

REEXAMINING CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATAGEMS AND EMPLOYEES' PRODUCTIVITY IN SELECTED NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

EBHOTE OSEREMEN PH. D

Department of Business Administration,
Edo State University Uzairue, Edo State, Nigeria
ebhote.oseremen@edouniversity.edu.ng

&

AKPAIDA PAX ANOGHENE

Academic Planning Unit,
Edo State University Uzairue, Edo State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study examined conflict resolution stratagems and organizational performance of selected tertiary institution in Nigeria with focus on tertiary institutions within Edo State, Nigeria. The study used survey design with sample of 150 respondents purposively selected in three Universities- Benson Idahosa University (Edo South), Samuel Adegboyega University (Edo Central) and Edo State University Uzairue (Edo North). The study adopted primary data with the aid of questionnaire which were analyzed using tables and simple percentages (%) while correlation and regression analysis were employed to test the hypotheses. The findings of this study reveal that there is a positive relationship between conflict resolution strategies and organizational performance of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This study therefore recommends among others that tertiary institutions should pay attention to conflict management and resolve conflicts more at the infant stage rather than allowing it to escalate and affect productivity of the organization.

Keywords: Conflict, management strategies, Edo.

JEL Classifications: M12, M13

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Arts, Management and Social Sciences, Edo State University Uzairue, Nigeria. ebhote.oseremen@edouniversity.edu.ng. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4789-561X>

Introduction

Since time immemorial, there have been issues arising from various backgrounds and concepts, resulting in disparities among the parties involved (or entities). Some may have wondered where it came from and why it became a part of existence, with its influence and effect on those with whom it comes into contact, but the fact remains that it is something to think about. However, many people became interested in conducting research on it and its subjects, and many people are still experimenting with its concept and capacity to this day. According to Digvijaysinh (2013), many influential and great minds have conducted various studies and research on this topic over the centuries. Methodical studies on approaches to conflict management have been intensified in recent decades, even with the advent of politics in the world's governance system and organizational civilization. The group will always have a schism. Every workplace has its share of squabbles.

The value of workplace conflict is becoming more widely recognized. Managers spend a significant amount of time dealing with conflict, according to a recent survey, and conflict management is becoming increasingly important to their overall effectiveness. However, according to Obisi (2016), maintaining peace is one of the most important factors in increasing productivity, which benefits both workers and management as well as global economic growth. Given this, it's reasonable to regard workplace conflict as an inevitable and desirable part of doing business. Conflict could also be defined as a competitive situation in which the parties are aware of the incomparability of their respective future positions and each party desires a position that is incompatible with the other party's.

Disputes can arise when an employee seeks to maximize profits while a workers' representative seeks to ensure that his or her constituents' working conditions are constantly improved. Conflict may arise if collective bargaining agreements are not followed. According to Igbinoba, Osibajo, Adeniji, Salau and Atolagbe (2019) violations of employees' rights and prerogatives may result in conflict between the parties. Pay, service conditions, and fringe benefits are a few examples of things you can negotiate. Igbinoba et al (2019), observed that conflicts encompass the entire spectrum of behaviors and attitudes that oppose

owners/managers and workers. Anger, distrust, or a clash of personalities can all lead to antagonism, whether the disagreement is about substance or emotion. Otobo (2017), examined the psychological, political, and economic consequences of industrial conflict from three perspectives. Everyone affected by industrial action suffers directly. An effective conflict management system is critical for preventing the escalation of conflict-related issues and assisting organizations in achieving their corporate objectives. Given the importance of conflict in human societies and relationship bases, many scholars have studied it and a long history of research on the subject and its controversies has been recorded.

Statement of the Problem

Organizations around the world have suffered as a result of workplace conflicts, which can be internal or external. Because of the globalization of trade, working-class citizens from all over the world have been forced to relocate from their homes in order to find work and earn a living. As a result, today's workforce is a melting pot of people from all over the world with diverse cultural backgrounds. There has been a lot of squabbling among staff members since then. Conflict resolution has grown in importance and value as a human resource management topic in order to ensure organizations' long-term viability. Conflicts in organizations have a negative impact on the organization's overall performance in achieving its goals. Organizational conflicts may lead to underperformance because a large portion of organizational funds will be devoted to resolving the conflicts at the expense of increasing productivity, which is contrary to the organization's existence. Conflicts also cause interactive disagreement within the organization, making achievement of organizational goals difficult. When a concerted effort is made to reduce the level of conflict within the organization, achieving organizational goals becomes more realistic. As a result, it is critical that efforts be made to discover ways to effectively manage conflict in order to achieve organizational goals. The rationale for this study is the problem of ineffective conflict management in tertiary organizations, with a focus on tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria.

As a requisite to achieving the objectives of this study, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. Does collaborating style of conflict management influences organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- ii. In what ways can competing style of conflict management influences organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- iii. How can avoiding style of conflict management has any significant relationship with organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- iv. Does accommodating style of conflict management on organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- v. How does compromising style of conflict management on organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The general objective of this research is to examine the relationship between conflict management and organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria the specific objectives are to;

- i. investigate the relationship between collaborating style of conflict management influences organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- ii. investigate the relationship between competing style of conflict management influences organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- iii. examine if avoiding style of conflict management has any significant relationship with organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- iv. investigate the effect of accommodating style of conflict management on organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- v. investigate the effect of compromising style of conflict management on organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The following hypotheses would be used in reaching conclusions on the significance of the variables.

Hypothesis one

H₀: collaborating style of conflict management does not influence organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis two

H₀: competing style of conflict management does not influence organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis three

H₀: avoiding style of conflict management does not influence organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis four

H₀: accommodating style of conflict management does not influence organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis five

H₀: compromising style of conflict management does not influence organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

This study examines all aspects of conflict resolution and employee productivity in tertiary institutions, with a focus on tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria. The research was carried out strictly within the parameters of the stated objectives.

Literature**Concept of conflict management**

According to Digvijaysinh (2013), "as long as organizations continue to use work teams, conflict cannot be avoided because it is an unavoidable aspect of work teams." When it comes to grouping individual behaviors, the result is always conflict, which is unavoidable as long as there are behavioral expressions and interactions. As part of human existence, there is always some interaction with conflict, and this interaction results in aggression, misunderstanding, antipathy, negative attitudes, and hostile approach. Furthermore, conflicts are an unavoidable part of any organization, whether they are negative or positive, if the organization's goals and objectives are viewed differently (at some point) by the organization's staff and management, regardless of how smooth and successful the operations are. Conflict exists whenever and wherever there is a contradictory interest in the common acceptance of a thing or situation.

Deutsch and Coleman (2000), Evans (2013), Digvijaysinh (2013) and Kamran, Yumna, and Syed (2016) have all expressed their views on the subject of conflict and conflict management. Conflict, on the other hand, can be constructive and add value to an organization, or it can be destructive to the functionality of a unit or group. As things stand, when conflict is negative, it is thought to have a negative impact and impede organizational productivity, teamwork, and progress, so it should be avoided. When conflict is constructive, it can help to refocus organizational vision, encourage healthy competition, and increase creativity and productivity without creating negative tension. However, in addition to the aforementioned factors, there are differences between the negative and positive approaches to conflict in terms of the organization's objectives and understandings.

Conflict, according to Kamran, Yumna, and Syed (2016), is the disagreement that exists among groups in the organization, and this disagreement causes productivity challenges that impede the progress of some individuals as well as the organization. This conflict may arise as a result of background differences, vision clarity, job creativity and conceptualization, operational bases, remuneration justification, task deliverable status, work relationship, excessive work pressure, and unethical demands over work preference, among other factors. The freethinking nature of humans always reveals the opportunities for conflict to gain access and influence situations in every human relationship. However, where there is no conflict, regardless of the wide range of potential differences among human beings, such organization lacks meaningful and impactful change that can influence the new status and improved psychology toward operations. According to Deutsch and Coleman (2000), the standard by which conflict is operated and managed determines whether it is destructive or constructive, because conflict cannot be classified as either good or bad (Ukata and Silas-Dikibo, 2020).

According to Digvijaysinh (2013), conflict between groups of people and even within organizations represents change (evolution), which is a competitive aspect of basic human survival, and this evolution influences the progress and success of human beings and the organization with new challenges and approaches to coordinate operations within the environment. This is not to say that this approach to conflict

is without risk; rather, it is an open form that can have either a positive or negative impact depending on how the affected members interpret the level of understanding and cooperation. Thus, conflict is inherent in human existence, and because every organization involves human capacity with varying philosophical perspectives, it is impossible to operate without conflict.

Furthermore, in terms of people and organizations, Evans (2013) defined conflict as the element that distinguishes one's values and principles from those of others, with the goal of categorizing people and organizations into groups with varying perspectives on basic operations. It demonstrates how conflict can influence decisions and, more importantly, how conflict can be managed successfully without adding to the complexity of situations.

"Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently," according to Ukata and Silas-Dikibo (2020). In conflict resolution, it is true that not all conflict can be resolved because it is a natural phenomenon. However, managing conflict necessitates an understanding of conflict resolution skills and self-awareness, which can lead to productivity. Because of the natural presence of conflict, communication skills become extremely important in the establishment of values and standards in the organization. It is difficult to resolve conflict without first understanding it in its various forms. And conflict resolution skills are required in everyday operations due to the unpredictable nature of humans, which can lead to conflict outbursts at any time.

In an organization where productivity is critical, everyone goes above and beyond to contribute positively and valuably to raising the standards, and this creates a high demand for competition. High competition demands can lead to internal conflict and disagreement between groups, necessitating a review of organizational values and realignment of visions in order to capture collective productivity. As a result, conflict management facilitates a satisfactory solution that encompasses a wide range of approaches to conflict resolution (Anderson, 1990).

When conflict is kept to a minimum, emotions are kept in check, and the achievement of objectives and goals becomes possible. This is the overarching goal of everyone dealing with conflict: to reverse the effect of conflict by successfully managing the incompatibilities (Umana, 2019) in order to achieve the desired outcome, bringing all parties to focus on that common goal. It has also been observed that whenever there is an industrial conflict, the effect on organizational productivity is always negative, and if not successfully managed, it can result in the organization's breakdown. As a result, in order for people and organizations to experience successful levels of progress and evolution in work and life, coordination and cooperation, which are essential aspects of living, must be implemented. According to Umana (2019), "it would be incorrect to conclude that cooperation is good while conflict is bad, because both concepts are pervasive and co-exist in our social life."

Sources of conflict resolution

Throughout history, the study of conflict has gained reputable review because it concerns human behavior and his reaction to society, even though many scholars have conducted studies on conflict as it relates to politics, economy, social relativity, and so on. Some authors speculated that conflict is deeply embedded in human biology, with exposition in his characters, because life is viewed as a competition and survival of the fittest. Further research identified materialistic and deterministic theories as sources of conflict, while other studies argue otherwise. Robbins (2005) stated in Digvijaysinh (2013) that there are three sources of conflict: Role conflict is influenced by sets of behavioral patterns displayed by groups of people in order to influence decision-making. Structural conflict arises from the need to coordinate and manage interdependence operations between different groups within the organization toward common organizational goals, and resources conflict arises from the competitive use of the organization's scarce resources to become the most successful unit within the organization, as well as communication misunderstandings within the organization. However, the approach to conflict resolution varies depending on the source of the conflict

Ukata and Silas-Dikibo (2020) identified six major sources of conflict as general sources: I Interpersonal disagreements, which indicate individual stress and unproductivity caused by high competition or inferiority complexes, which influence individual psychology. (ii) Role conflict, which stems from an individual's role contribution in the organization and can easily lead to interpersonal conflict. (iii) Power and leadership struggles that determine who rules over whom and whose decisions matter in the organization, frequently to achieve selfish goals over the organization's corporate goals. (iv) Distinctive misunderstandings and disputes caused by using different approaches and orientations to solve common

problems, resulting in unattainable success. (v) External decisions that influence internal decisions about the organization's objectives. Such a decision overrides the organization's values in favor of external interests that may or may not benefit the organization. (vi) Interdependence relationships, if not managed properly, can lead to communication breakdowns and intense conflict.

According to Osabiya (2015), potential sources of conflict without empirical research are meaningless, even if such sources are substantial. Organizations in Nigeria, according to the quote, have a rarity of empirical claims because "the Nigeria environment where empirical studies on the causes of organizational-level conflict are not in evidence." However, in terms of the empirical study, a plethora of potential sources of conflict are identified at the organizational level in addition to the theoretical conceptualization.

Among the sources of conflict identified by Havenga (2002) are content workload, affirmative action within the organization, cultural and racial differences, resource availability, and new management techniques. According to Rahim (2002), among the sources or causes of conflict are heterogeneity of the workforce, group loyalties within the organization, high competition for power and position, individual dislike, drive for autonomy, different role and organizational structure, difference in values, goals, and environmental changes, value discrepancies, and diverse economic interests.

According to Omisore and Abiodun (2014), two sources of conflict have been identified in Nigerian tertiary institutions: (1) Internal sources that harbor organizational factors influence operations with "opposing interests" in order to divide the focus and objectives with contention. Such a dispute involves a power struggle or structure, as well as intense competition for positional authority. As previously stated, conflict is unavoidable in any organizational evolution, and this conflict determines the impact on organizational productivity. External sources identify pressure from outside the organization that is biased and selfish in its policies and operations. External sources may lack clarity of vision or interpretation of values toward the organization, so when decisions concerning the organization are made, negative consequences may result (Leung, 2010).

Conflict management style

When used interchangeably, the terms "Style" and "Strategy" denote the same thing, and when it comes to conflict management, it is understood that there are different approaches to be used. Conflict management strategies are regarded as critical in various studies, and many literatures on the subject have been reviewed from the nineteenth century to the present, with differing perspectives on the approach and style of management. Blake and Mouton (1964) classified conflict management strategies as "forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem solving." According to Rahim (1983), the strategies are "integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising," with personal concern and concern for others. Certo (1997) classified these strategies as "comprise, avoidance and smoothing, forcing a solution, confrontation or problem solving." According to Rahim (2002), the strategies are "Integrating, Obliging, Dominating, Avoiding, and Compromising. According to Ukata and Silas-Dikibo (2020), the most popular and widely accepted conflict management styles are "collaborating, accommodating, competing, compromising, and avoiding. Conflict resolution necessitates the following basic and essential strategies, as mentioned in numerous literatures:

Accommodating Style - This approach requires a high level of cooperation and open-mindedness to deal with issues without defaming the decision of the other person or putting self-objectives and goals first. This allows others to contribute their ideas and efforts to the organization's growth.

Avoiding Style - This style of conflict resolution discourages others from contributing wholesomely to the growth of the organization because they perceive their contributions as irrelevant, negatively affecting organizational productivity. Avoiding an issue is regarded as one method of resolving conflict, particularly in minor matters, but it may not instill in people a goal-achieving mindset.

Collaborating Strategy - This resolution style necessitates relationship trust and confidence in order to work as a team to achieve goals and objectives. Complex situations necessitate this strategy, requiring the parties involved to form a partnership and channel their individual ideas toward a common goal.

Competing Strategy - This strategy emphasizes competition and individual goal pursuit. Everyone under this strategic influence operates without cooperation or partnership, pursuing power, position, objective target, and so on at the expense of others. However, it may be appropriate for gaining a promotion or in an emergency.

Compromising Method - "This is the lose-lose scenario," write Ukata and Silas-Dikibo (2020), "where neither person nor manager really achieves what they want." This style of conflict resolution through moderate cooperation allows the parties to compromise their standards for the sake of achieving a result, which is often the case when both parties' ideas are equally important.

Conflict management in tertiary institutions

Conflict is considered properly managed when it is resolved efficiently and with a high level of sensibility, and since conflict is a natural part of existence, it is critical that people understand and resolve it amicably. To that end, in tertiary institutions, all individuals compete to prove their worth over the other. Evans (2013) stated that conflict in tertiary institutions can arise from:

Economic conflict - As a result of operating with very scarce resources, various groups of parties using the limited resources clash due to a lack of resources to satisfy everyone. Economic conflict can raise the temperature of behavior, influencing decisions.

Value conflict - Ideas are deemed valuable, and when preferences for ideas are met with bias, individuals' emotions are punctured, which can explode into massive conflict, particularly when warding off inferiority and general negativity (Lewis et al, 2007).

Power Conflict - When one person attempts to lord over another in an intrusive manner, such an approach is not met with open arms in a social setting. Though conflict is natural, with ideologies and principles experiencing priority war, conflict can be constructive or destructive depending on management and outcome (Van et al, 2008)

Challenges of conflict management

While there are methods for successfully managing conflict, the fact remains that no individual, group, or organization can exist or operate without some form of conflict. Because conflict is unavoidable, it is the most difficult to manage because it evolves with knowledge and existence. Conflict, as stated in this study, can be constructive or destructive, making it especially difficult to determine which one it is in relation to potential situations. The following difficulties are obvious from the foregoing.

Styles that contrast - Among the challenges of conflict resolution, team members may differ in their workability style and approach, posing a significant risk of incompatibility with regard to work ethics. Not all team members may have a clear vision of what the team should do, resulting in a disparity in operational style.

Cultural And Gender Differences - Cultural differences can have an impact on a person's standards and, in some cases, productivity within an organization, as well as the general demographic status, which includes race, age, and gender.

Personal innovation - Some people are proud of their personality and position; others believe they should occupy or possess certain qualities, and that if they are not in those positions, no one else is qualified. Meeting another person with similar or superior qualities could spark an aggressive conflict. In their characters, these people are arrogant and bossy.

Sharing Resources - Conflict and high tension are unavoidable in an environment with scarce resources and the same limited resources being shared, whether individually, in group, or in organization. Misinterpretation of tasks and concepts leads to conflict in an environment where there is a lack of communication or poor information dissemination

Theoretical framework

This research is based on the conflict management model. Blake and Mouton proposed this theory in 1964. The theory classified interpersonal conflict resolution styles into five categories: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem solving. Researchers began to review these five conflict styles and developed additional styles that were not completely abstract from Blake and Mouton's five conflict styles.

The model is based on the concerns of the conflicting parties. A particular conflict management style would result from the parties' concern for their own interests (as assertiveness) and their concern for the interests of those across the table (cooperativeness). Pruitt classified these personality types as yielding (low assertiveness/high cooperativeness), problem solving (high assertiveness/high cooperativeness), inaction

(low assertiveness/low cooperativeness), and contending (high assertiveness/low cooperativeness). Pruitt contends that when seeking mutually beneficial options, problem-solving is the preferred method. The theory is relevant to the study because it focuses on how to handle conflicts in an organization. In fact, these five conflict modes are evaluated alongside two main dimensions: assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness refers to the quality of attempting to resolve one's own concerns, whereas cooperativeness refers to the extent to which one is concerned with satisfying the wishes of others (Labraguea & Petittebe, 2017).

Furthermore, the five models are divided into two categories: traditional and modern approaches to conflict, which is the earliest viewpoint on organizational conflicts. The traditional approach is the most basic approach to conflict resolution and was developed in the 1930s. Managers used to regard conflicts as evil, outright wrong, destructive, and negative. Managers also wanted to avoid conflicts at their workstation entirely because conflicts result in a demotivated workforce, lower productivity, and dysfunctional work. According to the traditional approach, managers should manage conflict by identifying the malfunctioning of causes. However, the traditional approach to conflict emphasizes miscommunication, employee disagreement, trust issues, and managers' or company owners' irresponsibility regarding employee needs and expectations. The modern approach to conflicts is the current perspective on organizational conflicts. Certain traditional approaches are being challenged by the advancement and expansion of studies on organizational behavior and HR methodologies. One such concept in HR was the traditional approach to conflict. A modern approach to conflict recognizes conflicts as an essential component of any organization. Furthermore, it views conflicts as beneficial to the company and does not seek to eliminate them. According to modern theories, an organization that does not face conflicts is unadaptable, non-flexible, non-responsive, and static. Conflicts are more beneficial when they are kept to a minimum because they encourage self-motivation, self-evaluation, and creativity in individuals. It's because they're competing with each other. It also reflects better task outcomes, effective resolutions, and improved group performance.

Methodology

This study's goal is to look into how conflict resolution affects organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria's. The study employed a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design is employed because the survey method entails the systematic collection of data from respondents with the aim of generalizing and forecasting a particular aspect of the behavior of the study population.

Union members from all tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria's made up the study's population. Convenience led to the selection of three tertiary institutions as the sample size: Edo State University Uzairue in Edo North, Samuel Adegboyega University in Edo Central, and Benson Idahosa University (BIU) in Edo South. The 150 sampled employees were divided among the three institutions, with 50 going to Edo State University Uzairue, 45 to Samuel Adegboyega University, and 55 to Benson Idahosa University (BIU). For this study, a convenient distribution of (150) 100 questionnaires were used as the sample size. This sample was chosen to support Sekaran's (2003) assertion of Roscoe's thumb rule, which holds that for the majority of research, a sample size greater than 30 but less than 500 is appropriate, and that for multiple regression analysis, a sample size several times larger is necessary. A data sample of 100 or more, according to Hill, Brierley, and MacDougall (2003) and Dillman (2000), is sufficient to represent the population or any subject under study accurately and to present clear, concise research findings.

Research was used to find the data for this study. In this study, information was gathered from participants using a questionnaire. The tool for gathering data was a questionnaire. With the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science, the questionnaire data was coded and subjected to simple percentage and regression analysis (SPSS). Reliability is the extent to which a measuring instrument consistently yields similar results. The table below displays the reliability of the research tools.

Table 1: Summary of Reliability Test Conducted.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Collaborating style of conflict management	0.87
Competing style of conflict management	0.86
Avoidance style of conflict management	0.88

Accommodating style of conflict management	0.92
Compromising style of conflict management	0.78

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Tables and percentages are used to present the study's data, which will undoubtedly help readers comprehend the study's research question and tested hypotheses. 100 of the 150 questions on the questionnaire that was given to respondents were filled out and returned, which represents a return rate of 67%.

Table 2: Demographic Information of Respondents

S/N	Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Male	60	60.00
	Female	40	40.00
	Total	100	100%
2	Marital Status		
	Married	35	35
	Single	50	50
	Divorced	5	5
	Separated	10	10
	Total	100	100%
3	Age		
	18 – 25	10	10.00
	26 – 33	60	60.00
	34– 41	5	5.00
	42 – 49	10	10.00
	50– 57	10	10.00
	58 and above	5	5.00
	Total	100	100%
4	Educational Qualification		
	SSCE/GCE	7	7.00
	OND	20	20.00
	HND/B.SC	30	30.00
	M.Sc[]/Phd	43	43.00
	Total	100	100%
5	Religion:		
	Christian	49	49.00
	Islamic	30	30.00

	Traditional	14	14.00
	Hinduism	7	7.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

According to the data in the preceding table, there were 60 men and 40 women among the study's participants. Additionally, 35 of the study's participants said they were married, making up 35.00 percent of the total sample. Of the total, 50 of the respondents are single, accounting for 50 percent; 5 respondents account for 5%; 10 respondents account for 10% of the total, and 10 respondents account for 10% of the total. As a result, it suggests that the vast majority of those who took the poll were single. Only 10.00 percent of respondents are between the ages of 18 and 25, according to the data on the age brackets of respondents. Those between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-three make up 60 percent of the study's participants. There was a five percent share of the study population in the thirty-four to forty-one age brackets. A full ten percent of the study's participants are between the ages of 42 and 49. People over the age of fifty-seven make up 10 percent of the research population, while people in the age range of fifty-eight to fifty-seven account for 5 percent.

There were seven respondents who had SSCE/GCE qualifications, which accounted for 7.0% of the total number of respondents. The total research population included 20 people with an OND, which accounted for 20% of the respondents. A total of 30 HND/B.SC respondents make up 30.00 percent of the total research population. The remaining 43 participants are all M.Sc/Ph.D. students, accounting for 43 percent of the total participants. Many of those who participated in this research study appear to have a college degree or higher. 49 of the respondents (or 49 percent) listed themselves as Christians in the preceding table. A total of 30 respondents, or 30 percent of the total, came from Islam. Only 14 people responded to the question about religion, and Hinduism received only 7 responses, which accounted for only 7 percent of the total. This suggests that most of those who responded were Christian.

SECTION B: This section analyses the responses collated from the main subject of interest i.e., independent and dependent variable.

Table 3: Does collaborating style of conflict management influences organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
1	Do you experience conflict in your place of work?	20 20.00	31 31.00	27 27.00	12 12.00	10 10.00
2	I usually have disagreement with my co-workers.	62 62.00	29 29.00	2 2.00	5 5.00	2 2.00
3	Do you feel that collaborating style of conflict is applicable in your place of work.	18 8.00	29 29.00	21 21.00	40 40.00	2 2.00
4	To what extent do you think collaborating style of conflict is useful in organization	70 70.00	15 15.00	5 5.00	6 6.00	4 4.00
5	I don't like collaborating style of conflict resolution at workplace so I try my best to circumvent it	40 40.00	20 20.00	9 9.00	22 22.00	9 9.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Twenty respondents, or 20% of the total sample, strongly agree that they have experienced conflict at work, as shown in the preceding table. There were 27 people who were undecided, which accounted for 27% of the total. According to the survey results, 31 percent of respondents agreed, 12 percent of respondents disagreed, and 10 percent of respondents strongly disagreed. This suggests that a large majority of those who responded to the survey had experienced workplace conflict. '

There were 62 respondents (or 62 percent) who strongly agreed that they frequently misunderstand one another, as shown in the preceding table. Undecided respondents accounted for 2% of the total sample size.

There were 29 people who agreed, 5 people who disagreed and 2 people who strongly disagreed, making up 29 percent of the total responses. My colleagues' intentions may be misunderstood by the vast majority of respondents, according to this poll.

Collaborating style of conflict is useful in organization, as shown in the preceding table by 29 respondents or 29% of the total research population. More than a quarter of the survey participants were undecided. There were 40 people who agreed, 2 who disagreed and 8 who strongly disagreed with the statement in the survey results.

Table 4: In what ways can competing style of conflict management influences organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
6	I have been involved in intra-group workplace conflict	40 40.00	31 31.00	10 10.00	12 12.00	7 7.00
7	Competing style of conflict resolution has a devastating effect on the productivity of employees	40 40.00	20 20.00	9 9.00	22 22.00	9 9.00
8	Competing style of conflict resolution increases productivity of employees	20 20.00	59 59.00	6 6.00	8 8.00	7 7.00
9	Competing style of conflict resolution is seamless when applied at workplace.	70 70.00	15 15.00	5 5.00	6 6.00	4 4.00
10	Competing style of conflict resolution has a devastating effect on the productivity of employees	45 45.00	25 25.00	10 10.00	5 5.00	15 15.00

Source: Fieldwork,

2022 Of the total number of people who participated in the survey, 40 people, or 40%, strongly agreed that they had been involved in intra-group conflict at work. At least 10% of those who took the poll were still undecided. Some 31 percent of respondents agreed; 12 percent disagreed; and 7 percent strongly disagreed with the statement, according to the results. According to the survey results, the vast majority of those who responded had been involved in intra-group conflict at work.

Competing style of conflict resolution has a devastating effect on the productivity of employees.45 respondents (or 45.00 percent of the sample) according to the data in the preceding table. They also strongly dislike it when it occurs. Twenty-five of the respondents, or 25 percent of the total, agreed, while ten of the respondents, or 10 percent of the total, were unsure. There was a total of 5 people who disagreed, and 15 people who strongly disagreed, which equates to 15.0 percent of the population.

Table 5: How can avoiding style of conflict management has any significant relationship with organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
11	Avoidance is a conflict resolution approach is effective.	70 70.00	11 11.00	4 4.00	12 12.00	3 3.00
12	I like to avoid conflicting co-workers.	50 50.00	20 20.00	10 10.00	14 14.00	6 6.00

13	Avoiding style of conflict resolution bring about peace in an organization.	30 30.00	40 40.00	13 13.00	10 10.00	7 7.00
14	Avoiding style of conflict resolution have a negative consequence on employee's productivity	70 70.00	5 5.00	15 15.00	7 7.00	3 3.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Eighty one percent of the study's participants strongly agree and agreed that the strategy of avoiding conflict is an effective one. There were 4% of people who weren't sure, according to the survey results. Twelve respondents (12%) disagreed, and three respondents (3%), who were the most strongly disapproving, disagreed with the statement. Thus, avoiding conflict is a strategy for dealing with conflicts.

I like to avoid conflict with co-workers. At least 10% of those who took the poll were still undecided. Thirteen respondents, representing fourteen percent of the total disagreed, and six respondents, representing six percent strongly disagreed. As a result, it implies that one of the most important conflict resolution strategies is to compromise.

Avoiding style of conflict resolution have a negative consequence on employee's productivity in the table above, 30 respondents, or 30% of the total sample, strongly agree that the approach taken to resolve conflict will have an effect on the productivity level of employees. 30 13 people, or 13%, said they were still unsure. Twenty-four respondents, 40% of the total, agreed; ten respondents, 10% disagreed; and seven respondents, 7% strongly agreed. Because of this, it follows that the method used to resolve conflict has an effect on the productivity of the employees.

Table 6: Does accommodating style of conflict management on organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
15	I learn to accommodate co-employee when they offend me.	11 11.00	70 70.00	12 12.00	4 4.00	3 3.00
16	Accommodating style of conflict resolution makes me feel better in the workplace	50 50.00	20 20.00	10 10.00	14 14.00	6 6.00
17	Accommodating style of conflict resolution increases my productivity.	30 30.00	40 40.00	13 13.00	10 10.00	7 7.00
18	Accommodating style of conflict resolution makes the organization productive	70 70.00	5 5.00	15 15.00	7 7.00	3 3.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

I learn to accommodate co-employee when they offend me. At least 12% of those who took the poll were still undecided. Four respondents, representing four percent of the total disagreed, and three respondents, representing three percent strongly disagreed. As a result, it implies that one of the most important conflict resolution strategies is to accommodating.

Table 7: How does compromising style of conflict management on organizational productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
19	Do you like to compromise in the face of conflict.	70 70.00	11 11.00	4 4.00	12 12.00	3 3.00
20	Compromising style of conflict is worthwhile in an organization.	50 50.00	20 20.00	10 10.00	14 14.00	6 6.00
21	Resolving conflict through compromise is a win-win process.	30 30.00	40 40.00	13 13.00	10 10.00	7 7.00
22	When workers comprise, it shows that in life you cannot get everything and as such you should be ready to engage in give and take.	70 70.00	5 5.00	15 15.00	7 7.00	3 3.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

When workers comprise, it shows that in life you cannot get everything and as such you should be ready to engage in give and take. In table above, 70 respondents, or 70% of the total sample, strongly agree that the approach taken to resolve conflict will have an effect on the productivity level of employees. 15%, said they were still unsure. 7% of the total, agreed while 3% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 8: EMPLOYEES PRODUCTIVITY

S/N	Statement (N=100)	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
23	I am effective in carrying out my duties in the workplace	45 45.00	21 21.00	4 4.00	17 17.00	13 13.00
24	I believe that conflict has a negative effect on employees' productivity	75 75.00	16 16.00	2 2.00	4 4.00	3 3.00
25	I am efficient in carrying out my duties in the workplace	60 60.00	14 14.00	6 6.00	10 10.00	7 7.00
26	Employee productivity is key to the success of any organization	55 55.00	25 25.00	5 5.00	7 7.00	8 8.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

I am effective in carrying out my duties in the workplace was the question that elicits the following respondent. A total of 45 respondents (or 45 percent of the total research population) strongly believe that they are effective in carrying out their work responsibilities. There were 4% of people who weren't sure, according to the survey results. There were twenty-one people who agreed, seventeen people who disagreed, and thirteen people who strongly disagreed.

Employee productivity is critical to any organization success, according to 55 respondents (or 55.00 percent of the total research population) as shown in the preceding table. More than a quarter of the respondents (25%) supported the findings, while only five (5.0%) were unconvinced. Respondents disagreed in seven

cases (7 percent), while eight cases (8 percent) strongly disagreed in seven instances (7 percent). As a result, it implies that employee productivity is critical to the success of any company.

Table 9: Test of Hypotheses. In this section, the various hypotheses were tested

	Mean	Std. Deviation
EP	3.57	1.489
COL	3.97	1.747
COP	3.59	1.403
AV	3.97	1.673
ACCOM	3.61	1.510
COMP.	3.67	1.820

Table 10: Correlations

		EP	COL	COP	AV	ACCOM	COMP
Pearson Correlation	EP	1.000	-.106	-.033	-.055	.924	.910
	COL.	-.106	1.000	.168	.249	-.166	-.160
	COP	-.033	.168	1.000	.379	-.129	-.123
	AV	-.055	.249	.379	1.000	-.077	-.056
	ACCOM	.924	-.166	-.129	-.077	1.000	.983
	COMP	.910	-.160	-.123	-.056	.983	1.000
Sig. (1- tailed)	EP	.	.147	.373	.294	.000	.000
	COL.	.147	.	.047	.006	.050	.056
	COP	.373	.047	.	.000	.101	.112
	AV	.294	.006	.000	.	.224	.290
	ACCOM	.000	.050	.101	.224	.	.000
	COMP	.000	.056	.112	.290	.000	.

Table 11: The correlation table above measures the extent of relationship between the dependent and the independent variables.

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
.863	.846	.929a		119.593	.000b	1.607

Table 12: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Beta	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance
1 (Constant)	.024	.368		-1.966	.052	-1.455	.007					
COL	.077	.074	.077	2.038	.002	-.070	.224	-.106	.106	.040	.912	1.096
COP	.106	.048	.106	2.214	.029	.011	.202	-.033	.223	.084	.842	1.188
AV	-.047	.040	-.027	-.287	.004	-.107	.052	-.055	-.071	-.026	.812	1.232
ACCOM	.015	.222	.925	2.169	.000	.484	1.365	.924	.395	.159	.033	30.046
COM	.073	.220	.073	.261	.001	-.364	.509	.910	.034	.013	.033	29.964

a. Dependent Variable: EP

The tables above show that there is a significant relationship between workplace conflict resolution strategy and employee's productivity with $R^2 = .843$; $P < .05$. The predictor variable explained 54% of employee's productivity. The positive beta shows that there is a positive correlation between conflict resolution strategies and employee's productivity. All the independent variables under consideration had a significant value, we therefore reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between collaborating, accommodating, avoidance, compromising and competing style of conflict resolution strategies and employee productivity in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.

Summary of Findings

The study investigated conflict resolution strategies and employee productivity in selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The findings arising from the tested hypotheses reveals the following:

Hypothesis 1: The null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that there is a significant relationship between collaborating style of conflict resolution strategies and employee productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: The null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which is there is a significant relationship between competing style of conflict resolution strategies and employee productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: The null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which is there is a significant relationship between avoiding style of conflict resolution strategies and employee productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 4: The null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which is there is a significant relationship between accommodating style of conflict resolution strategy and employee productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 5: The null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which is there is a significant relationship between compromising style of conflict resolution and employee productivity in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendation

As a medium for social interaction, conflict involves the contention for power, belief system, resources, and status (Appelbaum, Abdallah and Shapiro, 1999). This conflict is a natural inherent human phenomenon if socialization is involved, and there exist reasons for every conflict, which is the pivotal to aid conflict management in the society and organization. Many authors in the past decades and still counting, have in one related study or the other; published on the subject: Conflict and how to manage it, but with infinitesimal records on institutions and how productive are the institutional organizations in Nigeria with regards to conflict management. Also, considering the future of our tertiary institutions and how conflict could be manage using various conflict' strategies and styles to influence upon the productivity. Since the subject matter is viewed in various perspectives, the aim of this study is to relate the significance of conflict management in organizational productivity by exploring the concept, objective, effects, and benefits of conflict to the tertiary institution in Nigeria and the society at large, considering the forms and sources of conflict and how to manage organizational conflict with respect to the influence it has on productivity.

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations is made:

- i. The tertiary institutions should pay attention to conflict management and resolve conflicts more at the infant stage rather than allowing it to fester.
- ii. Organizations/Tertiary institutions should set up a negotiating team who will look at issues capable of causing conflict earlier enough and handle them before it goes out of hand.
- iii. Tertiary institutions should be proactive enough to adopt the various conflict resolution strategy in handling crisis because conflict could result to discouraging organizational commitment.
- iv. Government should also be ready to negotiate with tertiary institution in external conflict involving tertiary institutions workers union and the government.
- v. Management of tertiary institutions should see conflict as a destructive instrument capable of reducing workers productivity and adequate measures be deployed to thwart it existence in their organization.

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