Conflict Management Strategies and Employees' Performance in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Lagos State

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to examine conflict management practices and employee's performance in a selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State. Respondents comprised 357 employees across selected manufacturing companies through the use of stratified random sampling technique. Data were generated through the use of validated structured questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze data collected from the respondents.

The study used Spearman correlation analysis as methodology tool. Findings indicated that there is a significantly positive relationship between conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, compromise, and accommodation) and organizational goal attainment. Non-integrative conflict management strategies (competition, domination and avoidance) had a negative statistically determinate effect on organizational goal attainment. The result also indicated that there is a significant relationship between conflict management (collective bargaining, accommodation, confrontation, and avoidance) and employees' performance among selected manufacturing companies in Lagos State. The study recommended that Both management and employees must resolve to work together amicably by formulating potent strategies and sustaining acceptable policies as effective machinery for managing conflict on continuous basis in organizations.

Keywords: Conflict Management Strategies, Organizational Goals Attainment, goal attainment

INTRODUCTION

Human civilizations are prone to conflict. This can be attributed to rivalry between individuals, teams, or organizations vying for success—typically at the expense of others—by removing different barriers blocking their path. Pervasive in various organizational processes, conflict is an unavoidable hurdle in social existence (Tariq & Gardezi, 2023). As many organizations deal with different kinds of disputes, academics and researchers have made an effort to analyze how conflict management functions in these settings.

Conflicts have different sources and can lead to positive or negative effects (Cai & Wohn, 2023; Jordan & Troth, 2021) and has mostly stressed that conflict should be avoided at all costs and that the kind of disputes an organization faces can define its success or failure (Kilag et al., 2024). Conflict can arise in any sector or organization, whether it is public or private, according to Folger et al. (2021). Given the constant demands of patients, federal hospitals in Nigeria face a difficult challenge in managing conflict. As per Folger et al. (2021), the efficacy of conflict management is contingent upon the types of styles that are advantageous to the organization and fit in with its overall goals.

Conflict management is also seen as a wider concept which involves conflict management styles, process and skills to mitigating conflicts in a workplace (Furlong, 2020).

The management of the organization must therefore possess the necessary skills to handle conflicts that arise in order to determine which style is most appropriate for the given situation. Conflict management strategies include dominating, compromising, integrating, avoidance, and accommodation, according to Ronquillo et al.

(2023), who examined the five main styles. According to Liddle (2023), the type of dispute, the parties' positions, and the nature of the relationship all influence which conflict management approach is preferred over the others.

Human interactions in today's work environment make conflict a highly common component in businesses that contributes to a decline in performance (Belias et al., 2023). Conflicts negatively impact employee performance, which in turn affects how well employees function in the workplace. Employee productivity and effectiveness are frequently impacted by disagreements, along with a shift in attitude among other factors. Depending on the strategic impetus used, research on the impact of conflict management on organizational goal attainment has demonstrated that it creates a favorable climate that improves employee performance for goal attainment (Olang, B.A. 2017).

An effective conflict management strategy encourages candid dialogue, group decision-making, frequent feedback, and prompt conflict resolution. Employee morale can be positively impacted by open communication and collaboration as these practices improve the flow of new ideas and develop work relationships. According to Awan and Anjum (2015), providing regular feedback and promptly resolving conflicts can enhance employee satisfaction and help the organization achieve its goals. They further suggested that a hostile work environment that discourages conflict resolution can lead to low morale and prevent the achievement of organizational goals.

Nigerian manufacturing enterprises are not an exception; in recent years, a number of confrontations have been observed amongst them. A delay in the purchase process by the purchasing department may result in a great deal of tension and job redundancy. Conflicts may arise between an accountant and a marketing manager, a superior officer and junior employees, or a production manager and the purchasing manager. Studies have demonstrated, however, that good conflict management improves both employee performance and the effectiveness of businesses.

Statement of the Problem

Given that conflict in the workplace is unavoidable, great performers and organizations that are able to consistently implement effective conflict management strategies will be the ones that reach their objectives and standards. As is already known, Nigerian establishments have long been troubled by the impact of dispute resolution on achieving corporate objectives. The empirical validation of findings across establishments is, at most, extremely limited. The majority of the limited studies that are currently accessible in Nigeria focus on the construction and service sectors. When it comes to the manufacturing industries, empirical research is still inert. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate employee performance and conflict management strategies in a few Lagos State industrial organizations.

Research Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to examine Conflict management practices and employee's performance in a selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State.

The study also seeks the following specific objectives, which are to:

1. Identify the factors that causes conflicts in selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State

2. Examine the types of conflict that are much consistence in selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State

3. Determine the conflict management strategies adopted by selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State.

Research Hypotheses

In view of the above objectives, the following hypotheses are being examined

H01: There will be no significant relationship between organizational conflict management and employees'

performance.

H02: There will be no significant relationship between organizational conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, accommodation, confrontation, and avoidance) and employees' performance.

Scope and Limitation

The study looks at staff performance and conflict management strategies in a few manufacturing firms in Lagos State, including Yalog Paints, Sweetco Nigeria Limited, Flourmill Nigeria Limited, Pepsi Bottling Company, and Coca-Cola Bottling Company. The purpose of the study is to determine how dispute resolution techniques and worker performance are related. Nine (5) manufacturing enterprises in Lagos State were chosen, and only 357 respondents were chosen. The study's shortcomings are mostly focused on a small number of Lagos State manufacturing companies. The study's exclusive focus on a small number of carefully chosen industrial firms and its compact size

Review of the Related Literature Concept of Conflict

Numerous brilliant brains have studied conflict for millennia. However, it has only been able to conduct a more thorough investigation since the 20th century (Anastasiou, 2020). Conflict resolution research gained prominence with the publication of "African Political Systems," edited by Fortes and Evans Pritchard, which signaled the formation of political anthropology as a distinct subfield of social anthropology. But despite a lengthy history of research, theoretical debates regarding the nature of conflict and how it resolves have persisted. Scholars disagree from the outset on whether conflict is a sociation or a disjunctive process. There are academics who argue that confrontation creates division.

Sipova (2019), for example, thought that fighting was an anomalous occurrence. He described it as pathology or anomie. They also held the view that conflict has a disjunctive effect. This viewpoint has been refuted by numerous other academics. Men interact with one another in societies, and war is no exception. A way to resolve conflicts and prevent total disintegration is through conflict, which helps to maintain some degree of unity. There isn't a single, widely acknowledged definition of conflict in the literature, despite the fact that the phrase is vague and has many varied meanings (Rahim, 2023). Nonetheless, conflict is described as "a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party" by Marchetti & Tocci (2020).

Employee Performance

Attaining organizational objectives is contingent upon the performance of employees, as noted by Rivaldo and Nabella (2023). Effective workers may help businesses grow their productivity and the caliber of goods and services they create, as well as improve customer and staff happiness and brand recognition (Kuswati 2020). How well an employee is able to carry out his or her tasks and responsibilities on a correct and efficient basis is measured by their performance (Andreas, 2022). A worker's productivity, effectiveness, quality, initiative, and attitude can all be used to gauge their performance (Riyanto et al., 2021).

Companies that have high employee performance can more successfully accomplish organizational goals; conversely, low employee performance can result in losses for the business (Sitopu et al., 2021). Improving employee performance is a significant problem for businesses across a range of industries, according to Paul & Bommu (2024), while subpar employee performance can result in a company's loss of clients, a decline in productivity, and elevated operating expenses.

Empirical Review of Literature

An Empirical Analysis of the Literature on Employee Performance and Accommodating Style A cooperative and conciliatory approach to conflict resolution, the accommodating conflict management style involves one party voluntarily sacrificing their own interests or positions in order to advance the interests or positions of the

other party involved in the conflict (Kulesa et al., 2023). Depending on the circumstances, the accommodating conflict management approach can have a beneficial or negative impact on worker performance (Hussain et al., 2023). Positively, being accommodating can support the preservation of good working relationships with patients as well as with other staff members. In a service industry such as hospital, this may result in more patient retention and satisfaction. However, if accommodating is used too frequently or in situations where it is not appropriate, it can have negative effects on employee performance (Gunasingha et al., 2023).

This study proposes that accommodating style significantly influence employee performance. The study also proposes that accommodating style can be a positive approach to employee motivation. If an employee has a minor issue that is important to them but not critical to the overall success of the team or organization, accommodating can help build trust and maintain positive working relationships. Empirical Review of Literature on integrating Style and Employee Performance The integrating style of conflict management is a collaborative approach where both parties work together to find a mutually beneficial solution to their conflict (Chandolia & Anastasiou, 2020).

When it comes to the hospital industry, the integrating style of conflict management can have a significant impact on organizational effectiveness. By using this approach, hospitals can avoid costly legal battles and negative publicity that can damage their reputation (Zaghini et al., 2020). There are some ways in which the integrating style of conflict management can positively impact organizations' effectiveness including improving patients relations, reducing employee turnover, avoiding legal costs, and enhancing employee performance (Liddle, 2023). This hypothesis suggests that using the integrating conflict management style can lead to a range of benefits that ultimately improve employee overall performance. By working collaboratively to find mutually beneficial solutions, employees working in a hospital can foster a positive work environment that promotes teamwork, productivity, and a strong organizational culture to enhance performance.

The integrating conflict management style can have a positive impact on employee motivation thereby enhancing employee performance in several ways. This style emphasizes collaboration and mutual problem-solving, which may result in a happier workplace and more job satisfaction leading to high employee performance. Also, staff members are more likely to be inspired to work harder if they feel their issues are acknowledged and valued (Aseery et al., 2023).

Empirical Review of Literature on Avoiding Style and Employees' Performance

According to Kay & Skarlicki (2020), avoiding conflict management style is a type of leadership style where a manager tends to avoid or ignore conflicts that arise within their team or organization, rather than addressing them directly. Managers who adopt this style tend to prioritize maintaining harmony and avoiding tension and discomfort, even if this means not fully addressing issues that may arise. Avoiding conflict management style can significantly impact the performance of employees in the hospital. In the hospital environment, where conflicts can have significant reputational consequences, avoiding conflict can lead to unresolved issues, lack of accountability, and delays in decision-making (Jordan & Troth, 2021).

This can ultimately impact the employees' performance and reputational damage. Additionally, avoiding conflict can hinder innovation and growth, as employees may be hesitant to suggest new ideas or take risks (Abou Ramdan & Eid, 2020). Avoiding conflict management style can significantly impact employee motivation. When managers avoid conflict, they tend to ignore or downplay issues, which can create a culture of ambiguity, uncertainty, and mistrust. This can lead to a decrease in employee motivation and job satisfaction, as employees may feel disengaged, undervalued, and unsupported (Suliman et al., 2020) affecting their performance.

Conceptual Framework

The Figure 1 demonstrates the framework that relates the concepts and the central themes of the study. The conceptual framework establishes the links between the independent variables (accommodating style, integrating style and avoiding style) and the dependent variable (employee performance)
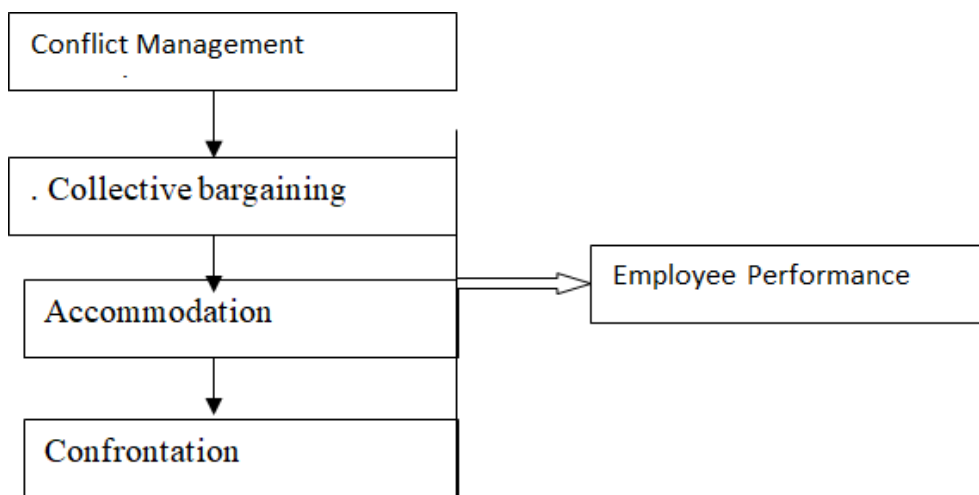
Source: Researchers perception, 2024

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research adopted survey research design, which attempts to describe and explain conditions of the present by using many subjects and questionnaire to fully describe a phenomenon. The reason for using survey research design is to collect relevant data from respondents in the field and make analysis and interpretation easy.

Population of the Study

The population of this study includes all the staff of quoted manufacturing companies in Lagos state. With the entire population are 3,195. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting staff of the company, the respondents were grouped into different strata and sample was drawn from each stratum randomly and the reason for this is because it affords every member of the sample an equal opportunity to be selected and also to reduce bias to the barest minimum. Also, the sample size was determined using the TaroYamane(1967)sample size determination technique, which is;

$n = N1+N(e)^2$

Where;

N = Population size

n = Sample size

e = Error of Margin (0.05)

n = 3195

$1+3195 (0.05)^2 = 357$.

The study used primary sources as a means of data collection, the primary data used was questionnaire administered to the staff of quoted company (Coca Cola Bottling company, Yalog Paints, Pepsi Bottling company and Sweetco Nigeria Limited) in Lagos State based on conflict management and its impact on the employees performance.

The instrument used for collecting data for the purpose of this study is a well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to the staff of the quoted company Lagos State through a staff of the company and respondents filled and returned the completed questionnaire.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table1: Lack of effective communication has been the major causes of conflict encountered by the management of the company

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	38	11
Agree	54	15
Undecided	72	20
Disagree	107	30
Strongly Disagree	86	24
Total	**357**	**100**

Source: Field Survey,2024.

Table 1 shows that 11% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of effective communication has been the major causes of conflict encountered by the management of the company, 15% of the respondents were agreed, while 20% of the respondents were undecided, 30% of the respondents disagreed with the opinion and 24% of the respondents strongly disagreed respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents disagreed that Lack of effective communication has been the major causes of conflict encountered by the management of the company, that means that the company really have effective communication approach to conflict management.

Table2: The company's management has implemented a conflict management strategy that involves either compromising or pursuing a more favorable resolution in the middle ground.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	56	16
Agree	74	21
Undecided	53	14
Disagree	93	26
Strongly Disagree	81	23
Total	**357**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table2 shows that 16% of the respondents strongly agreed that the company's management has implemented a conflict management strategy that involves either compromising or pursuing a more favorable resolution in the middle ground, 21% respondents agreed with their opinion, 14% of the respondents were undecided, while 26% of the respondents disagreed with their opinion and 23% of the respondents representing 26% and 23% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents disagreed that The company's management has implemented a conflict management strategy that involves either compromising or pursuing a more favorable resolution in the middle ground, that means that company does not really employ compromising as an approach to conflict management.

Table 3: Requiring employees to comply with management's decisions has consistently been the company's conflict management strategy.

Response	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Strongly Agree	106	30
Agree	168	47
Undecided	12	3
Disagree	42	12
Strongly Disagree	29	8
Total	**357**	**100**

Source: Field Survey,2024.

Table 3 shows that 30% of the respondents strongly agreed that Requiring employees to comply with management's decisions has consistently been the company's conflict management strategy, 47% of the respondents representing 3% were undecided, while 42 and 29 respondents representing 12% and 8% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that Requiring employees to comply with management's decisions has consistently been the company's conflict management strategy, that means that the company forces employees to accept management stand even against their wish.

Table 4: Employee satisfaction has significantly increased gradually.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	41	12
Agree	64	18
Undecided	72	20
Disagree	97	27
Strongly Disagree	83	23
Total	**357**	**100**

Source: Field Survey,2024.

Table 4 above shows that 12% strongly agreed that employee satisfaction has significantly increased gradually, 18% of the respondents agreed respectively that Employee satisfaction has significantly increased gradually, 20% of the respondents were undecided, while 27% of the respondents disagreed and 27% of the respondents strongly disagreed respectively. This indicates that majority of the respondents disagreed that employee satisfaction has significantly increased gradually, that means that employees morale may not have improved gradually.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One

H01: There will be no significant relationship between organizational conflict management and employees' performance.

Table 4.4: Significant relationship between organizational conflict management and employees performance

Variables	N	Mean (X)	(Std. Dev.) SD	R	Sig.	Remark
Organizational conflict management	357	217.28	2.52			
employees performance	357	140.72	4.52	0.449	0.05	Sign

It is shown in the above table that there is a significant relationship between organizational conflict management and employees performance (r = 0.449; P<0.05)

Hypothesis Two

H02: There will be no significant relationship between organizational conflict management strategies and employees performance.

Table 4.4: Significant relationship between organizational conflict management (collective bargaining, accommodation, confrontation, and avoidance) and employees performance

Variables	N	Mean (X)	(Std. Dev.) SD	R	Sig.	Remark
Conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, accommodation, confrontation, and avoidance)	357	198.28	2.56			
				0.420	0.05	Sign
Employees performance	357	159.72	4.34			

It is shown in the above table that there is a significant relationship between organizational conflict management and employees performance (r = 0.420; P<0.05)

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This study examines Conflict management practices and employees performance in a selected manufacturing companies in Lagos State. The result of the finding indicate that There is a significant relationship between conflict management (collective bargaining, accommodation, confrontation, and avoidance) and employees performance.

Hypothesis One shows a significant relationship between organizational conflict management and employees performance (r = 0.449; P<0.05) in manufacturing company.

Furthermore, hypothesis two shows a there is a significant relationship between organizational conflict management and employees performance (r = 0.420; P<0.05) in manufacturing company

The R^2 = 0.42 indicates that only 98%conflict management approaches (collective bargaining, accommodation, confrontation, and avoidance) by the company contributes immensely to the improvement of employees morale but can be explained by other factors not noted in the regression model which is refer to as error term. Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between conflict management and employees performance.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were obtained from the result analysed: There is a significant relationship between conflict management (collective bargaining, accommodation, confrontation, and avoidance) and employees performance among selected manufacturing company in Lagos State. This indicates that conflict management

approaches such as collective bargaining, accommodation, confrontation, and avoidance statistically contributes to improving employees' performance among selected manufacturing companies in Lagos State. That is, through managing conflict, manufacturing companies in Lagos State has improved employees performance.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are considered:

1. The management of manufacturing firms in Lagos State should continue to improve in its approach to conflict management (collective bargaining, accommodation, and confrontation, avoidance) since its leads to improvement in of employees' performance.

2. Management in the organizational must try to adopted an inclusive and collaborative strategies and at the same time strive to involve union – leadership or employee representative in vital decisions that affect the workforce.

3. Both management and employees must resolve to work together amicably by formulating potent strategies and sustaining acceptable policies as effective machinery for managing conflict on continuous basis in organizations.

4. Credible channels of communication and open discussions of conflict in work relations must be encouraged with an attempt to avoid confrontation, competition and domination as conflict management strategies.

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