

GENDER DIFFERENTIAL PERCEPTION ON IMPACTS OF CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS IN CLASSROOM INTERACTION ON LEARNING IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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Introduction

There have been several investigations into infractions in school relationship because of its salient and predominating influence on academic activities and school achievement. Nwana (1995) identified the potency of truancy (8.09%), disobedience (15.22%), drug offence (13.95%), assault and insult (8.09%), sex offences (1.66%); strikes and mass demonstration (0.19%) and increasing student's engagement in unlawful activities within the school environment. According to Obe (2009) such disciplinary problems such as vandalism, roughness, examination malpractices absenteeism, stubbornness, apathy among others, contradict the products of a school system, hamper a progressive learning environment and functionality of the social system hence should be deterred or exterminated in order for an effective learning to take place.

The concept of interaction classroom for effective instruction and learning therefore rely on harmony between the elements that make up the classroom. The knowledge of the subject matter, association of what constitutes the best practice on meeting the individual need of the students, effective teaching and use of teaching methods that can initiate and retain permanently interaction between learners and teachers. Harmony among these elements is the basic ingredient of an interactive classroom. In such classroom techniques, students are engaged and responsible for the acquisition of their knowledge, while teachers' make critical observation, and monitory of the learning environment as facilitators of learning, the well-learning of the students, a good learning environment is also achieved (Michelle, 2005; Albert, 2009; Kizlik; (2009; Hetlin & Stewart, 2005; Ajala 2000). Moreover, Oladipo and Adetoro (2008) emphasized the necessity for the well being of the students and teachers and accomplishment of education goals and policies.

Although conflict impedes harmony and in the views of Dewey (2000) stirs up observation and memory, it is a *sine qua non*'. In order to manage the divesting aspect of conflict based on differences in the theoretical explanations and intent of conflicts, different strategies are adopted (Kidmann & Thomas, 2009). Managing of classroom conflicts also differ in approach by teachers and students. For example in mediating

peer programs in secondary school, Johnson and Johnson (1996) posit that classroom teachers spend an inordinate amount of time and energy managing children's conflicts which are not managed well by students or the faculty. Seeking adult intervention could result from the carefree attitude on conflict; unwillingness and indiscipline among students. Differences in teacher opinion on management of classroom conflicts could also be as a result of inadequacy of management strategy or lack of positive and effective behavior management practices (Mcintyre, 2006).

To create a harmony in teacher practice, Adeyinka (2003) suggested teacher use of questioning technique, use of reinforcement, teaching cycle and systematized and ordered correct way to accomplish the set objectives of instruction (Mezwki, 2007). Kizilik (2009) and Rodriguez (2009) among other researchers advocated for a co-operative classroom setting where teacher sets the Socio-emotional environment in the classroom. Affection in the classroom, they maintained is a tool for directional accomplishment of the teaching goals- this has resulted to different models with the aim to achieve harmony and knowledge, such as the Flanders classroom interaction model, teacher initiation and students response and teach model (IRE) used by Nassaje and Wells (1996), Ituen (2009) among others.

It is therefore the intent of this research to study the differential perceptions on impact of conflicts and consensus in classroom interaction based on gender, especially among secondary schools in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The difficulty in determining the pattern of conflict and consensus in interaction among classroom participants (teachers and students) calls for careful study, which cannot otherwise be determined except through research. The school provides a setting in which students are exposed to the complexities of life. Students from different cultures, experiences and backgrounds have to interact. They not only interact among themselves, they also interact with teachers. Each participant comes to school to negotiate a shared World and act towards it. A notable fact in this process, which should not be undermined, is that it attracts reward and repercussion. Students tend to help themselves when there are shared meanings and congruence. But how the students perceive and interact with one another is a neglected aspect of instruction. Much training time is devoted to helping teachers arrange appropriate interactions between students and materials (that is, textbooks, curriculum programs, etc.), some time is spent on how teachers should interact with students, but how students should interact with one another is relatively ignored. This scenario could result to conflicts in which the participant may use novice ideas in finding solution to their differences.

Furthermore, how teachers structure student-student interaction patterns affect students learning and how they feel about school and the teacher. Moreover, the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom is of paramount importance because the existing congruence will enhance teaching and learning while the pervasiveness of conflict will destabilize the polity, making learning difficult. Teachers and curriculum planners emphasize interaction between teachers and students within the classroom, adhering to the content of the academic curriculum without integrating the social curriculum. This has obviously increased classroom conflicts. Other consequences include lack of cooperation among students, teacher-students conflicts.

As long as that situation persists, it is likely that meaningful learning would not take place. The conflict looked minute but it might turn out to be 'embers' from which greater conflict situation occurs. Within the classroom, it is not every time that the 'environment' is always in consonance with teachers' and students' expectations. In such situations, how can congruence be achieved? This study therefore is to investigate conflicts and consensus in classroom interaction as affecting learning, among senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the gender differential perception on the impact of conflicts and consensus in classroom interaction among public secondary schools in Rivers state.

Specifically, the following objectives are to be achieved.

1. To evaluate the contents and processes of social interaction in classroom in public secondary schools?
2. To determine the male and female students' perception of impact of contents and processes of conflicts in classroom interaction in secondary schools?
3. To evaluate the perception of teachers classified by gender on the impact of contents and processes of conflicts in classroom interaction in secondary school?

Research Questions

The following research questions are stated to the guide the study.

1. What are the contents and processes of social interaction in the classroom in secondary schools?
2. What are the exceptions of students' consensus (male and female) on the contents and processes in classroom interaction among secondary schools in Rivers state?

3. What are the perceptions of teachers (male and female) on the contents and consensus of conflicts in classroom interaction among secondary school in Rivers state?

Hypothesis

The following null Hypotheses (H_0) were formulated to guide the study.

H₀1. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female students on the content and processes of conflicts in classroom interaction in secondary schools in Rivers state.

H₀2. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers on the content and processes of conflicts in classroom interaction in secondary schools in Rivers state.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for teachers and students classroom interaction. The pattern of interaction in a classroom is important for conduciveness of learning environment and creation of a classroom order. Such order is constituted by the social roles and relationships among members, expectations that members construct and understanding of what members count as knowledge, participation, social interaction, text and individual within this classroom. The results of this research shall be useful in creating this expected knowledge and constructs for an ideal classroom for maximum cooperation in learning between teachers and students.

The study will sensitize educational authorities (policy makers, implementation and curriculum planners) to realize that there are minutiae in classroom interaction, which could hinder teacher effectiveness and inhibit students' learning outcome. Educational authorities will need to look into this area and see how best to go about it. It is on this premise the researcher would like to agree that, "this is the time when all hands must be on deck to see that students thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

In addition, the study will sensitize teachers to be more deliberate, cautious and positive about classroom interactions. Actions that will trigger conflicts and unnecessary classroom schisms will be avoided so that teachers can perform to the ultimate, this cannot be achieved until teachers come to this awareness. That is why Starr (2001) suggests that teachers develop social and academic skills that enhance their classroom achievements and create chances for future job success.

Furthermore, the study will show students the desirability of cherishing and working towards congeniality in classroom interaction, the socially constructed nature of life in classroom. However students should be more tolerant, carrying, understanding and

become more willing to give and to ask for help. It is hoped that parents, especially the literate ones will be intimated on how social interaction in the classroom could impinge on their children's educational achievements. Consequently, this will enable them to give adequate counseling to their children so that classroom interaction can be more congenial. Finally, social researchers, especially the other sociologists of education and interaction will find the study very handy for further research.

Scope of the Study/ Limitations of the Study

The study covers only public owned secondary schools in Rivers State. Conflict and consensus in school interaction that are not within the classroom are excluded from the study. This means that external scooping like family squabble, perceived negative school climate, socio-economic situation in the state, and residence of students and teachers are not taken into consideration.

The study is exploratory in nature and consequently took a broad focus. The findings of this study would not be generalized or considered to be representative sample of all secondary schools in Nigeria. The data reflects existing patterns of classroom conflict and consensus in the perceptions of students and teachers in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Methodology

In order to investigate gender differential perceptions of conflicts and consensus in classroom interaction among public secondary schools, the descriptive survey design is adopted. A population of 19263 senior secondary school teachers and 31200 students across public secondary schools in the state form the population of the study. However, a sample of eight hundred (800) respondents of three hundred and seventy (370) males and four hundred and thirty (430) females form the student sample, while the teachers sample used for the 185 males and 215 females.

The research instrument Classroom Conflict and Consensus Questionnaire (CCCQ) was used to collate respondents' opinion. The instrument is a 28-item instrument purported to seek opinions on conflicts and conservation in the classroom. The responses are analyzed using the mean and standard deviation in order to answer the research question while the hypothesis were answered using the test inferential statistics, tested at 0505 significance level.

Research Question I

What are the contents and processes of social interaction in the classroom in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4.1a: Frequency of Students’ Response on Contents and Process of Social Interaction in the Classroom.

| S/N | Questionnaire Item | SA | A | SD | D | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
|-----|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------|----------|
| 1. | Cases of conflict are predominant in classroom interaction among students such as: | | | | | | | |
| | (i) Physical contact. | | | | | | | |
| | • Push (Rough play) | (640) | (750) | (638) | (171) | 2.75 | 1.48 | Accept |
| | • Fight | 160 (1252) | 250 (654) | 319 (386) | 171 (76) | 2.96 | 1.83 | Accept |
| | (ii) verbal | 313 | 218 | 193 | 76 | | | |
| | • Abuse | (856) | (360) | (282) | (325) | 2.29 | 1.28 | Reject |
| | • Shout/threat | 214 (1220) | 120 (561) | 141 (218) | 325 (199) | 2.75 | 1.71 | Accept |
| | • Nagging | 305 (1152) | 187 (321) | 109 (432) | 199 (189) | 2.62 | 1.60 | Accept |
| | • Malice | 288 (1332) | 107 (591) | 216 (302) | 189 (119) | 2.93 | 1.86 | Accept |
| | 333 | 197 | 151 | 119 | | | | |
| 2 | Cases of consensus is sought adopting: | | | | | | | |
| | (i) Contention | | | | | | | |
| | Argue | (2004) | (348) | (202) | (100) | 3.32 | 2.55 | Accept |
| | | 501 | 16 | 101 | 100 | | | |
| | Tease | (1344) | (657) | (256) | (107) | 2.96 | 1.89 | Accept |
| | | 336 | 219 | 120 | 107 | | | |
| | (ii) smoothing | | | | | | | |
| | Give in silence | (468) | (1242) | (406) | (66) | 2.73 | 1.96 | Accept |
| | | 117 | 414 | 203 | 66 | | | |
| | Apology | (150) | (651) | (108) | (491) | 1.75 | 1.04 | Reject |
| | | 38 | 217 | 54 | 491 | | | |
| | (iii) compromise | | | | | | | |
| | Negotiating | (328) | (579) | (432) | (309) | 2.14 | 1.10 | Reject |
| | (iv) Emotional | 82 | 193 | 216 | 309 | | | |
| | Tears/cry | (1304) | (654) | (280) | (116) | 2.94 | 1.86 | Accept |
| | | 326 | 218 | 140 | 116 | | | |
| | (v) calling in 3 rd party | | | | | | | |
| | Fellow students | (2092) | (372) | (200) | (3) | 3.46 | 2.68 | Accept |
| | Teacher | 523 (524) | 124 (63) | 120 (820) | 3 (219) | 2.08 | 1.29 | Reject |
| | | 131 | 21 | 429 | 219 | | | |

Criterion Mean (xm) $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.50$

Table 4.1b: Frequency of Teachers' Response on Contents and Processes of Conflicts Social Interaction in the Classroom.

| S/N | Questionnaire Item | SA | A | SD | D | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
|-----------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|--------|----------|
| 3. | Cases of conflict are predominant in classroom interaction among students such as: | | | | | | | |
| | (i) Physical contact. | 12 | 6 | 596 | (97) | 1.78 | 1.51 | Reject |
| | • Push (Rough play) | (3) | 2 | 298 | 97 | | | |
| | • Fight | 0 | 3 | 418 | (190) | 1.53 | 1.14 | Reject |
| | (ii) verbal | 0 | 1 | 209 | 190 | | | |
| | • Abuse | (848) | (45) | (206) | (70) | 2.92 | 2.19 | Accept |
| | • Shout/threat | 212 | 15 | 103 | 70 | | | |
| | • Nagging | (404) | (129) | (312) | (200) | 2.61 | 1.40 | Accept |
| | • Malice | 101 | 43 | 156 | 200 | | | |
| | | (952) | (99) | (162) | (48) | 3.15 | 2.43 | Accept |
| | 238 | 33 | 81 | 48 | | | | |
| | (156) | (246) | (364) | (122) | 1.97 | 1.14 | Reject | |
| | 14 | 82 | 182 | 122 | | | | |
| 2 | Cases of consensus is sought adopting: | | | | | | | |
| | (i) Contention | (872) | (78) | (166) | (73) | 2.97 | 2.23 | Accept |
| | Argue | 218 | 26 | 83 | 73 | | | |
| | Tease | 229 | 107 | 36 | (28) | 3.34 | 2.42 | Accept |
| | (ii) smoothing | (916) | (321) | (74) | 28 | | | |
| | Give in silence | (728) | (39) | (246) | (82) | 2.74 | 1.93 | Reject |
| | Apology | 182 | 13 | 123 | 82 | | | |
| | (iii) compromise | 78 | 108 | 21 | 193 | 2.18 | 1.22 | Reject |
| | Negotiating | (312) | (324) | (42) | (192) | | | |
| | (iv) Emotional | 33 | 14 | 1153 | 200 | 1.70 | 0.97 | Reject |
| | | (132) | (42) | (306) | (200) | | | |
| | Tears/cry | 27 | 31 | 173 | 169 | 1.79 | 1.02 | Reject |
| | (v) calling in 3 rd party | (108) | (93) | (346) | (169) | | | |
| Fellow students | (872) | (9) | (264) | (47) | 2.98 | 2.28 | Accept | |
| Teacher | 218 | 3 | 132 | 47 | | | | |
| | (204) | (66) | (434) | (110) | 2.03 | 1.24 | Reject | |
| | 51 | 22 | 217 | 110 | | | | |

Criterion mean (\bar{x}_m) $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.50$

Table 4.1a revealed that cases of conflict are observed among students in the public secondary schools in the research area in areas of physical contact involving rough play (pushing) and fighting ($x: 2.75 > 2.50$). Other contents of social interaction includes verbal conflicts in the form of shout/threat, nagging and malice ($x: 2.75 > 2.50$; $2.62 > 2.50$; $2.93 > 2.50$). For cases of consensus adopted, contention among students are expressed through argument ($x: 3.32 > 2.50$), tease ($x: 2.96 > 2.50$), smoothing out conflicts are difficult as students give in to silence and not apologetic ($x: 1.75 < 2.50$; $2.14 < 2.50$). emotional

disposition is observed in tears/cry ($x: 2.94 > 2.50$) and as a result, calling in third party to wade into conflicts in the classroom among students are encouraged especially within the students ($x: 3.46 > 2.50$) much less than involving the teacher ($x: 2.08 < 2.50$).

Based on the teachers' response, table 4.1b indicated that the cases of conflict involving physical contact in the form of fighting and pushing are not common among students ($x: 1.78 < 2.50$; $1.53 < 2.50$) but cases of verbal conflict such as abuse, shout/threat, nagging are common ($x: 2.92 > 2.50$; $2.61 > 2.50$; $1.53 < 2.50$). Furthermore, processes of consensus involved students contention by use of argument ($x: 2.97 > 2.50$) teasing ($x: 3.34 > 2.50$), smoothing by giving in to silence ($2.94 > 2.50$) instead of use of apology ($2.18 < 2.50$). Student have avoided use of negotiation as processes of consensus ($x: 2.50 > 1.70$). Emotional evidence shown in the form of tears among students while calling in third party for the settlement of conflicts involve teachers ($x: 2.98 > 2.50$) much more than involving principals/vice principals ($x: 2.03 < 2.50$).

Research Question II: How do cultural differences impact on classroom interaction in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4.2a: Students' Opinion on the Impact of Cultural Differences in Classroom Interaction

| S/N | Questionnaire Item | HI | I | NI | LI | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
|-----|---|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------|------------|
| 5 | Learning should involve students from same tribe to avoid misunderstanding (conflicts) | (1192) 298 | (456) 152 | (612) 306 | (4) 4 | 2.83 | 1.76 | Impact |
| 6 | Upholding cordial relationship in the classroom is necessary among students of same native tongue | (656) 164 | (627) 209 | (360) 180 | (247) 247 | 2.36 | 1.25 | Non-impact |
| 7 | Students of the same faith should cooperate during learning to avoid conflict | (1272) 318 | (441) 147 | (326) 163 | (173) 173 | 2.77 | 1.74 | Impact |
| 8 | Moslems in my class should relate with their fellows in order to instill social harmony | (1744) 436 | (549) 183 | (218) 109 | (72) 72 | 3.23 | 2.29 | Impact |
| 9 | Those who play games together should enjoy cordial relationship | (652) 163 | (1536) 512 | (306) 102 | (23) 23 | 3.15 | 2.12 | Impact |
| 10 | Students of same socio-economic background should cooperate in classroom interaction | (1652) 413 | (459) 153 | (216) 108 | (126) 126 | 3.07 | 2.16 | Impact |
| 11 | Problem solving among students should be determined by their sex (male with male, female with female). | (624) 156 | (561) 187 | (572) 256 | (201) 201 | 2.37 | 1.25 | Non-impact |
| 12 | Academic matters should be discussed with female teachers only | (872) 218 | (489) 163 | (568) 284 | (135) 135 | 2.58 | 1.44 | Impact |
| 13 | Those who attend one mosque should not relate friendly with those of different mosques if co-existence and friendliness should exist in the classroom | (2048) 512 | (369) 123 | (282) 141 | (24) 24 | 3.40 | 2.62 | Impact |
| 14 | Academic matters should be discussed with male teachers only | (524) 131 | (561) 187 | (824) 412 | (70) 70 | 2.47 | 1.41 | Non-impact |
| 15 | It is important for students of the same age to work cooperatively in the classroom | (872) 218 | (567) 189 | (286) 143 | (250) 250 | 2.47 | 1.90 | Non-impact |
| 16 | Only students of comparable social status should work together and cooperatively in the classroom | (1192) 298 | (942) 314 | (206) 103 | (85) 85 | 3.03 | 1.92 | Impact |

Criterion mean (\bar{x}_m) $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.50$

HI = High impact, I = Impact, NI = Non-impact, LI = Less Impact

Table 4.2b: Teachers' Opinion on the Impact of Cultural Differences in Classroom Interaction

| S/N | Questionnaire Item | HI | I | NI | LI | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
|-----|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------|------------|
| 17 | Learning should involve students from same tribe to avoid misunderstanding (conflicts) | (0) 0 | (0) 0.0 | (636) 318 | (82) 82 | 1.80 | 2.57 | Non-impact |
| 18 | Upholding cordial relationship in the classroom is necessary among students of same native tongue | (68) 17 | (0) 0.0 | (582) 291 | (152) 152 | 2.00 | 1.51 | Non-impact |
| 19 | Students of the same faith should cooperate during learning to avoid conflict | (0) 0.00 | (33) 11 | (452) 226 | (162) 162 | 1.62 | 1.20 | Non-impact |
| 20 | Moslems in my class should relate with their fellows in order to instill social harmony | (4) 1 | (0) 0.0 | (784) 392 | (7) 7 | 1.99 | 1.96 | Non-impact |
| 21 | Those who play games together should enjoy cordial relationship | (0) 0.0 | (0) 0.0 | (596) 298 | (102) 102 | 1.75 | 1.51 | Non-impact |
| 22 | Students of same socio-economic background should cooperate in classroom interaction | (484) 121 | (0) 0.0 | (374) 187 | (92) 92 | 2.38 | 1.53 | Non-impact |
| 23 | Problem solving among students should be determined by their sex (male with male, female with female). | (0) 0.0 | (0) 0.0 | (658) 329 | (71) 71 | 1.82 | 1.65 | Non-impact |
| 24 | Academic matters should be discussed with female teachers only | (0) 0.0 | (0) 0.0 | (232) 111 | (289) 289 | 1.28 | 0.61 | Non-impact |
| 25 | Those who attend one mosque should not relate friendly with those of different mosques if co-existence and friendliness should exist in the classroom | (0) 0.0 | (0) 0.0 | (598) 299 | (101) 101 | 1.75 | 1.51 | Non-impact |
| 26 | Academic matters should be discussed with male teachers only | (84) 21 | (594) 198 | (136) 68 | (113) 113 | 2.32 | 1.56 | Non-impact |
| 27 | It is important for students of the same age to work cooperatively in the classroom | (48) 12 | (0) 0.0 | (622) 311 | (77) 77 | 1.87 | 1.56 | Non-impact |
| 28 | Only students of comparable social status should work together and cooperatively in the classroom | (96) 24 | (9) 3 | (638) 319 | (54) 54 | 1.99 | 1.62 | Non-impact |

Criterion mean (\bar{x}_m) $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.50$

HI = High impact, I = Impact, NI = Non-impact, LI = Less Impact

4.2a showed that cultural differences are measured in terms of tribe, language, religion, gender and socio-economic background. Students had the opinion that learning should involve same tribe to avoid misunderstanding in the classroom ($\bar{x}:2.83 > 2.5$). Upholding

that cordial relationship in the classroom is not necessary among students of same native tongue (language difference) (\bar{x} : 2.36 < 2.50) classroom cooperation during learning is observed to be effective only among students of same religious faith (\bar{x} : 2.77 > 2.50). In terms of socio-economic background, they opined that students of same socio-economic background should cooperate in classroom interaction (\bar{x} : 3.07 > 2.16). Furthermore, cooperative learning involving problem solving among students should be determined by gender (male versus male, female versus female) (\bar{x} : 2.37 > 2.50) while academic matters should be discussed with students of same faith if moslem, and comparable social status (\bar{x} : 3.40 > 2.50; 3.03 > 2.50).

Table 4.2b indicated teachers' opinion on the cultural differences in classroom interaction among the students in the research area. Learning according to their views should not involve students from same tribe if misunderstanding (conflict) should be avoided (\bar{x} : 1.80 < 2.50). To instill cordial relationship in the classroom, students of same language (native tongue), faith, religion and socio-economic background need not be separated (\bar{x} : 2.00 < 2.50; 1.62 < 2.50; 1.99 < 2.50). In terms of gender, problem solving among students should be determined by sex (\bar{x} : 1.82 < 2.50), academic matters involving students should not be selectively handled with respect to gender and there should be a mix of students of different socio-economic background.

Research Question III

How do the students perceive conflict in their classroom interaction in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4.5 Students' Perception of Conflict in Classroom Interaction in Secondary Schools in Rivers State

| S/N | Questionnaire item | SA | A | SD | D | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
|-----|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|------|----------|
| 29 | Teachers development of special interest in certain category of students is capable of causing conflict | (1120) 280 | (324) 108 | (256) 128 | (284) 284 | 2.48 | 1.53 | Reject |
| 30 | Teachers in intimate friendship with certain students of opposite sex can create suspicion and conflict | (1520) 380 | (387) 129 | (166) 83 | (208) 208 | 2.85 | 3.94 | Accept |
| 31 | Emotionally driven cares for opposite sex can create conflict among student/student or student/teacher | (1836) 459 | (654) 218 | (76) 38 | (85) 85 | 3.31 | 2.44 | Accept |
| 32 | A teacher will certainly lose respect from his/her students if he attends differentially to students of opposite sex | (732) 183 | (870) 290 | (384) 192 | (135) 135 | 2.65 | 2.26 | Accept |
| 33 | Teacher can lose respect if he loses control of his class | (1600) 400 | (570) 190 | (306) 153 | (57) 57 | 3.17 | 2.15 | Accept |
| 34 | A lesson not well prepared for, exposes teachers' incompetence | (2048) 512 | (603) 201 | (96) 48 | (39) 39 | 3.48 | 2.67 | Accept |
| 35 | It is proper for sanitary facilities (rest room) to be specially allocated to teachers and students differently | (1684) 421 | (900) 300 | (134) 67 | (12) 12 | 3.41 | 2.39 | Accept |
| 36 | If a teacher shows impartiality in handling disciplinary cases in the classroom, it would result to conflict | (2068) 517 | (630) 210 | (56) 28 | (45) 45 | 3.50 | 2.70 | Accept |
| 37 | Inordinate relationship between teachers and students will certainly make the teacher lose his respect | (1520) 380 | (384) 128 | (432) 216 | (76) 76 | 3.02 | 2.87 | Accept |
| 38 | If a teacher is in illicit love affair with the student, it would make his lessons uninteresting | (1028) 257 | (603) 201 | (364) 182 | (160) 160 | 2.69 | 1.57 | Accept |
| 39 | What can cause ridicule to a teacher or among students include infidelity, lies, shabby dressing and immorality in the classroom | (1444) 361 | (840) 280 | (242) 121 | (88) 88 | 3.27 | 2.12 | Accept |
| 40 | Teachers involving in immorality cannot control or manage their class and would receive jesting from the class | (1648) 412 | (900) 300 | (42) 21 | (67) 67 | 3.42 | 2.34 | Accept |
| 41 | Conflict is possible among classmates no matter how friendly the learning environment | (1314) 131 | (813) 271 | (416) 208 | (190) 190 | 3.42 | 2.01 | Accept |
| 42 | More often than not, students make effort to know their teachers secret. | (112) 28 | (396) 132 | (1036) 518 | (122) 122 | 2.08 | 1.40 | Reject |
| 43 | Ridiculing the female teachers are potential causes of school conflict (gender related issues) | (732) 183 | (1413) 471 | (216) 108 | (38) 38 | 3.00 | 2.00 | Accept |
| 44 | When students obtain knowledge of the secret of the teacher, they often use it in dealing with them | (1648) 412 | (900) 300 | (42) 21 | (67) 67 | 3.32 | 2.34 | Accept |
| 45 | In cases of conflict in the classroom, it is proper for the guilty to plead with the innocent | (1520) 380 | (384) 128 | (432) 216 | (76) 76 | 3.02 | 2.03 | Accept |
| 46 | Classroom conflicts can be settled with the teacher or principal | (712) 178 | (912) 304 | (366) 183 | (135) 135 | 2.66 | 1.52 | Accept |
| 47 | Conflicts can be resolved among the students without a quarrel or fight | (1812) 453 | (561) 187 | (56) 28 | (132) 132 | 3.02 | 2.37 | Accept |
| 48 | If conflicts occur, resolution can be reached by dialogue, warm handshake, embracement and sharing of gifts | (1560) 390 | (588) 196 | (286) 143 | (71) 71 | 2.51 | 2.11 | Accept |

Criterion Mean (\bar{x}_m) $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.50$

Table 4.5 revealed students' perception of conflict in classroom interaction among students in public secondary schools in the research area. Teacher developing special interest in certain category of students' is not capable of causing conflict (\bar{x} : 2.48 < 2.50) but teachers' intimate friendship with certain students of opposite sex can create suspicious and conflict (\bar{x} : 2.85 > 2.50). Similarly teachers' would lose their respect if they are unable to control their class (\bar{x} : 3.17 < 2.50) and do not prepare their lessons well exposes their incompetence (\bar{x} : 3.48 > 2.50). It is also proper that separate sanitary facilities be allocated to teachers and students (\bar{x} : 3.41 > 2.50).

Moreover, in terms of classroom discipline, teachers should show impartiality among students and avoid inordinate relationship with students (\bar{x} : 3.02 > 2.50), disrespect for teachers can be as a result of unaffectionate approaches to matters involving students indiscipline. However, conflict is inevitable no matter how friendly the learning environment is (\bar{x} : 3.42 > 2.50). Furthermore when female teachers are ridiculed, it could engender school conflict (\bar{x} : 3.00 > 2.50). In cases of classroom conflict, teachers and principals need to play intermediately roles and instill resolution by dialogue (\bar{x} : 2.66 > 2.50; 3.20 > 2.50; 2.51 > 2.50).

Table 4.7: Frequency of Students' Response on Contents and Processes of Conflict in Classroom Interaction in Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

| S/N | Questionnaire Item | Gender | HI | I | NI | LI | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | |
|--|--|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------|----------|------------|
| Cases of conflict are predominant in classroom interaction among students such as: | Push | M | (296) 74 | (348) 116 | (296) 148 | (79) 79 | 2.75 | 1.47 | Impact | |
| | | F | (344) 86 | (402) 134 | (342) 171 | (92) 92 | 2.74 | 1.70 | Impact | |
| | | M | (580) 145 | (303) 101 | (178) 89 | (25) 25 | 2.93 | 0.73 | Impact | |
| | | F | (672) 168 | (351) 117 | (208) 104 | (41) 41 | 2.95 | 2.11 | Impact | |
| | (i) Physical contact. | Abuse | M | (396) 99 | (168) 56 | (130) 65 | (150) 150 | 2.28 | 4.24 | Non-Impact |
| | | | F | (460) 115 | (192) 64 | (152) 76 | (175) 175 | 2.28 | 1.48 | Non-Impact |
| | (ii) verbal | Shout/threat | M | (564) 141 | (261) 87 | (100) 50 | (92) 92 | 2.08 | 1.68 | Non-Impact |
| | | | F | (656) 164 | (303) 101 | (118) 59 | (107) 107 | 2.75 | 1.99 | Impact |
| | • Push (Rough play) • Fight • Abuse • Shout/threat • Nagging • Malice | Nagging | M | (532) 133 | (141) 49 | (200) 100 | (87) 87 | 2.61 | 1.59 | Impact |
| | | | F | (620) 155 | (174) 58 | (232) 116 | (102) 102 | 2.62 | 1.86 | Impact |
| | | Malice | M | (616) 154 | (273) 91 | (140) 70 | (55) 55 | 2.76 | 1.82 | Impact |
| | | | F | (716) 179 | (318) 106 | (162) 81 | (64) 64 | 2.93 | 2.16 | Impact |
| Cases of consensus is sought adopting: | (i) Contention | Argue | M | (928) 232 | (162) 54 | (94) 47 | (46) 46 | 3.32 | 2.55 | Impact |
| | | | F | (1076) 269 | (186) 62 | (108) 54 | (54) 54 | 3.31 | 2.96 | Impact |
| | (ii) smoothing | Smoothing | M | (604) 151 | (303) 101 | (118) 59 | (49) 49 | 2.90 | 1.85 | Impact |
| | | | F | (724) 181 | (354) 118 | (138) 69 | (58) 58 | 2.96 | 2.20 | Impact |
| | (iii) compromise | Apology | M | (216) 54 | (339) 113 | (188) 94 | (31) 31 | 2.09 | 2.03 | Non-Impact |
| | | | F | (252) 63 | (669) 223 | (218) 109 | (35) 35 | 2.73 | 2.01 | Impact |
| | (iv) Emotional | Compromise | M | (72) 18 | (300) 100 | (50) 25 | (227) 227 | 1.75 | 1.04 | Non-Impact |
| | | | F | | (351) 117 | (58) 29 | (264) 264 | 1.75 | 1.21 | Non-Impact |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----|--------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|--------|--------|
| | Emotional | M | (80) | (267) | (200) | (143) | 2.06 | 1.05 | Non- | |
| | Tear/cry | | 20 | 89 | 100 | 143 | | | Impact | |
| | | F | (152) | (312) | (232) | (166) | 2.07 | 0.91 | Non- | |
| | | | 38 | 104 | 116 | 166 | | | Impact | |
| | Calling | in | M | (176) | (303) | (130) | (54) | 2.95 | 1.86 | Impact |
| | 3 rd party | | | 44 | 101 | 65 | 54 | | | |
| | | F | (604) | (351) | (150) | (62) | 2.94 | 2.15 | Impact | |
| | | | 151 | 117 | 75 | 62 | | | | |
| Tears/cry | Fellow | M | (700) | (171) | (138) | (1) | 3.45 | 2.67 | Impact | |
| (v) calling | in | | 175 | 57 | 69 | 1 | | | | |
| 3 rd party | student | F | (968) | (201) | (162) | (2) | 3.46 | 3.10 | Impact | |
| Fellow | | | 242 | 67 | 81 | 2 | | | | |
| students | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teacher | Teacher | M | (1124) | (30) | (398) | (101) | 2.19 | 2.59 | Non- | |
| | | | 281 | 10 | 199 | 101 | | | Impact | |
| | | F | (244) | (33) | (460) | (118) | 2.07 | 1.49 | Non- | |
| | | | 61 | 11 | 230 | 118 | | | Impact | |
| | | | (280) | | | | | | | |
| | | | 70 | | | | | | | |

Criterion mean (\bar{x}_m) $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.50$

HI = High impact, I = Impact, NI = Non-impact, LI = Less Impact

Table 4.7 showed that both male and female accepted that the classroom interaction among students in the research area especially those involving pushes, fighting, nagging and malice. However, the male students rejected the cases of abuse ($\bar{x}:2.50 > 1.28$) and threat ($\bar{x}:2.50 > 2.08$) while both male and female students hardly resolved their conflicts by apology ($\bar{x}:2.50 > 1.75$, $\bar{x}:2.50 > 1.75$) and use of negotiation ($\bar{x}:2.50 > 2.06$; $2.50 > 2.07$). Teachers were hardly involved in setting conflicts in the classroom ($\bar{x}:2.50 > 2.19$; $2.50 > 2.07$)

Research Question VI

What are the opinions of male and female teachers on the impact of contents and processes of conflicts in classroom interaction in secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 4.8: Frequency of Teachers Response on Contents and Processes of Conflict in Classroom Interaction in Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

| S/N | Questionnaire Item | Gender | HI | I | NI | LI | \bar{x} | Decision | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------|---|------------|---------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|------|-------------|
| 1 | Cases of conflict are predominant in classroom interaction among students such as: (i) Physical contact. • Push (Rough play) • Fight (ii) verbal • Abuse • Shout/threat • Nagging • Malice | Push | M | 1 (4) | 1(3) | 138(276) | 45(45) | 1.77 | Non- Impact | | |
| | | | F | 2 (8) | 1(3) | 160(320) | 52(52) | 1.78 | Non- Impact | | |
| | | Fight | M | 0 (0) | 0(0) | 94(188) | 88(88) | 1.49 | Non- Impact | | |
| | | | F | 0 (0) | 1(3) | 115(224) | 102(102) | 1.53 | Non- Impact | | |
| | | Abuse | M | 98 (392) | 7(21) | 48(96) | 32(32) | 2.92 | Impact | | |
| | | | F | 114 (456) | 8(24) | 55(110) | 38(38) | 2.92 | Impact | | |
| | | Shout/threat | M | 47 (188) | 20(60) | 72(144) | 92(92) | 2.62 | Impact | | |
| | | | F | 54(216) | 23(69) | 84(168) | 108(108) | 2.61 | Impact | | |
| | | Nagging | M | 110(440) | 15(45) | 36(72) | 22(22) | 3.12 | Impact | | |
| | | | F | 128(512) | 12(54) | 44(88) | 26(26) | 3.16 | Impact | | |
| | | Malice | M | 6(24) | 38(152) | 84(168) | 56(56) | 2.16 | Non- Impact | | |
| | | | F | 8(32) | 44(132) | 98(196) | 66(66) | 1.98 | Non- Impact | | |
| | | 2 | Cases of consensus is sought adopting: (i) Contention Argue Tease (ii) smoothing Give in silence Apology (iii) compromise Negotiating (iv) Emotional Tears/cry (v) calling in 3 rd party Fellow students Teacher | Contention | M | 101(404) | 12(36) | 38(76) | 34(34) | 1.34 | Non- Impact |
| | | | | Argue | | | | | | | |
| | | | | Tease | | | | | | | |
| Contention | F | | | 117(468) | 42(48) | 45(90) | 39(39) | 2.99 | Impact | | |
| Argue | M | | | 106(424) | 50(150) | 17(34) | 13(13) | 3.36 | Impact | | |
| Tease | | | | | | | | | | | |
| smoothing | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Give in silence | F | | | 123(492) | 57(71) | 19(38) | 15(15) | 3.33 | Impact | | |
| Apology | M | | | 84(336) | 11(33) | 57(114) | 38(38) | 2.81 | Non- Impact | | |
| compromise | F | | | 98(392) | 2(6) | 66(132) | 44(44) | 2.67 | Impact | | |
| Negotiating | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Emotional | M | | | 36(144) | 50(150) | 10(20) | 89(89) | 2.19 | Non- Impact | | |
| | F | | | 42(168) | 58(174) | 11(22) | 104(104) | 2.18 | Non- Impact | | |
| Tears/cry | M | | | 15(60) | 6(18) | 71(142) | 93(93) | 1.69 | Non- Impact | | |
| calling in 3 rd party | F | | | 18(72) | 8(24) | 82(164) | 107(107) | 1.71 | Non- Impact | | |
| Fellow students | M | 12(48) | 14(42) | 80(160) | 78(78) | 1.77 | Non- Impact | | | | |
| Teacher | F | 15(60) | 17(51) | 93(186) | 91(91) | 1.80 | Non- Impact | | | | |
| | M | 101(404) | 1(3) | 61(122) | 22(22) | 2.98 | Impact | | | | |
| | F | 117(468) | 2(6) | 71(142) | 25(25) | 2.98 | Impact | | | | |
| | M | 24(96) | 10(30) | 100(200) | 51(51) | 2.04 | Non- Impact | | | | |
| | F | 27(106) | 12(36) | 117(234) | 59(59) | 2.03 | Non- Impact | | | | |

Criterion Mean (\bar{x}_m) $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 2.50$

HI = High Impact, I = Impact, NI = Non-Impact, LI = Less Impact

Table 4.8 revealed that both male and female teachers uphold that cases of conflict during classroom interaction include verbal conflicts such as abuses, shout and threat, nagging and malice among students ($\bar{x}:2.50>2.92>2.61>2.50>3.16>3.12>2.50$) they also held the opinion that methods adopted in a bid to create harmony includes apology

and giving in silence ($2.81 > 2.67 > 2.50$). negotiation and emotional evidence of tear/cry are rarely male and female teachers hold that third party settlement is preferred as fellow teachers mediate over conflicts ($2.98 > 2.50$). Both male and female principals of schools are rarely involved in the processes of consensus in conflicts in the classroom.

Hypothesis One (Ho1)

There is no significant difference between the opinion of teachers and students on the content opinion of teachers and students on the content and processes of conflicts in class room interaction in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4.7: Summary of T-Test on the Opinions of Teachers and Students on Content and Processes Conflicts Sin Classroom Interaction.

| Groups | N | \bar{X} | SD | t-cal | df | α | t-critical | Decision |
|----------|-----|-----------|------|-------|------|----------|------------|---------------|
| Students | 800 | 2.659 | 1.15 | | | | | reject H0 |
| Teachers | 400 | 2.389 | 1.16 | 3.815 | 1198 | 0.05 | 1.960 | $\rho < 0.05$ |

Table 4.7 revealed that the t-calculated value is 3.815 at degree of freedom (df) of 1198 and significance level (e) of 0.05, t critical value is 1.960. Since the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical value ($t: 3.815 > 1.960$), the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between the opinions of teachers and those of the students on the content and processes of conflicts in classroom interaction in secondary schools in the research area.

4.6 Hypothesis Two (Ho2)

There is no significant difference between the opinion of teachers and students on the impact of cultural differences on learning in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4.8: Summary of T-Test on the Opinions of Teachers and Students on the Impact of Cultural Differences on Learning.

| | N | \bar{X} | SD | t-cal | df | α | t-critical | Decision |
|----------|-----|-----------|------|--------|------|----------|------------|---------------|
| Students | 800 | 2.805 | 1.07 | | | | | reject H0 |
| Teachers | 400 | 1.864 | 0.67 | 16.041 | 1198 | 0.05 | 1.960 | $\rho < 0.05$ |

Table 4.8 showed that at 0.05 significance level and degree of freedom (df) 1198 t-calculated value is 16.041 while t-critical value is 1.960. Since the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical value ($t: 16.041 > 1.960$), the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference between the opinions of the teachers and students on the impact of cultural differences on learning, in public secondary schools in Rivers.

Discussion of Findings

Impact of Gender on Classroom Interaction:

The finding showed that significant difference existed in the nature of classroom interaction between male and female students in Rivers State secondary schools. It could be inferred that gender plays significant role among classroom participants. Though, students sit in rows without taking abilities or family background into cognizance, yet, they are gender sensitive in their interactions. The differential relationships between the sexes must have been associated with the socialization pattern at early stages, which is common to most cultures, whereby girls are treated differently from their male counterparts, especially in Nigeria.

Thus, girls are expected to be docile, gentle, co-operative, affectionate and caring while the boys are expected to be aggressive, curious, competitive and ambitious, Ballantine (2001). Usually, each child would want to keep the social expectations of their society for the purpose of social acceptance, and to avoid being labeled negatively. This finding tally with Fiske (1992), who attributed the findings that fewer overall interactions existed along gender line in all college classes studied to gender political environment. More specifically, the result has supported Omokhodion's (1991) finding which provided that gender similarity often dictates the tendency to interact more for boys than girls.

Moreso, the way students treat each other during school hours is an aspect of the informal learning process, with significant negative implications for girls. There is mounting evidence that boys do not treat girls well. When boys line up to 'rate' girls as they enter a room, when boys feel it is good fun to embarrass girls to the point of tears, it is no-joke. It was noted during the observation of this study that boys threaten girls more in course of classroom interaction yet these types of behaviours are often viewed by school personnel as harmless instances of "boys are being boys" Houe (2005) also attested, to this fact in her findings when she writes that the most striking point to emerge is that boys predominate in all situations. In whole-class teaching, where the teacher decides who should contribute, boys make more contributions than girls, and their contributions are usually more elaborate. There is probably no age at which gender differences cannot be observed but these may be less entrenched and therefore less resistant to change at the early stages.

If intervention is attempted, however, it should not simply be addressed to classroom interaction as it currently exists but attempt to look toward the future. Practices with respect to classroom group work are currently under review, and there is likely to be movement towards activities which are more highly structured than is presently the case. By and large, the movement is to be welcomed but the research suggests that unless it is monitored carefully, it may have adverse implications as regards gender

divisions. The implication of this finding is that the level with which male and female relate in the classrooms differ. Thus, passing instructions to the class via a male may pass round more easily to his male counterparts than to other female colleagues and vice versa.

Impact of Ethnic Backgrounds on Classroom Interaction

The study revealed that there was no significant difference in the nature of classroom interaction among Rivers State senior secondary school students who are from multi-ethnic backgrounds. This finding is in sharp contrast with Cohen's (1991) assertion that, since culture plays a large role in shaping individual's character, this constitutive impact of culture cannot be erased by mere exposure to other cultures. No doubt, cultural differences have significant impact on relationship. The basis for this finding can be attributed to the cosmopolitan nature of Rivers State. As written earlier, the city of Port Harcourt is a community of 'displaced persons' who have left the familiarity and security of the rural communities with its pervasive influence on social behaviour for the metropolitan centre. The fact that people of many different cultures live side by side brings about cultural integration and the classrooms studied are action 'melting pots' of cultural variability. In addition, it should be noted that from the beginning of formal education in Nigeria, the school has tended to alienate the young from traditional society and culture. It was not possible for a student to attend to the mission or colonial schools and at the same time take part in traditional festivities

However, Okon and Wilson (1982) might refer to this finding as an educational lag. What is referred to, as educational lag here is a situation where societies change and have new needs and needs while the school is still responding to former conditions. Whatever be the case, one thing deducible from the finding is that those classrooms are very active in process, cultures and students are attuned to cultural relativism. No doubt, this is a good omen for the country, Nigeria, with over 400 ethnic groups, speaking over 400 languages or dialects. The import of this is that to a greater extent, comradeship exists in those classes despite cultural variabilities and when students unite on some issues, they can be ignored only to the detriment of the school programme. This finding tallies with the discovery of Roger and David (1997) that "students are more positive about each other when they learn co-operatively than when they learn alone, competitively, or individualistically - regardless of differences in ability, ethnic background, handicapped or not".

Perceptions on Consensus in Classroom Interaction

The study showed that when students considered themselves to be guilty, their attitude to congruence, in general, irrespective of the ethnic background is similar. That is, to go and apologize to the friend. The teachers, on the other hand are more likely to

apologize to the student when he or she (the teacher) is the one at fault. However, when the student is considered to be at fault, teachers would expect the student to come for resolution. Given the gaps in research, there are two possible responses. One is to focus on the uncertainty and to suggest waiting until more is known. Another is to say that there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to justify action. We suggest that tilting the balance forward the latter view is one piece of evidence that cannot be denied. Schools have been identified as cross-sectional units of society, representing small communities that foster a culture of conflict and violence. It is quite interesting to discover that cultural variability do not impact on classroom interaction.

This means that Rivers State could curb or eradicate ethnic clashes through the classroom. If students are attuned to cultural relativism early enough, they are likely to have a halcyon environment in nearest future. All youths – the general population require improved relationships as a life skill. In the words of wheeler (1980).

... education may be thought of as an important social institution. The totality of structures and roles process relations and material instrument built up around society's interest in the enculturation or socialization of the young. In modern times, formal education, as we have defined it is almost universally carried out by groups of people who are Incumbents in a system of roles and bound together by a set of stable social relations, the groups being deliberately created with the explicit aim of continuously accomplishing certain specific goals. (p.52)

Drawing from this postulation, the goal of making schools a safe haven in which youths can gain respite from socio-personal problems in order to think and learn is a good one. However, it cannot be realized apart from creating an anti-violent environment where mutual understanding reigns, every participant shares. No doubt, academic achievements would thrive in a harmonious social environment.

Conclusion

Contents and processes of conflict such as fight, threat, verbal abuses, cultural differences and negative teacher-student relationship are indices that adversely impacts on learning in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Meaningful learning is therefore a major outcome of cooperation among teachers and students. It is the responsibility of teachers and students to create a situation of social harmony such as peaceful co-existence for cooperative learning classroom environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Federal and State governments should give necessary support and include in the secondary school curriculum, conflict resolution and congruence of aspirations in the classroom. If students imbibe the culture of win-win approach from school, it will impact on their relationships outside the school. Students with co-operative experiences are more able to take the perspective of others, are more positive about taking part in controversy, have better developed interaction skills and have a more positive expectation about working with others. The sporadic ethnic clashes in the nation will certainly be minimized.
2. Teachers should be trained for counseling roles in secondary schools in order to equip them to teach conflict resolution and congruence of aspirations in schools.
3. Teachers are aware of students' conflicts, their position regarding the implementation of harmonic classroom interaction is a significant one. Teachers should review their roles in managing student conflict positively.
4. Teachers should adopt cooperative learning strategy and show of affection among students in school could help students learning effectively in groups encourage each other to ask questions explain and justify their opinions, articulate their reasoning and elaborate and reflect upon their knowledge, thereby motivating and improving learning. Teaching should therefore involve the use of collaborative and cooperative learning strategies.
5. The most effective innovative instruction is to teach students, both the cognitive skills necessary to learn the subject matter, and the social skills they need to communicate well in a team. Hence the school authorities should therefore develop instructional facilities and conducive learning environment to instill harmony, affection and excellent learning practices to support a "community classroom".

Contribution to Knowledge

Contents and process of conflict involving physical contact, verbal abuses and cultural differences in classroom interactions create social disharmony which affects learning among students.

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Dienye V.U. & David Chima Osilem

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Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Dienye V.U. & David Chima Osilem (2016), Gender Differential Perception on Impacts of Conflict and Consensus in Classroom Interaction on Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State. *J. of Education and Leadership Development Vol. 8, No. 1, Pp. 51 – 72.*
