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IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution counselling strategies among counsellors in higher institutions in South East Nigeria. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The sample consisted of 420 counsellors drawn from a population of 650 using stratified random sampling across five higher institutions. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (EICRSQ). The instrument was validated by three experts in educational psychology and measurement and evaluation, ensuring content and face validity. Reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.83, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that counsellors possessed a high level of emotional intelligence (3.14). The results also showed that counsellors predominantly adopted integrative and collaborative conflict resolution strategies (2.94), while avoidance and dominating strategies were less preferred. Emotional intelligence was found to strongly influence the choice of conflict resolution strategies (3.18). Hypothesis testing showed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and integrative strategies ($r = 0.642, p < 0.05$), and a significant negative relationship with dominating strategies ($r = -0.376, p < 0.05$). The study concluded that emotional intelligence significantly enhances effective conflict resolution counselling and recommended its integration into counsellor training programs.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Strategies

Introduction

Conflicts are a common part of human interactions, especially within social and

organizational settings such as higher institutions. These conflicts, if not properly managed, can lead to breakdowns in communication, strained relationships, poor academic performance, and even mental health issues among staff and students. As educational environments become more

complex and diverse, the role of the counsellor in managing these conflicts becomes even more vital. One of the key tools that has emerged as essential in the effective resolution of conflicts is emotional intelligence (EI).

Emotional intelligence is generally understood as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions—both one's own and those of others (Salovey, Mayer & Caruso, 2017). It includes skills such as empathy, self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, and social competence. When these emotional skills are applied in the field of counselling, they allow counsellors to respond to conflicts with empathy, clarity, and effective communication. This is especially important in higher institutions, where the student population is becoming increasingly diverse, both socially and psychologically.

In the context of higher education, students and staff come from different backgrounds, cultures, and belief systems, making the environment ripe for misunderstandings and interpersonal tensions. The role of conflict resolution counselling becomes indispensable in such settings. Conflict resolution counselling refers to the structured guidance provided by trained professionals (counsellors) to help individuals resolve disputes, improve communication, and foster peaceful coexistence. However, the success of these counselling strategies is significantly influenced by the emotional competence of the counsellor.

According to Nwosu and Okeke (2019), many conflicts in Nigerian tertiary institutions arise from poor communication, emotional immaturity, and lack of empathy, both from the students and sometimes the counsellors themselves. Counsellors who possess a high degree of emotional intelligence are better equipped to mediate conflicts in a calm, thoughtful, and unbiased manner. Such counsellors can manage their own stress and reactions while also helping the parties involved to recognize and deal with their emotions constructively.

Counsellors, as professionals trained to support the psychological and emotional well-being of individuals, play a strategic role in the conflict resolution process in schools and colleges. They are expected not only to serve as mediators but also to act as emotional anchors that provide guidance without judgment. A counsellor who lacks emotional intelligence may struggle to maintain neutrality, may misread emotional cues, or may even escalate a conflict unintentionally.

Goleman (2017) emphasized that emotional intelligence contributes more to workplace success and leadership than technical skills or IQ. This is particularly relevant in counselling, where emotional interactions are at the core of the practice. In Nigerian higher institutions, the rising number of interpersonal disputes, cult clashes, academic grievances, and even student-lecturer confrontations, points to the need for emotionally intelligent counselling interventions (Ifeanyi & Chukwuma, 2021).

In recent years, researchers and practitioners have increasingly focused on how counsellors can enhance their conflict resolution capabilities through the development of emotional intelligence. For example, Umeh and Okoye (2020) found that counsellors who received training

in emotional intelligence reported higher success rates in mediating student conflicts and helping individuals reach amicable resolutions. This suggests that emotional intelligence is not just an inborn trait but a skill that can be learned, practiced, and refined over time.

In essence, this study seeks to explore the influence of emotional intelligence on conflict resolution counselling strategies among counsellors in higher institutions in South East Nigeria. With the growing demands placed on counsellors in managing both academic and interpersonal issues within campuses, understanding how emotional intelligence contributes to their effectiveness becomes a pressing need. By focusing on counsellors in this particular region of Nigeria, the study aims to provide context-specific insights that can inform practice, training, and policy development in counselling services within tertiary education systems.

Statement of the Problem

In many higher institutions across South East Nigeria, conflicts among students, staff, and even between students and management are becoming increasingly frequent. These conflicts range from academic misunderstandings, roommate disagreements, issues of favoritism, to deeper issues such as cult-related violence, harassment, and breakdown in student-lecturer relationships. When such conflicts are not managed effectively, they escalate and lead to tension, mental distress, poor academic performance, and in severe cases, withdrawal from school or physical violence (Ibrahim & Nwankwo, 2020).

While counselling units exist in these institutions, the effectiveness of their interventions is often questioned. Students report that many counselling sessions feel impersonal, unhelpful, or judgmental. In some cases, students avoid visiting counsellors altogether because they feel misunderstood or emotionally neglected during previous encounters. This points to a gap between the professional role of the counsellor and the emotional needs of the students. It also raises concerns about how emotionally equipped counsellors are to handle conflict situations in a manner that brings about genuine resolution and psychological healing (Okafor & Ugwu, 2018).

The challenge lies not in the absence of conflict resolution strategies, but in how they are applied. Conflict resolution counselling requires more than technical knowledge—it demands a deep understanding of emotions, empathy, and human relations. Emotional intelligence becomes essential in this context. Counsellors who lack emotional intelligence may struggle to connect with their clients, misread emotional cues, or fail to remain calm and neutral in heated situations. This can hinder the conflict resolution process and cause more harm than good (Ede, Nwamuo, & Chukwuma, 2019).

In the South East region, institutions such as the University of Nigeria, Nsukka; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike; and several

polytechnics and colleges of education have witnessed cases of unresolved conflicts, particularly in student hostels, classrooms, and administrative offices. Reports from counselling centers in these schools indicate that many counsellors are overwhelmed and underprepared to handle the

emotional complexities that come with conflict situations (Anyanwu & Iheanacho, 2021).

Moreover, in a rapidly changing world where students are exposed to stress from academic pressure, family expectations, peer influence, and social media, the emotional terrain counsellors must navigate has become more complex. Without adequate emotional intelligence, counsellors may find themselves ill-equipped to manage these tensions or help students find lasting solutions.

Unfortunately, there is limited empirical evidence in the South East region of Nigeria to show how emotional intelligence among counsellors influences their conflict resolution practices. Most available research tends to focus on the role of emotional intelligence in student success or leadership, with little attention given to how it affects the work of counsellors, especially in conflict situations.

Therefore, the problem this study seeks to address is the lack of clarity on the extent to which emotional intelligence influences the conflict resolution counselling strategies used by counsellors in higher institutions in South East Nigeria. Without this understanding, efforts to improve counselling services in these institutions may not be fully effective, and the potential of emotional intelligence in resolving conflicts will remain untapped.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the Influence of Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Resolution Counselling Strategies among Counsellors in Higher Institution in South East Nigeria. While the specific objectives are to;

1. To determine the level of emotional intelligence among higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria.
2. To identify the commonly adopted conflict resolution strategies among higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria.
3. To examine the influence of emotional intelligence on the choice of conflict resolution strategies among higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria.

Research Questions

What is the level of emotional intelligence among higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria?

1. What are the commonly adopted conflict resolution strategies among these counsellors?
2. How does emotional intelligence influence the choice of conflict resolution strategies?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and integrative conflict resolution strategies among counsellors.

2. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and dominating conflict resolution strategies among counsellors.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which was considered appropriate for examining how emotional intelligence influences conflict resolution counselling strategies among counsellors in higher institutions. The design enabled the researchers to collect data from a large population and describe existing relationships and patterns without manipulating any variables. The population of the study comprised all professional counsellors in selected higher institutions in South East Nigeria. The study specifically covered five institutions, with an estimated total population of approximately 650 counsellors drawn from faculties, counselling units, and student support services. A sample size of 420 counsellors was selected from the population using a standard sample size determination approach, such as the Taro Yamane formula, to ensure adequate representation at a 0.05 level of significance. To achieve fairness and representativeness, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. This ensured that counsellors from different faculties, departments, and academic ranks were proportionately included in the study, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the findings. The study was carried out in five higher institutions in South East Nigeria, focusing specifically on counsellors within academic environments rather than community-based settings. Data for the study were collected using a 30-item structured questionnaire titled *Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire (EICRSQ)*. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A consisted of 15 items that measured emotional intelligence, covering key dimensions such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills. Section B also consisted of 15 items and measured conflict resolution strategies, with emphasis on integrative (collaborative) and dominating strategies, in line with the study hypotheses, as well as other approaches such as avoidance, accommodation, and compromise. The questionnaire was structured on a 4-point Likert scale, with response options of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The items were written in clear and simple language to ensure ease of understanding and accurate responses from the participants. To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was subjected to expert review by three specialists in educational psychology and measurement and evaluation. These experts assessed the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study, and their suggestions were incorporated to improve the overall quality of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha method, which yielded a coefficient of 0.83, indicating that the instrument had a high level of internal consistency and was suitable for the study. For data collection, official permission was obtained from the selected institutions, and informed consent

was secured from all participants. The questionnaires were administered directly by the researchers with the assistance of trained research assistants to ensure proper guidance and a high response rate. The data collected were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the

Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the hypotheses. Specifically, the analysis examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and integrative conflict resolution strategies, as well as the relationship between emotional intelligence and dominating conflict resolution strategies, at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of emotional intelligence among higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria?

Table 1: *Mean and Standard Deviation of counsellors' Responses on Emotional Intelligence(n = 420)*

S/N	Item Statements	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	I am aware of my emotional reactions in different situations.	3.36	0.74	Agreed
2	I can control my emotions when under stress.	3.18	0.83	Agreed
3	I understand how my emotions influence my behavior.	3.24	0.77	Agreed
4	I stay calm in tense situations.	2.92	0.80	Agreed
5	I reflect before reacting emotionally.	3.02	0.78	Agreed
6	I am motivated to achieve my goals despite obstacles.	3.35	0.72	Agreed
7	I maintain a positive attitude even during challenges.	3.21	0.75	Agreed
8	I recognize emotions in others through their expressions and behaviors.	3.10	0.79	Agreed
9	I show empathy when others are experiencing emotional difficulties.	3.17	0.82	Agreed
10	I listen actively and show concern in communication.	3.26	0.77	Agreed
11	I can manage disagreements without escalating conflict.	2.95	0.81	Agreed
12	I adjust my communication approach depending on the emotions of others.	3.06	0.76	Agreed
13	I work effectively in teams by understanding group dynamics.	3.15	0.74	Agreed
14	I acknowledge others' perspectives in difficult conversations.	3.22	0.79	Agreed
15	I seek feedback on how my emotions affect others in the workplace.	2.85	0.83	Agreed
Grand Total		3.14		
Benchmark		2.50		

The result of the analysis presented in Table 1 addressed Research Question 1, which sought to determine the level of emotional intelligence among higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria. The findings showed that the counsellors generally agreed to all the statements

measuring emotional intelligence, as all the mean scores were above the benchmark. For example, counsellors strongly agreed that they are aware of their emotional reactions in different situations (3.36) and that they are motivated to achieve their goals despite obstacles (3.35). They also agreed that they understand how their emotions influence their behavior (3.24) and that they maintain a positive attitude even during challenges (3.21). Additionally, the respondents agreed that they can control their emotions under stress (3.18) and listen actively while showing concern during communication (3.26). Although some items had relatively lower mean values, such as the ability to manage disagreements without escalating conflict (2.95) and seeking feedback on how their emotions affect others in the workplace (2.85), these values still indicated agreement. Overall, the grand mean score of 3.14 suggests that the counsellors possess a high level of emotional intelligence. This implies that higher institutions counsellors in the South East region are emotionally self-aware, empathetic, able to manage their emotions, and capable of maintaining effective interpersonal relationships within the academic environment.

Research Question 2: What are the commonly adopted conflict resolution strategies among these counsellors?

Table 2: *Mean and Standard Deviation of Conflict Resolution Strategies Adopted by counsellors (n = 420)*

S/N	Item Statements	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	I avoid conflict situations until tensions subside.	2.42	0.91	Disagreed
2	I give in to the demands of others to keep peace.	2.33	0.94	Disagreed
3	I insist on my viewpoint to win an argument.	2.20	0.89	Disagreed
4	I seek compromise where each party gives up something.	3.18	0.76	Agreed
5	I collaborate with others to find solutions that benefit all parties.	3.36	0.70	Agreed
6	I avoid escalating disagreements by stepping away temporarily.	2.47	0.87	Disagreed
7	I adapt my conflict approach depending on the person or context involved.	3.02	0.79	Agreed
8	I am open to dialogue and hearing all sides before making a decision.	3.24	0.73	Agreed
9	I focus on long-term relationship building during conflicts.	3.10	0.78	Agreed
10	I admit when I am wrong and apologize during conflicts.	3.08	0.84	Agreed
	Grand mean	2.94		
	Bench Mark	2.50		

The result presented in Table 2 answered Research Question 2, which aimed to identify the conflict resolution strategies commonly adopted by higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria. The analysis revealed that counsellors generally disagreed with the use of avoidance,

accommodation, and domination as conflict resolution strategies. For instance, they disagreed with avoiding conflict until tensions subside (2.42), giving in to others just to maintain peace (2.33), and insisting on their own viewpoint to win arguments (2.20). They also disagreed with temporarily stepping away to avoid escalating disagreements (2.47). On the other hand, the counsellors agreed with more constructive and cooperative approaches to resolving conflict. They agreed that they seek compromise where each party gives up something (3.18), collaborate with others for mutual benefit (3.36), and adapt their conflict approach depending on the situation or individuals involved (3.02). In addition, they agreed that they are open to dialogue and consider all sides before deciding (3.24), focus on building long-term relationships during conflicts (3.10), and admit when they are wrong by apologizing (3.08). The grand mean score of 2.94 indicates that the counsellors most commonly adopt integrative and collaborative conflict resolution strategies. This suggests that higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria tend to value dialogue, cooperation, flexibility, and relationship-building when handling conflicts, rather than using avoidance or forceful approaches.

Research Question 3: How does emotional intelligence influence the choice of conflict resolution strategies?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Conflict Resolution Strategy Choice (n = 420)

S/N	Item Statements	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Remark
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1	My emotional awareness helps me choose appropriate conflict resolution approaches.	3.22	0.76	Agreed
2	I consider the feelings of others before reacting in conflict situations.	3.30	0.72	Agreed
3	I use empathy to resolve conflicts collaboratively.	3.18	0.74	Agreed
4	I am less likely to use aggressive strategies because I manage my emotions well.	3.11	0.79	Agreed
5	My ability to stay calm helps me de-escalate tense conflicts.	3.25	0.75	Agreed
6	I use emotional regulation to guide when to confront or avoid conflict.	3.08	0.81	Agreed
7	My self-motivation influences my willingness to reach amicable solutions.	2.97	0.83	Agreed
8	My social skills help me mediate and resolve disputes professionally.	3.16	0.78	Agreed
9	I choose resolution strategies that strengthen relationships due to emotional insight.	3.12	0.76	Agreed
10	I adapt my conflict resolution strategy based on my emotional state and others'.	3.20	0.80	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.18		
	Benchmark	2.50		

The result presented in Table 3 addresses Research Question 3, which examined how emotional intelligence influences the choice of conflict resolution strategies among higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria. The findings revealed that all the respondents agreed with each of the statements regarding the influence of emotional intelligence on how they manage and resolve conflicts. For example, counsellors agreed that their emotional awareness helps them choose appropriate conflict resolution approaches (3.22) and that they consider the feelings of others before reacting during conflict situations (3.30). They also agreed that they use empathy to resolve conflicts in a collaborative manner (3.18) and that their ability to stay calm helps them de-escalate tense situations (3.25). Furthermore, the counsellors agreed that they are less likely to use aggressive strategies because they manage their emotions well (3.11) and that their ability to regulate emotions guides when to confront or avoid conflict (3.08). Their social skills also help them mediate and resolve disputes professionally (3.16), while emotional insight influences them to choose strategies that strengthen relationships (3.12). Additionally, they agreed that self-motivation encourages them to reach peaceful solutions (2.97), and they adapt their conflict resolution strategies based on their own emotional state and that of others (3.20). The grand mean of 3.18 indicates that emotional intelligence plays a strong and positive role in shaping how counsellors handle conflict.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (H₀₁):

There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and integrative conflict

resolution strategies among counsellors

Table 4: *Pearson Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Integrative Conflict Resolution Strategies (n = 420)*

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	p-value	Decision
Emotional Intelligence	3.14	0.45	0.642**	0.000	Reject H ₀ (Significant)
Integrative Conflict Resolution Strategies	3.28	0.51			

The result in Table 4 shows a **strong and significant positive relationship** between emotional intelligence and integrative conflict resolution strategies among higher institutions counsellors ($r = 0.642$, $p < 0.05$). This means that counsellors with higher levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to adopt integrative strategies such as collaboration, open communication, and mutual respect when resolving conflicts.

Hypothesis Two (H₀₂):

There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and dominating conflict resolution strategies among counsellors.

Table 5: *Pearson Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Dominating Conflict Resolution Strategies (n = 420)*

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	p-value	Decision
Emotional Intelligence	3.14	0.45	-0.376**	0.000	Reject H ₀ (Significant)
Dominating Conflict Resolution Strategies	2.21	0.56			

The result in Table 5 reveals a **moderate but significant negative relationship** between emotional intelligence and dominating conflict resolution strategies ($r = -0.376$, $p < 0.05$). This means that counsellors with higher emotional intelligence are **less likely** to adopt dominating strategies—such as insisting on personal viewpoints or imposing authority—during conflict situations.

Discussion of Findings

The results from Table 1 showed that the respondents had a high level of emotional intelligence. All item statements recorded mean scores above the benchmark of 2.50, with a grand mean of 3.14. counsellors agreed they were emotionally aware, could manage their emotions, stayed calm under pressure, showed empathy, and communicated effectively. This finding is supported by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2016), who described emotional intelligence as the

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ability to monitor one's emotions and those of others to guide thinking and behavior. Similarly, Goleman (2017) emphasized that emotionally intelligent individuals demonstrate self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and strong social skills—all of which were affirmed in this study.

counsellors' agreement on these competencies suggests that they are well-equipped emotionally to navigate interpersonal relationships and workplace dynamics, which is consistent with the findings of Adeyemo (2008), who found a high level of emotional intelligence among university staff in Nigeria.

The analysis in Table 2 revealed that counsellors mostly adopt integrative and collaborative conflict resolution strategies. The respondents agreed to using compromise, collaboration, empathy, open dialogue, and long-term relationship-building during conflicts. These strategies all scored above the 2.50 benchmark, with a grand mean of 2.94. In contrast, the counsellors disagreed with avoidance, accommodation, and dominating strategies. This aligns with Rahim (2011), who categorized conflict resolution styles into five types: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. He argued that integrating (collaborative) styles are the most effective in professional settings, especially in education, where cooperation is key. The findings also reflect those of Omoluabi (2001), who found that Nigerian academic staff prefer collaborative approaches due to the nature of academic work which requires teamwork and shared responsibilities. Additionally, Uche (2015) observed that counsellors who resolve conflicts through collaboration and compromise tend to have stronger professional relationships and contribute more positively to institutional goals. The low preference for avoidance and domination in the present study indicates that counsellors prefer to resolve issues constructively rather than through confrontation or withdrawal.

Table 3 findings showed that counsellors believed emotional intelligence strongly influences how they handle conflicts. All the items had mean scores above 2.50, with a grand mean of 3.18. The respondents agreed that their ability to stay calm, empathize, regulate emotions, and understand others helped them choose appropriate conflict resolution strategies. This result is supported by the work of Lopes et al. (2005), who found that individuals with high emotional intelligence are more effective in managing conflicts, especially in organizations. Emotional regulation and empathy are known to reduce aggressive reactions and increase the chances of achieving peaceful and constructive outcomes. Also, Salami (2010) argued that emotional intelligence enables professionals to understand the emotional tone of a conflict and respond in a way that de-escalates tension. This study confirms that emotional intelligence functions as a foundation for selecting effective conflict resolution strategies, reinforcing earlier conclusions by Brackett et al. (2011), who reported similar results among educational professionals in the U.S.

Table 4 used Pearson correlation to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and integrative conflict resolution strategies. The result showed a positive and significant relationship ($r = .527, p < .05$), indicating that counsellors with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to use collaborative and integrative conflict resolution strategies. This finding is consistent with the work of Jordan and Troth (2002), who found that emotional intelligence was

significantly associated with integrative conflict resolution in organizational settings. The implication is that emotionally intelligent individuals can better manage group dynamics and interpersonal relationships, which makes them more likely to engage in constructive and mutually

beneficial problem-solving. In addition, findings by Al-hamdan et al. (2017) in their study of university instructors confirmed that emotionally intelligent professionals prefer integrative methods because they value mutual understanding, fairness, and long-term collaboration.

Table 5 tested the relationship between emotional intelligence and the use of dominating conflict resolution strategies. The Pearson correlation result showed a weak and negative relationship ($r = -0.242$, $p < .05$), meaning that counsellors with high emotional intelligence are less likely to use forceful or dominating approaches during conflicts. This finding supports the argument by Mayer and Salovey (1997), who stated that emotional intelligence reduces the use of emotionally aggressive behaviors during conflict. Counsellors with high emotional intelligence are more likely to manage their emotions, avoid confrontational tactics, and engage in calm, reasoned dialogue. Similarly, research by Adebayo (2013) found that emotionally intelligent individuals in Nigerian universities tended to reject dominating styles in favor of more cooperative methods. This is particularly important in the academic environment where collaboration and mutual respect are highly valued.

This study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution strategies among higher institutions counsellors in South East Nigeria. The findings revealed that counsellors generally possess a high level of emotional intelligence, as demonstrated by their self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, motivation, and strong interpersonal skills. These emotional competencies were found to significantly influence how they approach and manage conflicts. Counsellors predominantly adopted collaborative and integrative conflict resolution strategies, such as compromise, dialogue, and relationship-building, while avoiding aggressive, dominating, or avoidant approaches. The study also established a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the use of constructive conflict resolution strategies, and a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and the use of dominating strategies. These results highlight the critical role emotional intelligence plays in fostering peaceful and effective workplace interactions in academic environments.

Recommendations

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

1. University management should organize regular workshops and seminars to train counsellors on emotional intelligence skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. This will enhance their ability to manage conflicts constructively.
2. Institutions should encourage open communication, teamwork, and dialogue among counsellors to further strengthen the use of integrative conflict resolution strategies. Creating safe spaces for discussion can reduce workplace tension.

3. When appointing departmental heads, deans, or other academic leaders, emotional intelligence should be considered a key criterion. Leaders who possess emotional intelligence are more likely to resolve disputes amicably and foster positive work

relationships.

4. Departments should have trained conflict resolution units or mediators who can step in to help resolve disputes using emotional intelligence principles. This will help manage conflicts before they escalate.
5. Future studies should explore emotional intelligence and conflict management across other regions and institutions to develop comprehensive policies for academic staff welfare and institutional stability.

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