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**Assessment of Secondary School Conflicts and Effective Resolution Strategies Adopted by  
the Principals in Akwa Ibom State**

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**BY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The main purpose of this study was to investigate secondary school conflicts and effective resolution strategies in Akwa Ibom State. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Expost-facto research design was used for this study. This design was considered appropriate for this research as it will investigate the already existing relationship between the independent variable (school conflicts) and the dependent variable (effective resolution strategy). The population of the study comprises all the public senior secondary school principals and teachers of senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom state. There are 234 principals and 19,624 teachers distributed into 234 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Cluster and random sampling techniques were used to select 200 respondents, which constituted the sample size used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Secondary School Conflicts and Effectiveness of the Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (SSCERSQ)". Face and content validity of the instrument was carried out by a supervisor and a lecturer in tests and measurement, in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. Instrument reliability was tested using the Cronbach reliability test at 0.94 coefficients. The data obtained was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean) and standard deviation, while simple regression analysis will be used to analyse the hypotheses. The result was tested for significance at 0.05 alpha levels. The study concluded that the peer mediation program has a positive effect on the school discipline climate, the level of violent disciplinary problems, increases the self-image of students who are peer mediators, and improves vocational-educational attitudes. One of the recommendations made in the study was that school mediators should be given adequate training and seminars to guide them during the mediation process, and the training should be precisely based on technical skills such as setting up a hearing, gaining trust, gathering facts, questioning, note-taking, identifying and prioritizing issues, and writing an agreement.*

**KEYWORDS: Conflict, Resolution Strategies, Secondary Schools, Akwa Ibom State**

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**Introduction**

Conflict resolution is the process of resolving a dispute/conflict. Strategies, according to Deutsch and Coleman (2000), are the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflicts. Often, committed group members attempt to resolve group conflicts by actively communicating information about their conflicting motives or ideologies to the rest of the group (e.g., intentions; reasons for holding certain beliefs), and by engaging in collective negotiation (McNamara, 2007). A wide range of methods and procedures for addressing conflict exist, including but not limited to, negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, and creative peace building. Often times, successful conflict resolution occurs by listening to and providing opportunities to meet the needs of all parties and to adequately address interests, so that each party is satisfied with the outcome. Conflict practitioners talk about finding a win-win outcome for parties involved, as opposed to the win-lose dynamics found in most conflict situations. Attention is shifted away from conflict resolution, which involves conflicts that have already started, to conflict prevention, which aims to end conflicts before they start or before they lead to verbal, physical, or legal fighting or violence (Weaver, 2003).

Nevertheless, utilizing appropriate conflict resolution strategies in the classroom is becoming an increasingly important part of a school day. Donna, (Director of the National Center for Conflict Resolution Education [NCCRE]) and Richard, (NCCRE's Training Director), (2003) assert that the largest number of conflicts that result in violence start as relatively minor incidences. Using another youth's property without permission or unprovoked contact can cause a major conflict among students. Another interesting aspect of the report by Donna and Richard (2003) is that most incidents occur at home or at school, and the majority of them occur between individuals who know each other. Hence, Donna and Richard elaborate submitted that the common goal of violent acts involves retribution. Donna and Richard's (2003) report further indicates that violent acts are not the result of an absence of values, but are a result of a value system that accepts violence. Based on such reports, there is a need to conduct a study on conflict management and resolution in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. It is of common knowledge that violence against teachers, principals, other students, and destruction of property both in the learning institution and surrounding communities is a common occurrence in senior secondary. Unresolved conflicts reportedly lead to such arson, riots and violence which may result in injury and loss of life and property and we do not want this to happen in our schools.

### **Statement of Problem**

In every organization, there is a problem of conflict between the management and the workers. In some cases, conflict exists between workers themselves. Conflict also exists in public sectors. For instance, public secondary schools experience various cases and degrees of conflicts. These conflicts include student/student, student/teacher, teacher/teacher and principal/teacher conflicts. Such influences have negative influences on students' performance in school. Conflict prevents the principal in many ways in his or her quest for an effective school administration that brings about high performance on the part of the school. Some principals who face conflict in their place of work are always in a confused state and cannot supervise the workers to bring about high performance. This calls for good conflict resolution strategies. There are various conflict resolution strategies which the principal adopts in resolving conflicts in their schools, while the majority of principals are either forgetful of the fact that there are such strategies to help them in

effective resolution in schools and organizations, or they are still conscious of the fact but are only reluctant to apply such strategies.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate secondary school conflicts and effective resolution strategies in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To establish the effectiveness of compromise in resolving student-student conflicts in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State as compared to other strategies.
2. To determine the effectiveness of mediation in resolving principal-student conflicts in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State as compared to other strategies.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent is compromise effective in resolving student-student conflicts in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent is mediation effective in resolving principal-student conflicts in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in effectiveness between compromise and mediation as conflict resolution strategies used by secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in effectiveness between mediation and competition as conflict resolution strategies used by secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Compromise Resolution Strategy**

The compromise approach to conflict is to assume that a win/win solution is not possible and adopt a negotiating stance that involves a little bit of winning and a little bit of losing, with respect to both the interests and the relationships of the involved parties. Persuasion and manipulation dominate the style. The objective is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies the interests of the parties involved. The parties' stance toward conflict management here is mini-win/mini-lose. According to Lim and Rashad (2012), this is a clear case of a give-and-take situation in which both parties involved in the conflict willingly wish to give up something after negotiation in order to reach an agreement. Yuan (2010) observed that this compromising style will create I-win and I-lose sections to create compromise. On the issue of compromising style, Lussier (2010); Reich, Wagner-Westbrook, and Kressel (2007); and Friedman, et al. (2000) also agree that those engaged in conflict usually change their own opinions, either because they find sufficient reasons to do so or simply to avoid continued confrontation. According to Lim and Rashad (2012), one benefit of this style is that conflicts are resolved in a short time while relationships are still maintained. Lim and Rashad (2012) observed that when management in an organization overuses this style, it may cause some form of greed on the part of the users.

## Concept of Mediation Resolution Strategy

Mediation has been recognized as an economical, faster, and more amicable alternative to either arbitration or litigation in re-solving construction disputes. Its use in construction appears to receive little resistance from construction practitioners owing to its emphasis on confidentiality, opportunity to salvage business relationships, clarity of the third party neutrals' role, and flexibility in procedures. Mediation is one of several Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) strategies that ACAS began evaluating after recommendations were published by the Employment Tribunal and Better Regulations Taskforces in 2003. Kelly, (2004) stressed that it first gained a profile when it was introduced into family disputes twenty-five years ago. More recently, this interest has been strengthened by new works on restorative justice that argue that social justice can be achieved for both victims and falsely accused persons through reconciliation processes that avoid punitive sanctions. Over time, restorative justice and mediation have gained a reputation for effectiveness in situations where issues are emotionally complex (Roche, 2003).

Using the results of comprehensive conflict analysis and building on identified entry points, peace mediation interventions have to be designed carefully before processes start. In the Process Design phase, decisions on objectives, appropriate measures, procedures, formats, strategies, methods and logistics are taken while equally considering relevant norms and operationalising the mediation principles. The resulting design (Process Design) lays out the structure of the process and can serve as a roadmap for third parties. Due to changes within the conflict setting, the Process Design may require continuous and dynamic adaptation.

### *The following three approaches are relevant for peace mediation:*

Facilitative mediation focuses on organising and facilitating communication between the parties in a non-directive manner, eliciting the underlying interests and needs behind the stated demands and positions. In order not to jeopardise multi-partiality, the mediator refrains from making substantial recommendations or suggestions.

In formulative mediation, the mediator takes a more directive role. In addition to structuring the process and gathering proposed solutions, the mediator offers different options, e. g. by formulating option papers or drafting agreements.

As in facilitative mediation the consent of the parties is seen as essential. The focus of power-based mediation lies in using the mediator's leverage in order to reach an agreement. A strong mediator deploys his power and uses strategic tactics. The conflict parties are encouraged to agree through threats of punishment and promises of reward (carrot and stick approach). In practice, there is not always a clear-cut difference between these methods, and different mediation actors can use these approaches or combinations thereof at different stages of the mediation process. While the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation emphasises consent of the conflict parties, impartiality of the mediator and inclusivity of the process as mediation fundamentals, these elements are not always met in all the approaches.

## Compromise Conflict Resolution Strategy and its Effectiveness in Resolving Conflicts in Secondary Schools

Compromise, as described in Yuan (2010), is a win-lose agreement in which both parties get something of what they want but not all of what they want. Most disputes typically start with a

competitive or collaborative strategy where the best possible outcome is the goal for both sides. However, a number of factors such as time requirements, financial costs, use of power and influence, and practical matters often enter into the equation. The realization that initial desired goals may be unachievable moves parties to a negotiation process involving give and take in order to reach a compromised mutual agreement (Schmidt, 1991).

According to Edwards and Marson (1990), compromise is a strategy commonly associated with purchasing a car or home, settling a divorce, or resolving labour contract disputes. When an agreement is reached and the parties separate, the compromise process can help both parties feel satisfied that they have reached an acceptable solution. However, in disputes such as a divorce or labour contract agreement, the parties typically resume a functional relationship after the negotiation and the compromise agreement might not produce a truly satisfactory solution to the problems. As a result, lingering anger, resentment or dissatisfaction may trigger subsequent conflicts (The Community Board Programme. 1992). Using compromise to settle a conflict or dispute requires the parties involved to be consciously aware that the outcome might be less than they had originally hoped for. The final decision may be one that is acceptable but not optimal. There can be reluctance or resistance to using compromise as an approach to conflict resolution when the result seems like a loss. However, if the focus is on what is achieved, rather than on what has been given up, there is a greater likelihood that the parties will leave with feelings of satisfaction and acceptance (Tolan, 1994). Compromise is more successful when the parties have a range of tangible outcomes that are open for consideration such that the final decision is one that remains "within the box" for both parties (Buntz, 1983).

There may be a need to "agree to disagree" on some points when the dispute seems intractable and the reality that they will not be able to totally agree sets in. (Cowling, 1990). Agreeing to disagree is required more often when there is disagreement over values or principles rather than facts or methods. When both parties are able to truly listen and attempt to respectfully understand the position of the opposing party, they can often come to accept their disagreements. The mutual acceptance of differences increases the likelihood of a productive resolution of the dispute (Sadalla, Henriquez & Holmberg, 2007). The compromising strategy typically calls for both sides of a conflict to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable, if not agreeable, solution. This strategy prevails most often in conflicts where the parties hold approximately equivalent power. Business owners frequently employ compromise during contract negotiations with other businesses when each party stands to lose something valuable, such as a customer or necessary service.

Compromise can be an effective method for managing conflict and differences, but it is not always the best choice. Resorting to compromise when other conflict modes (avoiding, accommodating, competing or collaboration) may be more appropriate can result in a process or outcome that is not helpful for the situation at hand. It is important that vital issues or significant requirements are not lost in the course of compromise. Sometimes other creative solutions are needed. All differences and disagreements do not need to be negotiated. Effective individuals know when to use compromise and when other approaches to problem solving are needed, (Community Mediation Services, 2003)

According to Schmidt and Friedman (2005), several studies show that individuals who have a preference for using the compromise mode in managing conflict have a thinking orientation

toward decision making. These people are more likely to be objective in their assessment of differences and use factual information when weighing their options. Individuals with a thinking preference typically make pragmatic decisions based on deductive reasoning. When attempting to manage a conflict, they will be more inclined to accept or suggest a compromise when this seems to be the most viable thing to do. People with a "feeling" preference on (Community Board Programme, Inc: 1990) will be less likely to desire compromise as a mode for resolving differences. These individuals are concerned about the impact of decisions on themselves or others and would prefer to collaborate for a win/win outcome when possible. When collaboration is not an option, they are more apt to avoid dealing with the problem or may accommodate others in order to reduce stress and keep the environment stable. Agreeing to a compromise will likely feel like a loss if the outcome has a negative impact on them or those they care about. The other dyads (Extrovert-Introvert, Sensing-Intuition, and Judging-Perceiving) do not show any consistent patterns related to the compromise conflict mode. (Mercy, 1993). Therefore, mediators, coaches and supervisors need only observe the thinking-feeling dyad when integrating into their work with clients or employees who are engaged in the use of compromise (Fabumini, 2010).

Finally, compromise is often a useful strategy when dealing with relatively small concerns. This differs from an accommodating strategy, in which the conceding party finds an issue unimportant that the opposing party considers comparatively important. A manager might enlist a compromise approach most effectively when both parties consider the issue to be of moderate or little importance. In such cases, compromising saves both parties the time required to employ problem-solving techniques to address the fundamental core of the conflict.

### **Mediation Conflict Resolution Strategy and Effective Strategies in Resolving Conflicts in Secondary Schools**

Mediation, according to Schmidt and Friedman (2005), is an alternative to the traditional disciplinary practices (detention, suspension, and so on) that occur in schools. It is a structured process that enables two disputing parties/individuals to talk out and resolve their differences with the assistance of a pair of neutral peers. The end result is a written contract. Mediation is a voluntary process. The conflicting parties must agree to resolve the problem together or they may instead choose to proceed through traditional disciplinary measures.

Grace (1991) reported that more than 350 schools in the United States and Canada have implemented instruction in conflict resolution and peer mediation for students. The number of school-based conflict resolution programs grows yearly. In San Francisco, the Community Board began school-based mediation in 1982 (Davis & Porter, 1985). The programme had three major components: (a) A conflict resolution course was taught in high schools. It included experiential exercises, reading and discussion, and specific activities on interpersonal communication, assertiveness, one-to-one conflict resolution skills and conflict mediation skills for third parties. The second component involved classroom meetings which were conducted in the Kindergarten through Grade 5 classrooms. The meetings took place for about 20 minutes immediately following lunch hour. Alternate conflict resolution methods were taught to students through discussion of problems, role-playing and structured experiences. In the third sector of the programme, conflict managers were trained to mediate disputes on the playground. Students from Grades 4 and 5 were selected by their peers based on leadership ability. They represented

the gender division and racial/ethnic identity of the school. Students d 15 hours of training in active listening, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, assertiveness, open communication, and conflict management. They wore "conflict manager" t-shirts and, using a simplified version of the mediation process, they made themselves available on the playground to help students resolve disputes (Davis & Porter, 1985).

Evaluations from the Community Board projects in San Francisco show that conflicts in the school decreased. The principals of the four schools using the Conflict Manager programme stated that "conflict managers" made significant contributions to a calm, friendly atmosphere on the playgrounds. They noted that what students learned about resolving conflicts on the playground was carried into the classrooms and resulted in less teacher time on "refereeing disputes". These principals also observed that "conflict managers" taught what they had learnt to their parents, siblings, and friends (Davison, 1985).

Gentry, & Benenson (1992) implemented the Community Board Programme in an elementary school in central Illinois and evaluated its effects on how students who were trained in conflict resolution skills dealt with their sibling conflicts at home. Students trained as conflict managers reported a significant decline in the frequency and intensity of conflicts with their siblings. Parents of these children perceived a similar decline in the frequency of conflicts and their need to intervene. They reported a significant improvement in their children's use of productive talk during conflicts.

Star, (2003) who conducted the first reported empirical study on a school-based mediation programme, examined the impact of the programme on the school in three areas: (a) impact on school discipline climate, defined as the perceptions of students and faculty on issues such as discipline and violence in the school, as well as the number of disciplinary problems and violent incidents in schools, (b) effect of mediation on students' peer mediators, including effect on their self-image; and (c) effect of mediation on student disputants, including the number and nature of disciplinary problems experienced subsequent to mediation. The programme was implemented in a middle school in New York State. Peer mediators were selected by the administration to represent a cross-section of the school population. They were trained in basic mediation skills over a three-week period. The majority of the students had minority backgrounds from low-income families. Nearly one-half were welfare recipients.

It was established that the peer mediation programme had a positive effect on all three areas. Overall, the school discipline climate improved, the level of violent disciplinary problems was reduced, and there were beneficial effects on students who were peer mediators. The most dramatic effect for the peer mediators was increased self-image, social morality, and improved vocational-educational attitudes.

The Dispute Management in Schools Project (DMSP) was a three-year cooperative project of the University of Hawaii and the Hawaii State Department of Education. Beginning in January 1986, the project was designed to train student mediators to manage disputes at a high school, a feeder intermediate school, and a feeder elementary school. Student mediators, perceived leaders who volunteered to participate, completed a 20-hour training programme. They were on call throughout the school day and agreed to make up all school work missed.

It was established that during the second and third year of the project, 133 out of 136 mediated cases reached agreement. Twelve cases were teacher-student disputes mediated by a student and teacher team. School personnel reported that co-mediators seemed to work most effectively. Females were more likely to use mediation than males and students in Grades 7, 8 and 9 used the mediation services more than other age groups. Thirty-one (31) percent of the mediated disputes were among Grade 8 students, 18 percent among Grade 7 and 11 percent among Grade 9 students. Ethnic group distribution was in proportion to that of the schools. The types of disputes mediated were: gossip/rumor, harassment, arguments, and classroom behaviour (Takeshita, 1999). The overall leadership roles of the student mediators were enhanced through training in questioning for feelings as well as facts, analyzing and synthesizing problems, listening supportively, and communicating verbally and nonverbally. Student mediators improved academically, especially those with marginal grades. Teachers and administrators observed improved attitudes among mediators and disputants (Araki, 1990). In spite of positive perceptions of the programme by participants, empirical data showed no improvement in school climate, no reduction in retention, suspension or dismissal incidents, and no improvement in student attendance (Kadomoto, 2008).

Deutsch (2003) reported on a programme at the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution at Teachers' College, Columbia University, which trained several students from one high school in New York City in cooperative learning and conflict resolution. Students who participated in the study were grouped into three. One group was trained in cooperative learning, the second in conflict resolution, and the third in both conflict resolution and cooperative learning. Deutsch (2003) discovered that students, teachers, and administrators generally had positive views of the training and results. Researchers thought that the group that received both types of training (conflict resolution and cooperative training) was the most positively affected. This impression was not supported by empirical data. A qualitative study of the same project by Mitchell, (2006) indicated that a needs assessment should have been conducted separately for each site before the project began and that if more time had been available, prior to implementation, to build trust and rapport between the trainers and school personnel, the project might have been more successful. Complications in the project include students' absenteeism, lack of interest by students and staff in the research component, and limited funding. It was, however, reported that, on the whole, as students improved in managing conflicts, they experienced increased social support, improved relationships, higher self-esteem, increases in personal control, and high academic performance (Deutsch, 2003).

## **Empirical Review**

### **Empirical Review of Compromise Conflict Resolution Strategy**

Dickson and Isaac (2019) in their study examined the use of compromise conflict management style and its impact on organizational health of some selected Federal Agencies in Rivers, namely Niger Delta Development Commission, Niger Delta Basin Authority, Ministry of Niger Delta and National Emergency Management Authority. The research design used to carry out the study was the cross sectional survey. The sample size of 201 employees was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Also, the sampling technique used was the simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were constructed to measure all the indicators of the conflict management style, and organizational health and these were administered to the respondents in



order to extract data for analysis. Multiple regression statistics was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that there is a positive and significant association between compromise conflict management style and cohesiveness; also it was revealed from the findings that there is a positive and significant association between compromise conflict management style and problem solving. It is then concluded that because the employees of these Federal agencies exhibited the attributes of compromise conflict management style, the health of the organization was strengthened.

### **Empirical Review of Mediation Conflict Resolution Strategy**

Kangogo, Matei, Sambu and Otungu (2008) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of mediation on conflict management in public secondary schools in Kenya. The work adopted the descriptive research design. The population comprised all the students, teaching and non-teaching staffs of secondary schools in Kisumu, in Kenya. Out of this population, a sample of 1755 staff was taken and selected through the stratified random sampling techniques. This sample was made up of 585 non-teaching staff, 585 teaching and 585 students. The sampling respondents were the respondents in the study. The data collected were analyzed using percentages, t-tests and Chi-square analysis while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels. The study concluded that, mediation is seen having a lot influence on conflict resolution.

### **Methods**

The study area was Akwa Ibom State. Comparative research design was used for this study. The population of the study comprises all the public senior secondary school principals and teachers of senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom state. There are 234 principals and 19,624 teachers distributed into 234 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Cluster and random sampling techniques was used to select 200 respondents which constituted the sample size used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Secondary School Conflicts and Effectiveness of the Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (SSCERSQ)". Face and content validity of the instrument was carried out by a supervisor and to a lecturer in test and measurement, in the Faculty of education, University of Uyo, Uyo. Instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach reliability test at 0.94 coefficients. The data obtained was analyzed using correlated t-test statistics (mean) and standard deviation while simple regression analysis will be used to analyse the hypotheses. The result was tested for significance at 0.05 alpha levels.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **Hypothesis One**

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in effectiveness between compromise and mediation as conflict resolution strategies used by secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.

**Table 1: Correlated t-test analysis of the difference in effectiveness between compromise and mediation as conflict resolution strategies used by secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	R	t	Sig.
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Mediation		15.86	1.53			
	200			0.70	12.94	.000
Compromise		14.56	1.99			

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 199; N=200; critical t-value 1.96**

The above table presents the calculated r-value as (0.70) with its corresponding P-value of .000. and calculated t-value as (12.94) with its corresponding P-value of .000. As regards the correlated r-value, the P-value of .000 when compared with the alpha level of .05 was found less and so proved that the corresponding calculated r-value (0.70) was significant. With reference to the correlated t-value the P-value of .000, when compared with the alpha level of .05 was found less and so proved that the corresponding calculated t-value (12.94) was significant. Hence, the result was significant. The result means that there is significant difference in effectiveness between compromise and mediation as conflict resolution strategies used by secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State. The significance of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Buntz, (1983) in a way as he had observed that compromise is more successful when the parties have a range of tangible outcomes that are open for consideration such that the final decision is one that remains "within the box" for both parties. It also agreed with the opinion of The Community Board Programme (1992) that using compromise to settle a conflict or dispute requires the parties involved to be consciously aware that the outcome might be less than they had originally hoped for. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

### Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in effectiveness between mediation and competition as conflict resolution strategies used by secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.

**Table 2: Correlated t-test analysis of the difference in effectiveness between mediation and competition as conflict resolution strategies used by secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State.**

VARIABLE	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	R	t	Sig.
Competition	200	13.79	1.57	0.89	39.86*	.000
Mediation		15.86	1.53			

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 199; N= 200; critical t-value 1.96**

The above table presents the calculated r-value as (0.89) with its corresponding P-value of .000. and calculated t-value as (39.86) with its corresponding P-value of .000. As regards the correlated r-value, the P-value of .000 when compared with the alpha level of .05 was found less and so proved that the corresponding calculated r-value (0.89) was significant. With reference to the correlated t-value the P-value of .000, when compared with the alpha level of .05 was found less and so proved that the corresponding calculated t-value (39.86) was significant. Hence, the result was significant. The result means that there is significant difference in effectiveness between mediation and competition as conflict resolution strategies used by secondary school principals in Akwa Ibom State. The significance of the result is in agreement with the opinion of Kelly, (2004) which stressed that mediation is one of several Alternative Dispute Resolution

(ADR) strategies that ACAS began evaluating after recommendations were published by the Employment Tribunal and Better Regulations Taskforces in 2003. It first gained a profile when it was introduced into family disputes twenty-five years ago. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

### **Conclusion**

The study observed that when an agreement is reached and the parties separate, the compromise process can help both parties feel satisfied that they have reached an acceptable solution. Using compromise to settle a conflict or dispute requires the parties involved to be consciously aware that the outcome might be less than they had originally hoped for. However, in disputes such as student-student conflicts or principal-student agreements, the parties typically resume a functional relationship after the negotiation and the compromise agreement might not produce a truly satisfactory solution to the problems. As a result, lingering anger, resentment or dissatisfaction may trigger subsequent conflicts. Moreover, agreeing to a compromise will likely feel like a loss if the outcome has a negative impact on them or those they care about. The study concludes that the peer mediation program has a positive effect on the school discipline climate, the level of violent disciplinary problems, increases the self-image of students who are peer mediators, and improves vocational-educational attitudes.

### **Recommendations**

1. School mediators should be given adequate training and seminars to guide them during the mediation process, and the training should be precisely based on technical skills such as setting up a hearing, gaining trust, gathering facts, questioning, note-taking, identifying and prioritizing issues, and writing an agreement.
2. It is very essential for mediators to exhibit conscious awareness of when to use compromise and when other approaches to problem solving are needed. Therefore, mediators, coaches and supervisors need only observe the thinking-feeling dyad when integrating into their work with clients or employees who are engaged in the use of compromise.

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