has the mean value of 2.33 with standard deviation of 0.66 while item 7 has the mean value of 2.20 with standard deviation of 0.72. The analysis of research question three indicated that the aggregate mean of 2.18 is below the scale mean of 2.50. This therefore implies that the principals level of empathy is insufficient to enhance effective conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**Hypotheses Testing**

All the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The results are presented in tables below:

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**Table 4: Correlation Coefficient Analysis Showing the Significant Relationship between Principal's Level of Self-Awareness and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Niger State**

Group	$\bar{X}$	N	Df	R	P-value	Remarks
Principal Level of Self-Awareness						
Conflict Management	2.43	890	888	0.516	0.000	H <sub>01</sub> Rejected

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

Table 4 indicates the correlation coefficient of the significant relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The analysis of the results revealed that the p-value is 0.000 and 888 as the degree of freedom. Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the significant level of 0.05, hypothesis one was rejected. The result, therefore, implies that there was a significant relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant correlation between principal's level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**Table 5: Correlation Coefficient Analysis Showing the Significant Relationship between Principal's Level of Social-Awareness and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Niger State**

Group	$\bar{X}$	N	Df	R	P-value	Remarks
Principal Level of Social-Awareness						
Conflict Management	2.31	890	888	0.601	0.002	H <sub>02</sub> Rejected

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

Table 5 showed the correlation coefficient of the significant between principal's level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The analysis of the results revealed that the p-value is 0.002 and 888 as the degree of

freedom. Since the p-value of 0.002 is less than the significant level of 0.05, hypothesis two was rejected. The result, therefore, implies that there was a significant relationship between principal's level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**Hypothesis Three:** T There is no significant relationship between principal's level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

**Table 6: Correlation Coefficient Analysis Showing the Significant Relationship between Principal's Level of Empathy and Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in Niger State**

Group	$\bar{X}$	N	Df	R	P-value	Remarks
Principal Level of Empathy						
Conflict Management	2.18	890	888	0.641	0.001	H <sub>03</sub> Rejected

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

Table 6 indicated the correlation coefficient of the significant between principal's level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The analysis of the results revealed that the p-value is 0.001 and 88 as the degree of freedom. Since the p-value of 0.001 is less than the significant level of 0.05, hypothesis three was rejected. The result, therefore, showed that there was a significant relationship between principal's level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State.

### Discussion of Findings

All the four hypotheses of this study were tested using Pearson's product-moment correlation at a significant level of 0.05. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between principal's level of self-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The findings of the study agreed with Omini (2015) who found that the emotional feelings of self-awareness of principals influence their conflicts management abilities in secondary schools in South-South Nigeria. Self-awareness is key to realizing one's own strengths and weaknesses. Individuals with self-awareness skills are aware of their abilities and limitations, seek for feedback and learn from their mistakes and know where they need to improve and when to work with others who have complementary strengths. It is also one's awareness of his owns feelings and what he thinks about. Self-awareness could help emotionally intelligent principals to make appropriate decisions needed for effective conflict management in the setting, determine their roles in decision-making process. Through self-awareness, principals could be guided to identify their emotional ability and use it

to make decisions that are devoid of frequent occurrence of conflict but rather promote peaceful working relationship among staff in the school environment. Self-awareness could help a principal to be fair towards his approach, actions and reactions. Such principals are great motivators and they know how to pursue ethical issues. The greatest mistakes and negative actions of most managers occur as a result of being over emotional over certain issues. Emotions contain information and influence thinking, as a result, school managers need to incorporate emotions intelligently into their reasoning, problem solving, judging and behaviour. This requires them to stay open to emotions, whether they are welcome or not and to choose strategies that include the wisdom of their feelings

The findings of the study further showed that there was a significant relationship between principal's level of social-awareness and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The findings of the study disagreed with Alireza, Hamid, Naghme and Fateme (2013) who conducted that emotional intelligence of social awareness is not associated with conflicts management in Iran High schools. Social-awareness describes how people handle relationships and awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns. Principals with social awareness could perceive situations, interpret nonverbal cues such as tone of voice or facial expression and use it to encourage their subordinates towards effective job performance. The understanding of other people's feelings and concerns flows from awareness of one's own feelings. This sensitivity to others is critical for higher job performance whenever the focus is on interactions with people. The social-awareness component is the ability of an individual to be empathic in nature (that is to sense others' feelings and perspectives, and taking interest in their concerns); organizational-awareness (reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships) and service orientation (anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs). The functional school principal is able to sense others' feelings and perspectives, and taking interest in their concerns. Knowing that his learners are from such poverty stricken backgrounds, he allows them to study at school. The safety and concerns of the parents are laid to rest by employing additional security guards late at night.

The findings of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between principal's level of empathy and conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State. The findings of the study conform with Adedokun (2015) who ascertained that there is a strong, positive correlation between emotional intelligence of empathy and effectiveness of provosts in conflicts management of federal training centres in Nigeria. Empathy is the consideration of other people's feelings especially when making decision. This implies that a principal who is empathic in nature is capable of identifying the thoughts, feelings and state of another person which sometimes help him or her to

consider the feelings of the staff and students with emotional and psychological problems when making decisions that would help to reduce the rate of conflicts in the school system. Self-awareness aspect of emotional intelligence of a principal may help him or her to understand the feelings of the teachers and students and their reaction towards a particular issue. As a result, it may equip principals to make decisions that would be devoid of conflict, thereby promoting a peaceful school system. Empathy plays significant roles towards the success of school management because empathic managers are more likely to have an appropriate degree of openness about diversity and the differences between cultures. Empathy plays an important role in developing trust in manager-employee relationships, as a result, it could also improve the relationship between principals and teachers. Empathy enables managers to have a better understanding of new social surroundings and helps them to learn and adapt to new working environments.

### **Conclusion**

The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study:

Principal's self-awareness helps the principals in Niger State to become aware of their feelings and emotions to understand the feelings of the teachers and students, and their reactions towards issues, hence, it will increase their power to manage conflicts successfully.

The findings of the study on social-awareness and conflict management concluded that principals with social-awareness see situations differently, sense others' feelings and perspectives, and taking interest in their concerns help them to manage conflicts effectively.

The study further concluded that the place of empathy cannot be ruled out in the discussion of conflict management in secondary schools in Niger State, since it enhances a sense of management by providing principals with the awareness to listen, serve their subordinates and have a greater understanding of interrelationships within the school system.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of his study:

1. The Niger State Ministry of Education should organize regular training for principals through seminars and conferences to boost the level of their self-awareness component of emotional intelligence to help them become effective conflicts managers of their various secondary schools in the state.
2. The Niger State Teaching Service Commission should include emotional intelligence test as part of the criteria for promotion of teachers to the position of

principals as this may help to ensure that only teachers with high level of social-awareness component of emotional intelligence are appointed as principals to ensure conflicts are easily managed in the secondary school system.

3. The skill of empathy should be developed in the curriculum and extra curriculum of all levels of education so that graduates of any level of education will acquire the requisite skills of empathy needed for effective management of conflicts in secondary schools in case, any of the graduates become a principal of a secondary schools.

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