

Evaluating Stakeholders' Perceptions of Compromise and Negotiation as Conflict Management Techniques among Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study evaluated stakeholders' perceptions of compromise and negotiation as conflict management techniques in Federal Unity Schools in Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone. Two objectives guided the study: to ascertain stakeholders' perceptions of the application of compromise technique, and to determine the extent to which stakeholders perceive the application of negotiation technique, in resolving and managing conflict in these schools. Two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated accordingly. A descriptive survey design was adopted, drawing on a population of 2,566 principals, teachers, Ministry of Education officials, and Parent-Teacher Association members across Federal Unity Schools in six South-South states. Using proportionate and cluster sampling techniques, 333 respondents were selected, of whom 315 returned validly completed, structured questionnaires built on a five-point Likert scale. Frequency counts and mean scores answered the research questions, while One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tested the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that both compromise (grand mean = 4.00) and negotiation (grand mean = 4.21) are actively applied in Federal Unity Schools, with compromise used mainly as a quick, give-and-take settlement for day-to-day disputes and negotiation used for more structured bargaining with unions, Ministry officials, and other external parties. ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of principals, teachers, MOE officials, and PTA members regarding either approach (compromise: $p = 0.347$; negotiation: $p = 0.392$), pointing to broad stakeholder consensus. The study concludes that compromise and negotiation are complementary bargaining-based approaches that help stabilise Federal Unity Schools, and recommends that both be reinforced through structured training for administrators and staff.

Keywords: compromise, negotiation, conflict management approaches, stakeholders' perceptions, Federal Unity Schools

Introduction

Conflict is an inevitable feature of school life, arising wherever individuals or groups with differing interests, values, or expectations interact (Deutsch et al., 2020). In Federal Unity Schools, which bring together principals, teachers, Ministry of Education (MOE) officials, and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, disputes over welfare, resource allocation, discipline, and administrative policy are a recurring reality. How these disputes are managed has direct implications for staff morale, institutional stability, and the quality of teaching and learning. Among the various approaches available to school stakeholders, compromise and negotiation are both bargaining-based strategies, but they differ in structure and scope. Compromise is a middle-ground settlement in which each party gives up part of its demands to reach a quick, mutually tolerable agreement; it operates on a “fixed-pie” assumption and is most useful when a decision must be reached rapidly between parties of roughly equal standing (Robbins & Coulter, 2020; Rahim, 2023). Negotiation, by contrast, is a more structured and interactive process of dialogue and bargaining, often used to reconcile the demands of different institutional actors — staff unions, Ministry officials, PTA/SBMC representatives — through formal discussion, concession, and documented agreement (Lewicki et al., 2021; Fisher & Ury, 2019). Where compromise is typically fast and informal, negotiation is typically deliberate and can be formalised into binding agreements. Despite the frequent, everyday use of both approaches in school administration, there is limited empirical evidence on how stakeholders in Federal Unity Schools in the South-South zone perceive their application, and whether such perceptions are shared across principals, teachers, MOE officials, and PTA members. This study addresses that gap



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by evaluating stakeholders' perceptions of compromise and negotiation and testing whether these perceptions differ significantly across stakeholder groups.

Literature Review

Compromise is generally defined as a middle-ground settlement in which each party surrenders part of its demands to reach a mutually tolerable agreement, operating on a “fixed-pie” assumption rather than seeking to expand the resources available (Robbins & Coulter, 2020). Sitting at the midpoint of assertiveness and cooperativeness on the Thomas-Kilmann model, compromise is often the fastest route to a workable decision and is especially useful between parties of roughly equal standing (Rahim, 2023). Mullins and Christy (2025) describe it as a “temporal stabiliser” that preserves working relationships even where it does not fully satisfy either side, though Tjosvold and Wong (2024) caution that habitual, “lazy compromise” can produce sub-optimal outcomes and “compromise fatigue” over time. Negotiation is treated in the literature as a more structured and voluntary process of dialogue and bargaining through which parties exchange concessions to reach agreement, without recourse to force or unilateral imposition (Lewicki et al., 2021). Scholars distinguish between distributive, “win-lose” bargaining over fixed resources and integrative, “win-win” bargaining aimed at expanding value for all sides, with Fisher and Ury's (2019) principled-negotiation model separating people from the problem, focusing on interests rather than positions, and applying objective criteria, widely cited as best practice for reaching durable, fair agreements. While both techniques are grounded in bargaining rather than authority, compromise is typically informal and rapid, whereas negotiation is more deliberate and often formalised into documented agreements with external parties such as unions or Ministry officials. Existing research has generally examined each technique in isolation; comparatively little empirical work has explored how stakeholders in Federal Unity Schools perceive them side by side, which is the gap this study addresses.

Empirical Studies

Owan, Agunwa, and Anyanwu (2020) investigated conflict management strategies and organizational effectiveness in secondary schools across the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, using a correlational design with 1,200 principals and teachers sampled through multi-stage stratified random sampling. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis, they found that integrative and compromising strategies had a strong positive correlation with school effectiveness, while avoidance was linked to organisational stagnation, and recommended that school boards prioritise appointing principals with strong emotional intelligence and collaborative problem-solving skills. This study shares the present study's South-South setting and its focus on compromise, lending direct empirical support to the finding that compromise is positively perceived by stakeholders; however, while Owan et al. used a correlational design to link strategy choice to school effectiveness as an outcome, the present study instead compares stakeholders' perceptions of compromise and negotiation directly across the Federal Unity School hierarchy. Oyediji and Mahmud (2025) examined the relationship between principals' conflict management skills including emotional intelligence and negotiation and teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria, using a correlational design with 280 respondents. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, they found a significant positive relationship between principals' conflict management skills and teachers' effectiveness, and recommended that skilled, negotiation-competent leadership be treated as a prerequisite for principal appointment. This finding directly supports the present study's expectation that negotiation would be strongly perceived by stakeholders as an effective conflict management approach; the key difference is that Oyediji and Mahmud linked negotiation skill to a performance outcome at the local-government level, whereas the present study compares how negotiation is perceived across principals, teachers, MOE officials, and PTA members within the wider Federal Unity School system.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives. The study sought to:

1. Ascertain stakeholders' perceptions on the application of compromise technique in resolving conflict in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria
2. Determine the extent to which stakeholders perceive the application of negotiation technique in managing conflict in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria.



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Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do stakeholders perceive the application of compromise technique in resolving conflict in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does the perception of stakeholders support the application of negotiation technique in managing conflict in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of stakeholders on the application of compromise technique in resolving conflict in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of stakeholders on the application of negotiation technique in managing conflict in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, appropriate for systematically capturing stakeholders' existing perceptions and views on conflict management practice within a natural school setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The population comprised 2,566 stakeholders which includes 17 principals, 2,205 teachers, 269 MOE officials, and 75 PTA members, drawn from Federal Unity Schools in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States. Using Research Advisors' (2006) sample-size table, a sample of 333 respondents (8 principals, 290 teachers, 28 MOE officials, and 7 PTA members) were drawn from three of the six states through simple random and proportionate cluster sampling. A structured, five-point Likert-scale questionnaire (Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree = 1) was administered to all four stakeholder groups; the items relevant to this article are drawn from the sub-sections addressing the compromise and negotiation techniques. Content and face validity were established by experts in Educational Administration and Planning at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and a pilot test at FGC Ibillo, Edo State, yielded a split-half reliability coefficient of 0.78. Of the 333 copies of the questionnaire administered, 315 were correctly completed and returned. Research questions were answered using frequency counts and mean scores, with a benchmark mean of 3.0 used to denote agreement; hypotheses were tested using One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at the 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Compromise as a Conflict Management Technique in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statements	Respondents	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean
11	The principal, teachers and PTA resolve disagreements by both parties making concessions to reach a middle ground.	Principals	3	4	1	0	0	4.25
		Teachers	96	148	25	6	1	4.20
		MOE Officials	6	17	3	1	0	4.04
		PTA Members	1	6	0	0	0	4.14
12	Compromise is used as a quick way to settle disputes so that academic activities are not disrupted.	Principals	2	5	1	0	0	4.12
		Teachers	95	149	26	6	0	4.21
		MOE Officials	6	16	5	0	0	4.04
		PTA Members	2	4	1	0	0	4.14
13	Conflict management involves a "give-and-take" approach where no single party gets everything it wants.	Principals	1	3	3	1	0	3.50
		Teachers	98	144	26	6	2	4.20
		MOE Officials	11	13	2	1	0	4.26
		PTA Members	4	2	1	0	0	4.43
14	The principal encourages compromise on minor issues to maintain school harmony.	Principals	1	5	2	0	0	3.88

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S/N	Item Statements	Respondents	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean	
15	When resources are limited, a compromise strategy is adopted to ensure every department gets a fair share.	Teachers	104	136	29	7	0	4.22	
		MOE Officials	10	9	6	2	0	4.00	
		PTA Members	1	5	1	0	0	4.00	
		Principals	1	5	2	0	0	3.88	
		Teachers	100	138	26	12	0	4.18	
16	Disputing parties are encouraged to "split the difference" to end a conflict quickly through compromise.	MOE Officials	9	16	2	0	0	4.26	
		PTA Members	4	3	0	0	0	4.57	
		Principals	3	5	0	0	0	4.38	
		Teachers	104	133	28	11	0	4.20	
		MOE Officials	7	18	1	1	0	4.15	
17	Compromise is frequently used in staff meetings to reconcile opposing views on school administrative policies.	PTA Members	1	4	2	0	0	3.86	
		Principals	3	2	3	0	0	4.00	
		Teachers	97	142	30	7	0	4.19	
		MOE Officials	10	13	2	2	0	4.15	
		PTA Members	3	4	0	0	0	4.43	
18	The school leadership facilitates compromise agreements that allow both sides to maintain their professional dignity.	Principals	4	3	0	1	0	4.25	
		Teachers	103	130	32	10	1	4.17	
		MOE Officials	9	17	0	1	0	4.26	
		PTA Members	5	1	0	1	0	4.43	
		Principals	5	3	0	0	0	4.62	
19	Mediation by senior staff, PTA, and SBMC focuses on finding a compromised solution that is acceptable to all stakeholders.	Teachers	91	156	18	10	1	4.18	
		MOE Officials	7	15	4	1	0	4.04	
		PTA Members	4	3	0	0	0	4.57	
		Principals	3	5	0	0	0	4.38	
		Teachers	110	131	21	13	1	4.22	
20	Most professional conflicts in this school are settled through a negotiated compromise rather than a win-loss outcome.	MOE Officials	8	15	1	3	0	4.04	
		PTA Members	1	4	0	1	1	3.43	
		Grand Mean							4.00

Research Question One: Perceptions on Compromise Technique

Ten questionnaire items examined stakeholders' perceptions of compromise, covering mutual concessions to reach a middle ground, the use of compromise to quickly settle disputes without disrupting academic activities, a "give-and-take" approach to sharing limited resources, and mediation by senior staff, PTA, and the SBMC. The analysis of data in Table 1 shows stakeholders' perception of compromise as a conflict management technique in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria. The analysis of item 11 revealed mean scores of 4.25 for principals, 4.20 for teachers, 4.04 for MOE officials, and 4.14 for PTA members, all above the 3.0 benchmark. This indicates that the principal, teachers and PTA resolve disagreements by making concessions to reach a middle ground. For item 12, the mean scores were 4.12 for principals, 4.21 for teachers, 4.04 for MOE officials, and 4.14 for PTA members, all above the benchmark. This suggests that compromise is used as a quick means of settling disputes to prevent disruption of academic activities.



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The analysis of item 13 showed mean scores of 3.50 for principals, 4.20 for teachers, 4.26 for MOE officials, and 4.43 for PTA members. Since all the scores were above the 3.0 benchmark, the result indicates that conflict management involves a give-and-take approach in which no single party gets everything it wants. For item 14, mean scores of 3.88 for principals, 4.22 for teachers, 4.00 for MOE officials, and 4.00 for PTA members were recorded. These scores show that principals encourage compromise on minor issues in order to maintain harmony within the schools. For item 15, the mean scores were 3.88 for principals, 4.18 for teachers, 4.26 for MOE officials, and 4.57 for PTA members. The scores indicate that when resources are limited, compromise is adopted to ensure that departments receive a fair share. The analysis of item 16 revealed mean scores of 4.38 for principals, 4.20 for teachers, 4.15 for MOE officials, and 3.86 for PTA members. This indicates that disputing parties are encouraged to split the difference in order to bring conflicts to an early conclusion. The analysis of item 17 showed mean scores of 4.00 for principals, 4.19 for teachers, 4.15 for MOE officials, and 4.43 for PTA members. This suggests that compromise is frequently employed during staff meetings to reconcile opposing views concerning school administrative policies. For item 18, mean scores of 4.25 for principals, 4.17 for teachers, 4.26 for MOE officials, and 4.43 for PTA members were obtained. The result indicates that school leadership facilitates compromise agreements that enable conflicting parties to maintain their professional dignity. The analysis of item 19 revealed mean scores of 4.62 for principals, 4.18 for teachers, 4.04 for MOE officials, and 4.57 for PTA members. Since all the mean scores were above the benchmark, the result indicates that mediation by senior staff, PTA and SBMC focuses on achieving compromise solutions acceptable to the stakeholders. Finally, the analysis of item 20 showed mean scores of 4.38 for principals, 4.22 for teachers, 4.04 for MOE officials, and 3.43 for PTA members, all above the 3.0 benchmark. This indicates that most professional conflicts in the schools are settled through negotiated compromise rather than a win-loss approach. The grand mean score of 4.00, which is above the 3.0 benchmark, indicates that stakeholders have a positive perception of compromise as a conflict management technique in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria. This implies that compromise is widely perceived as an effective approach for resolving disagreements, maintaining school harmony, preventing disruption of academic activities, and ensuring that conflicting parties reach mutually acceptable settlements.

Table 2: Negotiation as a Conflict Management Technique in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statements	Respondents	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean
61	The school management engages in formal negotiation with staff unions to resolve disputes over welfare and entitlements.	Principals	3	4	1	0	0	4.25
		Teachers	93	138	32	6	0	4.18
		MOE Officials	8	15	4	0	0	4.15
		PTA Members	2	3	2	0	0	4.00
62	Direct negotiation between the principal and Ministry officials is used to resolve administrative bottlenecks in the school.	Principals	2	5	1	0	0	4.13
		Teachers	98	133	32	6	0	4.22
		MOE Officials	9	14	4	0	0	4.19
		PTA Members	3	3	1	0	0	4.29
63	Conflict resolution in this school involves a structured bargaining process where parties present their terms for a settlement.	Principals	3	3	2	0	0	4.13
		Teachers	91	143	28	6	0	4.21
		MOE Officials	7	16	4	0	0	4.11
		PTA Members	2	4	1	0	0	4.14
64	The principal, PTA, and SBMC use negotiation to reconcile the demands of the Ministry and school staff.	Principals	2	6	0	0	0	4.25
		Teachers	103	128	39	6	0	4.24
		MOE Officials	10	13	4	0	0	4.22
		PTA Members	3	2	2	0	0	4.14

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S/N	Item Statements	Respondents	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Mean
65	Professional disagreements are settled through a “give-and-take” negotiation process to ensure stability in the school.	Principals	3	4	0	1	0	4.13
		Teachers	95	139	28	6	0	4.22
		MOE Officials	8	16	3	0	0	4.19
		PTA Members	2	3	1	1	0	4.00
66	The administration prefers negotiating settlement terms privately with aggrieved staff rather than using formal disciplinary panels.	Principals	2	4	2	0	0	4.00
		Teachers	88	148	34	6	0	4.15
		MOE Officials	7	17	3	0	0	4.15
		PTA Members	3	3	0	1	0	4.14
67	Negotiation is used to reach a consensus when there is a clash between government policy and the local needs of the school.	Principals	3	5	0	0	0	4.38
		Teachers	101	133	36	6	0	4.24
		MOE Officials	9	15	3	0	0	4.22
		PTA Members	2	4	1	0	0	4.14
68	Formal agreements reached through negotiation are documented and respected by both the school management and staff.	Principals	2	5	1	0	0	4.13
		Teachers	93	141	36	6	0	4.22
		MOE Officials	8	14	4	1	0	4.07
		PTA Members	3	3	1	0	0	4.29
69	The school leadership adopts negotiation strategies to manage disputes regarding the allocation of resources and facilities.	Principals	3	3	1	1	0	4.00
		Teachers	98	141	31	6	0	4.24
		MOE Officials	10	14	3	0	0	4.26
		PTA Members	2	3	2	0	0	4.00
70	Most industrial and administrative conflicts in this school are resolved through mutual negotiation rather than industrial action.	Principals	2	6	0	0	0	4.25
		Teachers	91	141	38	6	0	4.20
		MOE Officials	8	15	4	0	0	4.15
		PTA Members	3	2	1	1	0	4.00
Grand Mean								4.21

Research Question Two: Perceptions on Negotiation Technique

A parallel set of ten items examined perceptions of negotiation covering formal negotiation with staff unions over welfare and entitlements, direct bargaining between principals and Ministry officials, structured settlement processes, and the use of negotiation to resolve resource-allocation disputes. The analysis of data in Table 2 shows stakeholders' perception of negotiation as a conflict management technique in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria. The analysis of item 61 revealed mean scores of 4.25 for principals, 4.18 for teachers, 4.15 for MOE officials, and 4.00 for PTA members, all above the 3.0 benchmark. This indicates that school management engages in formal negotiation with staff unions to resolve disputes concerning welfare and entitlements. For item 62, the mean scores were 4.13 for principals, 4.22 for teachers, 4.19 for MOE officials, and 4.29 for PTA members, indicating that direct negotiation between principals and Ministry officials is used to resolve administrative bottlenecks. The analysis of item 63 showed mean scores of 4.13 for principals, 4.21 for teachers, 4.11 for MOE officials, and 4.14 for PTA members. Since all the scores were above the benchmark, the result indicates that conflict resolution involves a structured bargaining process in which parties present their terms for settlement. For item 64, mean scores of 4.25, 4.24, 4.22 and 4.14 were recorded for principals, teachers, MOE officials and PTA



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members respectively. This suggests that negotiation is used by the principal, PTA and SBMC to reconcile the demands of the Ministry and school staff. For item 65, the mean scores were 4.13 for principals, 4.22 for teachers, 4.19 for MOE officials, and 4.00 for PTA members. This indicates that professional disagreements are generally settled through a give-and-take negotiation process. Item 66 recorded mean scores of 4.00, 4.15, 4.15 and 4.14 respectively, indicating that school administrations negotiate settlement terms with aggrieved staff as an alternative to formal disciplinary panels. The analysis of item 67 revealed mean scores of 4.38 for principals, 4.24 for teachers, 4.22 for MOE officials, and 4.14 for PTA members. This indicates that negotiation is used to reach consensus when government policy conflicts with the local needs of the school. For item 68, the mean scores were 4.13, 4.22, 4.07 and 4.29 respectively, showing that formal agreements reached through negotiation are generally documented and respected by the parties involved. For item 69, mean scores of 4.00 for principals, 4.24 for teachers, 4.26 for MOE officials, and 4.00 for PTA members were obtained. This indicates that school leadership adopts negotiation strategies when managing disputes concerning the allocation of resources and facilities. Finally, item 70 recorded mean scores of 4.25, 4.20, 4.15 and 4.00 respectively. This suggests that most industrial and administrative conflicts in the schools are resolved through mutual negotiation rather than industrial action. The grand mean score of 4.21, which is above the 3.0 benchmark, indicates that stakeholders have a positive perception of negotiation as a conflict management technique in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria. This implies that negotiation is widely perceived as an effective approach for managing disputes, reconciling differing interests, reaching consensus, and maintaining stability among school management, staff, Ministry officials, PTA and SBMC stakeholders.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (HO₁): There is no significant difference in the perceptions of stakeholders on the application of compromise technique in resolving conflict in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA on Stakeholders' Perceptions of Compromise Technique

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.238	3	0.079	0.654	0.347	Retained
Within Groups	38.990	315	0.121			
Total	39.228	318				

With a significance value of 0.347, well above the 0.05 threshold, HO₁ is retained: there is no statistically significant difference in how principals, teachers, MOE officials, and PTA members perceive the application of compromise technique.

Hypothesis Two (HO₂): There is no significant difference in the perceptions of stakeholders on the application of negotiation technique in managing conflict in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 4: One-way ANOVA on Stakeholders' Perceptions of Negotiation Technique

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.236	3	0.073	0.638	0.392	Retained
Within Groups	40.324	315	0.114			
Total	40.560	318				

With a significance value of 0.392, also above 0.05, HO₂ is retained: perceptions of the negotiation technique likewise do not differ significantly across the four stakeholder groups.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that compromise is perceived as applied (grand mean = 4.00) is consistent with its established role as an “expedient” conflict management choice, faster than collaboration, which requires deep problem-solving, yet more constructive than avoidance (Robbins & Coulter, 2020; Rahim, 2023). Within Federal Unity Schools, the pattern of high agreement on quick, give-and-take settlement of disputes over minor issues and limited resources reflects what Mullins and Christy (2025) describe as a “temporal stabiliser”: compromise may not fully satisfy either party, but it preserves working relationships and prevents escalation into open conflict. At the same time, Tjosvold and Wong (2024) caution against “lazy compromise,” in which reliance on quick concessions produces sub-optimal decisions and “compromise fatigue” over time, a risk worth monitoring even where, as here, stakeholders broadly endorse the practice. Negotiation



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recorded the highest grand mean (4.21) of the two techniques, suggesting that stakeholders view it as a particularly effective and legitimate route to resolving disputes that extend beyond the school gate such as, welfare disputes with staff unions or administrative bottlenecks involving the Ministry of Education. This aligns with the view of negotiation as a structured, voluntary process of dialogue and mutual adjustment rather than an imposition of will (Lewicki et al., 2021), and with Fisher and Ury's (2019) principled-negotiation model, which emphasises separating people from the problem and focusing on interests rather than fixed positions. The strong perception of negotiation as effective for reconciling the demands of school management, staff, and external bodies is also consistent with the study's finding that formal agreements reached through negotiation are seen as generally documented and respected by the parties involved. That perceptions of both techniques did not differ significantly across principals, teachers, MOE officials, and PTA members suggests a shared institutional culture around bargaining-based conflict resolution in Federal Unity Schools: whether the dispute is a minor day-to-day disagreement calling for compromise, or a more complex, multi-party issue calling for structured negotiation, stakeholders across all categories appear to recognize and endorse these approaches similarly.

Conclusion

This study concludes that compromise and negotiation are both actively applied conflict management approaches in Federal Unity Schools in South-South, Nigeria and that stakeholders, principals, teachers, MOE officials, and PTA members alike hold broadly similar perceptions of each. Compromise functions as a fast, give-and-take mechanism for settling everyday disputes and preserving working relationships, while negotiation functions as a more structured, deliberate process for reconciling the demands of school management, staff, and external stakeholders such as unions and Ministry officials. Together, the two bargaining-based approaches contribute meaningfully to institutional stability within these schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. school administrators should continue to use compromise for time-sensitive, lower-stakes disputes, while guarding against “lazy compromise” by periodically revisiting unresolved underlying issues rather than treating a quick concession as a permanent solution
2. Federal Unity Schools should strengthen negotiation skills among administrators and staff representatives through regular training in structured bargaining and principled-negotiation techniques, to sustain the strong, positive perception negotiation currently enjoys in resolving disputes with unions, Ministry officials, and other external stakeholders.

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