



An Assessment on Conflict Management Strategies in Organizational Performance: A Case Study of a Selected Manufacturing Company in Abuja, Nigeria

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini menguji dampak strategi manajemen konflik terhadap pencapaian tujuan organisasi di perusahaan manufaktur terpilih di Abuja. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif dengan dua pertanyaan penelitian yang diajukan dan dua hipotesis penelitian. Studi ini menyelidiki strategi manajemen konflik di sembilan perusahaan manufaktur di Abuja, termasuk 7up Bottling, Coca-Cola, Nigerian Breweries, Glasco Plastic Company, Ero Table Water, Alpha Ceramics, dan Aslo Glass. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara strategi manajemen dan pencapaian tujuan organisasi. Penelitian ini memiliki keterbatasan, seperti fokus pada beberapa perusahaan terpilih dan ukuran sampel yang kecil, yang mungkin membatasi kemampuan generalisasi temuan. Data dihasilkan melalui penggunaan kuesioner terstruktur yang divalidasi. Statistik deskriptif dan inferensial digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang dikumpulkan dari responden. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis korelasi Spearman sebagai alat metodologi. Hasilnya menunjukkan hubungan positif yang signifikan antara strategi pengelolaan konflik (perundingan bersama, kompromi, dan akomodasi) dan pencapaian tujuan organisasi. Strategi non-integratif (persaingan, dominasi dan penghindaran) mempunyai dampak negatif. Strategi perundingan bersama memiliki korelasi positif tertinggi dengan pencapaian tujuan. Studi ini merekomendasikan strategi pengelolaan konflik yang inklusif dan kolaboratif, yang melibatkan serikat pekerja dalam pengambilan keputusan strategis, untuk menghindari pemberontakan konflik. Konflik tidak dapat dihindari dalam organisasi dan dapat mempengaruhi pencapaian tujuan tergantung pada strategi manajemen konflik yang dipilih.

Kata kunci: Manajemen Konflik, Kinerja Organisasi, Pencapaian Tujuan Organisasi, Strategi Manajemen

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of conflict management strategies on the attainment of organizational goals in selected manufacturing companies in Abuja. The study adopted a descriptive research design with two research questions raised and two research hypotheses. The study investigates conflict management strategies in nine manufacturing companies in Abuja, including 7up Bottling, Coca-Cola, Nigerian Breweries, Glasco Plastic Company, Ero Table Water, Alpha Ceramics and Aslo Glass. The research aims to establish the relationship between management strategies and organizational goal attainment. The study has limitations, such as its focus on a few selected firms and the small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Data were generated through the use of a validated structured questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze data collected from the respondents. The study used Spearman correlation analysis as a methodology tool. The results showed a significant positive relationship between conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, compromise, and accommodation) and organizational goal attainment. Non-integrative strategies (competition, domination and avoidance) had a negative effect. Collective bargaining strategy had the highest positive correlation with goal attainment. The study recommends an inclusive and collaborative conflict management strategy, involving unions in strategic decisions, to avoid conflict insurrection. Conflict is unavoidable in organizations and can affect goal attainment depending on the chosen conflict management strategies.

Keywords: Conflict Management, Organizational Performance, Organizational Goal Attainment, Management Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Conflict management is a critical aspect of organizational life, especially in the dynamic and diverse environment of manufacturing companies. In regions like Abuja, Nigeria, where cultural diversity, varying interests, and operational pressures converge, conflict can significantly impact organizational performance, influencing productivity, morale, and overall effectiveness. Understanding how to manage conflict effectively is crucial for maintaining a harmonious work environment and ensuring the sustainable success of organizations. Conflict management strategies can be categorized into five primary approaches: avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration (Maiti & Choi, 2021). The manufacturing industry, characterized by its reliance on teamwork and collaboration, necessitates a thoughtful approach to conflict management to optimize performance and foster a positive organizational culture.

The selected manufacturing company in Abuja serves as a relevant case study due to its unique operational challenges and cultural context. The capital city of Nigeria is a melting pot of diverse ethnicities, beliefs, and professional backgrounds, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts among employees. The manufacturing sector in Nigeria is currently undergoing significant transformation, driven by economic reforms and globalization, making conflict management a pertinent area of study for organizations operating within this landscape. Effective conflict management can lead to improved organizational performance by fostering better communication, enhancing collaboration, and promoting innovation. Conversely, poorly managed conflict can result in decreased employee satisfaction, increased turnover rates, and diminished organizational effectiveness.

Conflict in organizations is crucial for both relationship-based and task-based conflicts (Koval et al., 2018). Conflict of interest arises from group scarcity of freedom, position, and resources (Schneider, 2023). Employees with different personalities have different attitudes towards conflict, affecting their behaviour. Respecting and considering their motives is essential during conflict management. Conflict is unavoidable and can manifest in various forms in an organization. Conflict management impacts organizational goal attainment by establishing a conducive environment that leads to better employee performance (Emmanuel, 2021). Properly managed conflict promotes open communication, collaborative decision-making, regular feedback, and timely resolution of conflicts. Open

communication and collaboration enhance the flow of new ideas and strengthen work relationships, positively affecting employee morale. Regular feedback and timely resolution of conflict can improve employee satisfaction and organizational goal attainment. A negative work environment without conflict resolution can result in poor behaviour and non-attainment of organizational goals.

Conflict in the workplace is inevitable, and organizations must constantly develop effective conflict management methods to achieve set-standard goals. Nigerian establishments have long been concerned about the impact of conflict management on business goal attainment, but empirical confirmation is limited. Most studies in Nigeria focus on service and construction industries while manufacturing industries are not actively researched (Dania, 2017; Demirkesen & Tezel, 2022; Ebekoziem & Aigbavboa, 2021; Etim & Daramola, 2020; Moshood et al., 2020). This study aims to provide insights to management in selected manufacturing firms in Abuja about the strategic importance of conflict management strategies as a resource tool for achieving business goals. It also assesses the conflict management strategies utilized by the selected manufacturing company in Abuja and evaluates their effectiveness in enhancing organizational performance. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on conflict management within the manufacturing sector in Nigeria, providing valuable recommendations for practitioners and policymakers. By identifying best practices and areas for improvement, organizations can develop tailored conflict management strategies that not only resolve disputes but also leverage conflict as a catalyst for growth and innovation.

Research Purpose

The study aims to investigate the impact of conflict management strategies on the goal attainment of selected manufacturing firms in Abuja, with specific objectives including:

1. Identify the factors that cause conflicts in selected manufacturing firms in Abuja
2. Examine the types of conflict that are consistence in selected manufacturing firms in Abuja
3. Determine the conflict management strategies adopted by selected manufacturing firms in Abuja.
4. Determine the effect of organizational conflict management on attaining organizational goals in the selected manufacturing firms in Abuja.

Research Questions

1. What are the primary factors contributing to conflict within selected manufacturing firms in Abuja, and how do these factors differ across various departments or organizational levels?
2. How do the chosen conflict management strategies employed by selected manufacturing firms in Abuja impact the attainment of organizational goals, and are there specific strategies that are more effective than others?

Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between organizational conflict management and organizational goal attainment.

H02: There is a significant relationship between organizational conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, compromise, accommodation, confrontation, competition and avoidance) and organizational goal attainment.

Literature Review

Organizational conflict is defined as an act of discontentment and contention used by workers or employers to exert excessive pressure to achieve demands (Himes, 2008). This view aligns with other authors' descriptions of conflict as a dispute arising when different interests, goals or values are incompatible within an organization (Abiodun, 2014; Agbo, 2020; Vilas-Boas, 2018). In the context of employment relationships, conflict is an inevitable clash of interests and resulting disputes of varying intensity between and within active actors (Adegbonmire, 2015). In the absence of common values, conflict is bound to occur, as conflicts are inevitable in organizations. Research indicates that factors such as lack of resources, different expectations, competition, lack of cooperation, interdependence, and communication problems contribute to organizational conflicts (Abiodun, 2014; John-Eke & Akintokunbo, 2019; Shah et al., 2022; Rawashdeh, 2019). In the Nigerian service industry, these factors include unacceptable terms of employment, poor human relations, non-consultation with employees, anti-union posture, and lack of effective conflict prevention mechanisms (Oluwafemi & Kifordu, 2023; Kolawole, 2019). In the banking sector, communication failure, perception, values, and culture problems are moderately serious sources of conflict (Abubakar, 2021; Akintayo et al., 2019; Longe, 2015; Newman et al., 2020). Most

organizational conflicts have economic and goal incompatibility orientations in the workplace.

Balogun (2022) and Longe (2015) categorized workplace conflict into two types: informal and formal. Informal conflicts are based on grievances and are expressive, resulting from unconscious protests, sabotage, unruly behaviour, and poor work attitudes (Tawiah, 2020). These conflicts can significantly affect employee job description focus, turnover, and organizational prosperity. Formal conflicts are organized expressions of conflict articulated through trade unions or other workers' representatives, often aimed at altering employment relationships (Bidwell et al., 2013; Donaghey et al., 2011). Adetunji and Adetunji (2018) noted that there are two sides to workplace conflict: one destructive and unhealthy, and the other productive and healthy, with a problem-solving base. However, both conflict situations are neither bad nor good, as disagreement and dissatisfaction must occur in work relations for adjustment to improve overall organizational performance. Akanbi (2020) emphasize the importance of managing organizational conflict to ensure its positive or negative impact on performance. The author suggests that timely recognition and explanation of underlying tension are crucial for effective conflict management. Dolapo (2018) proposes a four-way process for conflict resolution, including assessment, inquiry, design, implementation, and evaluation. This integrative approach encourages management to satisfy stakeholder needs and creates better results and higher commitment in individuals. Jamiu (2021) suggested that using an integrative style of conflict management can lead to better results and increased commitment in individuals, as it broadens understanding of the conflict problem and increases resolution.

According to Ekwoaba et al. (2015), collective bargaining strategy is a widely recognized method for managing union-management conflicts in organizations. It is a legal tool used by workers and management to resolve employment contract disputes. In Nigeria, the Trade Union Amendment Act has encouraged the adoption of collective bargaining strategies. This collaborative approach involves negotiation between union and management, meeting demands, discussing, presenting counter-demands, and sometimes bluffing to reach a collective agreement.

Wobodo (2019) proposed conflict management strategies, including avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration. The avoidance strategy is a palliative approach that requires minimal sacrifice to achieve peace. Accommodation is a palliative technique that

involves capitulation and appeasement. Competition is a win-lose method that prioritizes the fittest, without considering other parties. Compromise involves parties willing to give up something to settle the conflict (Radosavljevic et al., 2014). Collaboration is a win-win approach where parties are prepared to satisfy each other's demands. All other approaches depend on the organization's structure and provide short-term solutions to conflict situations. The Trade Disputes Amendment Decree, 1988, No. 39 and Trade Dispute Act CAP 18, 2004 in Nigeria offer a conflict management approach (Christopher, 2016). These steps include voluntary settlements using internal grievance procedures and external mechanisms like the appointment of mediators, conciliators, industrial arbitration panels, National Industrial Courts, and Boards of Inquiry. The National Industrial Court's award is final and binding on employees and employers, making it a crucial tool for conflict resolution in Nigeria.

METHOD

The study used a descriptive research design to survey 145 participants from 607 manufacturing firms in Abuja. The sample size was restricted to 28% of the workforce, categorized into managerial and non-managerial employees. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, with 130 copies retrieved for analysis. The study investigates conflict management strategies in nine manufacturing companies in Abuja, including 7up Bottling, Coca-Cola, Nigerian Breweries, Glasco Plastic Company, Ero Table Water, Alpha Ceramics, and Aslo Glass. The research aims to establish the relationship between management strategies and organizational goal attainment. The study has limitations, such as its focus on a few selected firms and the small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The questionnaire was validated using a Test and Re-Test method with 25 employees from a manufacturing firm. The reliability of the coefficient ranged from 0.786 to 0.885, indicating its validity and reliability. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics the Spearman Correlation Coefficient and the Shapiro-Wilk test. The Shapiro-Wilk test determined the normality of the data, with a significance level of 0.05 in all distributions and 0.05 for other variables. The Spearman correlation matrix was used for hypothesis testing, as it does not require specific requirements for variable distribution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study analyzed the factors causing organizational conflict in selected manufacturing firms in Abuja. The results showed that the consciousness of workers was the most significant source of conflict, followed by inequitable treatment (20%), non-consultation (18%), cumbersome grievance and dispute procedure (15%), nature of work activities (8%), and differences in perception (5%). The study also found that inequitable treatment (20%), non-consultation (18%), cumbersome grievance and dispute procedure (15%), nature of work activities (8%), and differences in perception (5%) were the most common causes of conflict.

Table 1. Means and standard deviation of causal factors of workplace conflicts

| Variable | Sample size | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Standard deviation |
|--|-------------|---------|---------|------|--------------------|
| Consciousness of workers | 250 | 1 | 5 | 4.5 | 1.18 |
| Inequitable treatment | 250 | 1 | 5 | 4.3 | 1.20 |
| Non-consultation with employees with key issues affecting them | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.75 | 1.21 |
| Cumbersome grievance in dispute procedure | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.35 | 1.35 |
| Nature of work activities | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.24 | 1.36 |
| Differences in perception | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.05 | 1.38 |

On the common types of conflict in the selected manufacturing firms in Abuja

The study reveals that union-management conflict is the most prevalent type of conflict in Abuja's selected manufacturing firms, with a mean score of 4.51 on a Likert scale. Personal conflict, on the other hand, has the lowest mean score (2.50) and is the least rife type of conflict in the establishment.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of prevalent types of conflict in the organization

| Variable | Sam ple size | Minim um | Maxim um | Me an | Stand ard deviat ion |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Union- manage ment conflict | 250 | 1 | 5 | 4.5 1 | 1.20 |
| Procedu ral conflict | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.7 5 | 1.22 |
| Job task- related conflict | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.5 0 | 1.36 |
| Interpers onal conflict | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.0 2 | 1.38 |
| Personal conflict | 250 | 1 | 5 | 2.5 0 | 1.42 |

On conflict management strategies adopted by selected manufacturing firms in Abuja

The study reveals that collective bargaining, compromise, and accommodation are the most integrative conflict management strategies used in a manufacturing firm. Other methods rated below 2.5 include confrontation, competition, and avoidance. Respondents rated the importance of each indicator using a 5-point Likert scale. Collective bargaining was found to be the most important and productive conflict management strategy. The organization rarely uses palliative methods like avoidance, competition, and confrontation, which are non-integrative collaborative conflict management strategies.

Table 3. Means and standard deviation of conflict management strategies adopted by the organization

| Conflict Managem ent Strategie s | Sa mpl e size | Mini mum | Maxi mum | M ea n | Stan dard devia tion |
|--|------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Collectiv e Bargainin g | 250 | 1 | 5 | 4.4 | 1.21 |
| Compro mise | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.7 | 1.27 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|---|---|----------|------|
| Accomm odation | 250 | 1 | 5 | 3.6 5 | 1.28 |
| Confront ation | 250 | 1 | 5 | 1.6 4 | 0.96 |
| Competi tion | 250 | 1 | 5 | 1.6 2 | 0.72 |
| Avoidanc e | 250 | 1 | 5 | 1.5 0 | 0.82 |

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between workplace conflict management and organizational performance

The study used the Spearman correlation to test the hypothesis of a link between organizational conflict management and organizational goal attainment. Results showed a significant statistically determinate effect with a 33.5% coefficient at a significance level of 0.01. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, indicating a statistically significant relationship between conflict management and organizational goal attainment.

Table 4. Matrix of correlation between workplace conflict management and organizational performance

| Conflict Management I | Organizational Goal | Variable |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--|
| | 0.335 | Organizational Conflict Management |
| | 0.001 | |

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between organisational conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, compromise, accommodation, confrontation, competition and avoidance) and organizational goals.

The study identifies several strategies, including Collective Bargaining (CB), Compromise (COM), Accommodation (ACC), Confrontation (CON), Competition (COMP), Avoidance (AV), and Organizational Goal (OG). The Spearman correlation method was used to test hypothesis (2). The results showed a positive correlation between collective bargaining strategy and organizational goals at a confidence level of 0.001. Both compromise and accommodation strategies showed a positive and significant correlation with organizational performance at a confidence level of 0.05. Integrative conflict management strategies significantly enhanced organizational goals. Non-integrative strategies like confrontation, competition, and avoidance did not have significant correlations with organizational goals. The study concluded that collective bargaining strategy significantly enhances organizational goals.

Table 5. Correlation matrix of organization conflict management strategies and organizational goal

| Variable | CB | CO M | AC C | CO N | CO MP | AV | OG |
|----------|-------|---------|---------|---------|----------|-------|-------|
| CB | 0.675 | | | | | | |
| CO M | 0.481 | 0.750 | | | | | |
| ACC | 0.406 | 0.316 | 0.397 | | | | |
| CO N | 0.110 | 0.112 | 0.343 | 0.342 | | | |
| CO MP | 0.102 | 0.112 | 0.395 | 0.343 | 0.342 | | |
| AV | 0.111 | 0.023 | 0.361 | 0.380 | 0.293 | 0.097 | |
| OG | 0.446 | 0.408 | 0.340 | 0.386 | 0.206 | 0.296 | 1.002 |
| | 0.000 | 0.003 | 0.003 | 0.041 | 0.002 | 0.091 | 0.021 |

Regression Result

The study used regression analysis to predict the most effective conflict management strategies for organizational goals. The results showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between the independent variables (collective bargaining, compromise, accommodation, confrontation, competition, and avoidance strategies) and the dependent variable (organizational goal). The most effective strategies were collective bargaining with the highest beta coefficient (0.480), followed by compromise with the highest beta coefficient (0.450), accommodation with the highest beta coefficient (0.441), confrontation with the highest beta coefficient (0.216), competition with the highest beta coefficient (0.214), and avoidance with the lowest beta coefficient (0.201).

Table 6. Regression analysis of the most effective conflict management strategies on organizational goal attainment

| Indicators | Proposed Effects | Beta Coefficient | Observed value |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Collective Bargaining | +Ve | .480 | 5.575 |
| Compromise | +Ve | .445 | 5.302 |
| Accommodation | +Ve | .421 | 5.102 |

| | | | | |
|---------------|-----|------|-------|-------|
| Confrontation | +Ve | .216 | 2.198 | 0.046 |
| Competition | +Ve | .214 | 2.393 | 0.111 |
| Avoidance | +Ve | .210 | 2.186 | 0.223 |

Discussion of Findings

The study explores the impact of conflict management strategies on goal attainment in a manufacturing company in Abuja, Nigeria. The results of the study offered strong empirical support for the existence of a positive and statistically significant effect of conflict management on organizational goal attainment. Evidence shows in the analysis that if an organization adopts integrative conflict management strategies, organizational performance will be appreciated. To a very large extent, the findings of this present study concur with earlier empirical studies on conflict management and organizational performance that the use of integrative strategies in conflict management yields positive results (Kazimoto, 2013). The study confirms that organizational conflict can arise from various factors, including worker consciousness, inequitable treatment, cumbersome grievance procedures, and differences in perception. It aligns with previous empirical studies on causative factors of organizational conflict (Abubakar, 2021; Akintayo et al., 2019; Longe, 2015). The research confirms that conflict in work relations can arise from multiple factors based on economic and goal incompatibility orientations within an organization.

Furthermore, the empirical study has shown that there are dissimilarities in the types of conflict in work-relations. Study findings indicate that job-task-related conflict, procedural conflict, interpersonal conflict and union-management conflict are the common types in existence in the organization. This result however is significant in providing evidence on consensus rating of union-management conflict as the most prevalent type in the organization. The finding buttressed the views of Fajana and Shadare (2012) that in employment relationships, the interests of employers represented by management and employees represented by the union have often been opposed in work organisations. This has historically been the major cause of conflict in unionized organizations, not only in Nigeria but also in developed economies. The results of the present study were aligned with those of Comboh (2014) on conflict management and organization performance. What has emanated within the context of this present study deviated from Comboh's study that all types of industrial conflicts are negatively associated with employees and organizational performance. Empirical

evidence from this study has suggested a positive link between conflict management strategies of collective bargaining, compromise and accommodation and organizational performance. This position was reinforced by the previous findings of Longe (2015) as re-affirmed by the study hypotheses. Specifically, regression analysis indicated that collective bargaining strategy displayed the highest significant positive correlation with organizational performance. Non-integrative conflict management strategies (competition, domination and avoidance) showed a negative statistically determinate effect on organizational goals.

The findings were in consonant with the proponents of Agwu (2013) and that managers prefer the use of integrative management strategies which are relatively useful in minimizing the incidence of disruptive conflict and having a positive impact on corporate productivity and organizational goals. With integrative conflict management strategy, there is often high confidence and trust in one another among organizational members, loyalty to the work group and the organization in the achievement of corporate performance.

CONCLUSION

The study found that integrative conflict management strategies are strongly linked to organizational performance and goal attainment. It concluded that manufacturing firms in Federal Capital Territory Abuja should adopt integrative conflict management to transform conflict situations from destructive to constructive, ultimately enhancing organizational goals. The study recommends that management adopt inclusive and collaborative strategies, involve union leaders or employee representatives in workforce decisions, and work together amicably. Both management and employees should develop potent strategies and maintain acceptable policies for managing conflict. Encouraging open communication and open discussions of conflict in work relations is crucial to avoid confrontation, competition, and domination. Mutual survival and optimal organizational performance are the goals and basis for both employees and employers in the industrial work setting.

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