Effects of Conflict Management on Organizational Performance (A Study of Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State)

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**Abstract**

The study examined the effect of conflict management on organizational performance with reference to Broadcasting Corporation of Abia state. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Sampling random sampling technique was adopted in analyzing eighty-five (85) questionnaire distributed with the help of SPSS package. Findings indicated that conflict management had a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance. Motivational packages adopted by the organization had the potential to positively influence the organization’s workforce when given the adequate attention it deserves. The study therefore concluded that organizational performance was enhanced when the organization maintained an acceptable level of conflict resolution in the work environment that help to coordinate and control the activities of the organization. The study thus recommended among others that; i) Adequate conflict resolution mechanism is recommended to be set up and
maintained in order to serve as a catalyst to reduce accumulated grievance and trigger employees to better performance. ii) Strategic considerations on personnel competency is recommended as the benchmark for selecting conflict management parties. Finally, there is a need to continuously educate the workforce on the best way to channel their grievances. This is to ensure that the employees do not take laws into their hands.

Introduction
Background to the Study
Conflicts are inevitable part of organizational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and staff are often incompatible (Adomi and Ojo, 2005). Conflict is an unpleasant fact in any organization as longer as people compete for jobs, resources, power, recognition and security. Organizational conflict can be regarded as a dispute that occurs when interests, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other. This results into a situation whereby they frustrate each other in an attempt to achieve their objectives. Conflict arises in groups because of the scarcity of freedom, position, and resources. People who value independence tend to resist the need for interdependence and, to some extent, conformity within a group. People who seek power therefore struggle with others for position or status within the group. Conflict is a part of organizational life and may occur between individuals, between the individual and the group, and between groups (Jung, 2003). While conflict is generally perceived as dysfunctional, it can also be beneficial because it may cause an issue to be presented in different perspectives. Conflict has both positive and negative effects. It can be positive when it encourages creativity, new looks at old conditions, the clarification of points of view, and the development of human capabilities to handle interpersonal differences. Conflict can be negative when it creates resistance to change, establishes turmoil in
organization or interpersonal relations, fosters distrust, builds a feeling of defeat, or widens the chasm of misunderstanding.

In unorganized conflict, the worker responds to the situation in the only way open to him as an individual, that is, by withdrawing from the source of discontent, or in reaction engaging in sabotage and rudeness. Azamosa (2004) argues that such reaction rarely derives from any real calculative strategy. Indeed, unorganized expression of conflict are often, not regarded as conflict by the persons in the situation. This is why most people may not ordinarily associate acts of rudeness with being in a state of conflict. Quite often such rude behaviour may be attributed to “bad mood” and similar psychological states of mind. Conflicts in organizations, whether organized or unorganized individual or group, need to be managed effectively because of their effects on the organization.

Conflict situations affect the overall effectiveness of co-operate organizations in the sense that they cause disharmony among organizational participants impacting negatively on organizational performance. This is because useful time and resources are wasted during conflicts in organizations. Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind than on organization is immune to conflict within itself since every organization is made up of different individuals with diverse interests, goals, ideas and temperaments and it is very difficult to harmonize these divergences. As a corollary, interests and goals usually conflict between the individuals and the management team as well as within the management team members.

Conflict resolution is an important aspect of corporate management. Richard (2011) notes that the aim of conflict management is not to create an ideal corporate situation since that is not attainable given the divergences in the individuals goals, etc. However, conflict management systematically uses the available conflict resolution strategies to build an effective mechanism for conflict management in corporate organizations. Although there may be existing mechanism and procedures already in place to deal with conflicts whenever they occur, some organizations with reactive managers rise to the situation when it occurs.
Statement of Problem

Unfortunately, the term "conflict" has only the connotation of "bad" for many people; so much so that they think principally in terms of suppression, giving little or no attention to its more positive side. Adomi and Ojo, (2005) emphasizes this by stating that it seems entirely likely that many, if not most, organizations need more conflict, not less. The absence of conflict may indicate autocracy, uniformity, stagnation, and mental fixity; the presence of conflict may be indicative of democracy, diversity, growth, and self-actualization. Greenberg (2011) complements this statement arguing that conflict is not the opposite of cooperation but a mechanism that allows to perceive benefits of cooperative work. Furthermore, conflict is considered psychologically and socially healthy. It is psychologically healthy because it provides a breather for frustrations and enables a feeling of participation and even of joy. And it is sociable healthy because it encourages opposition to the status quo and provides conditions for social chances and democracy stemming from pluralism and respect to diversity. Therefore, conflict is ubiquitous, not necessarily dysfunctional and can be required to defy people to perform and stimulate progress.

Traditional workplace practices and systems with their hierarchical structures, tight divisions of labour, narrowly defined jobs, detailed rules, limit employee involvement, and managerial decision making, authority, and control are no longer adequate since they foster conflict (Hener, 2010). The high-performance workplace emphasizes conflict management as a cornerstone of the effective high-performance workplace.

Due to frequent organizational conflict, performance in most organizations has taken a comparatively nosedive sequence (Jehn, and Bendersky, 2013). The frequent agitation by workers for improved working conditions and other interests have led to a down toll which eventually affects organizations performance.

Conflicts in organizations have destabilizing effects on the overall performance of the organization. It leads to under performance since valuable time and resources (human and material) are used in controlling and managing conflicts rather than in enhancing output and productivity. Conflicts also lead to interpersonal disharmony in the organization which makes attainment of
organizational goals difficult. Attaining organizational goals is possible if efforts are always made to reduce the overall level of conflict within the organization. Consequently, it is very imperative that efforts are made towards finding ways of effectively managing conflict so as to achieve organizational objectives. This study therefore is targeted to examine the effect of conflict management on organizational performance using Broadcasting Corporation of Abia (BCA) as a case.

Research Objectives
The main objective of this study was to examine effect of conflict management on organizational performance. Other specific objective was to:

i. determine the effect of conflict management on organizational productivity.

Research Question
The following research question was formulated for the study;

4. To what extent does conflict management affects organizational productivity?

Research Hypothesis
The following research hypothesis was tested in the study;

H0: There is no significant effect of conflict management on organizational productivity.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Conceptual Framework
Meaning of Organizational Conflict
Conflict is conceived to be an outcome of behaviour which is an integral part of human life. Dunlop (2002) expresses that conflict is a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups with each individual or group trying to make the other accept its view or position. Ugbaja (2002) defines organizational conflict as any dispute, individual or group, that arises in the work place which causes disharmony among a group of workers or between an individual and the
management. Sinclair (2005) sees conflict as a disagreement between employees and their employers.

In analyzing conflict situation in corporate organizations, McDaniel (2001) explains that organizational conflicts arise because participants in an organization differ in their attitudes, values, beliefs, goals and understanding. For this reason, conflict is unavoidable. This implies that it is the difference in the orientation, personalities and identities of individuals and groups within an organizational framework that brings about organizational conflict.

In the context of industrial relations, Levine (2000) describes organizational conflict as any disagreement between workers and employers over a breach of the tent. As long as workers and employers abide by the terms of agreement there is bound to be organizational harmony. Disagreements arising from breach of the terms of employment contract have been known to result in organizational conflicts. Accommodation and resolution of conflict is the central theme and subject matter of industrial relations.

Agreements are reached between the workers and employers on the terms of employment and conditions of work. Ubaku (2003) explains that the terms of employment of persons include such things as wages, hours of work compensation, leave, promotion, fringe benefits among others. Conditions of work include environment to the workers’ efficiency or his enjoyment of the job, these include safety and working conditions generally, health and welfare of the employee.

Nwatu (2004) remarks that in all organizations, employees and employers have common interests in getting work done. What constitutes the work, how the work should be done and the price of labour services in the price of labour services in the work process constitute areas where the interests of the two parities vary. It is therefore essential to put in place machineries for effective management of conflicts naturally resulting from their common and opposing interests.

Types of Conflicts in Organizations

Doyles (2000) distinguishes between two types of conflict in organizations. These are individual conflicts (which can arise as a result of one employee feeling aggrieved) and collective conflict (which may originate from an
individual employee or many result from a disagreement between the union and management). Accordingly, individual conflict arises when an employee considers that he has been maltreated or deprived something that he is legitimately entitled to or that some right of his has been breached. This may arise from unfair disciplinary measure taken against the individual, lack of promotion opportunities for him, deprival of annual increment, among others. This conflict, unless properly investigated can have adverse effects on the employee concerned.

On the other hand, collective conflict arises either from misinterpretation of collective agreement or non-implementation of the whole or parts of the agreement. It may also result from break down of collective bargaining. Doyles (2000) expresses that in some cases, a conflict that begins as an individual conflict can develop into a collective conflict.

Generally, conflicts involving an individual are ever having his rights i.e. what he thinks he is entitled to as a workman in his workplace. Collective conflicts are concerned mainly with economic matters except in cases where individual conflicts. The conflict may arise either because of a break down in collective agreement on misinterpretation of collective agreement on, in yet other cases, the non-implementation of the whole or parts of the agreement.

While agreeing with this expression, Dunlop (2002) remarks that organizational conflicts that arise from collective grievances may also be the result of non-observance of conditions of an individual or disciplinary measures. A large number of conflicts that occur in organizations may be those concerning situations not governed by rules. Such conflicts emanate essentially from individual workers and may be because of an alleged ill-treatment of the workers by his boss or the result of some claimed right.

Chandan (2005) distinguishes between five types of conflicts which occur within an organization. These include the following;

i. Intra-personal conflict
ii. Inter-personal conflict
iii. Personal-group conflict
iv. Inter-group conflict
v. Inter-organizational conflict
i. **Intra-personal**

Accordingly, intra-personal conflict occurs within an individual which results from conflict between an individual’s goals and the values expected of him. The circumstance creates a tension in the individual as he tries to satisfy both his personal interest and what people expects from him.

Nwatu (2004) exemplifies this type of conflict with a bank cashier who is expected to remain polite to a customer in the face of high level of provocation by the customer just to maintain good relations with the customer.

ii. **Inter-personal conflict**

Chandan (2005) states that this type of conflict occurs between two or more individuals in the organization. It occurs due to disagreements between individuals over the goals of an organization which they are left to decide for themselves. Their respective desires for organization may conflict resulting in disagreements it is based on opinions rather than on facts.

Such competition also result from competition among individual workers arising from limited vacancies and opportunities for personnel development and promotion in the organization.

iii. **Personal-Group conflict**

Osborne (2001) defines a group as two or more people acting independently but in unified manner towards achieving a common goal and in the process they share common concern, values or ideologies. Individual members are expected to adhere strictly the group’s norms, when an individual member’s behaviour is not in agreement with the group’s norms and values.

iv. **Inter-group conflict**

This type of conflict occurs when there is disagreement between groups, departments, sections or units in an organization over established norms and values. Chandan (2005:116) observes that such conflicts are not personal in nature because they arise from factors inherent in the organizations structure e.g. when tasks are properly defined, they cause conflict. Again, such conflicts may arise
due to inconsistencies in performance criteria for different units and groups.

In exemplifying this type of conflict, Nwatu (2004:97) explains that cashiers are rewarded on the basis of the number of customers attended to at the counter whereas customer-care staff are rewarded based on the level of satisfaction they offer to customers. Invariably, conflict will arise because cashiers meet more customers than customer care staff.

v. Organizational Conflict

These types of conflicts exist among organizations. Such conflict arises when the policies of one organization causes one organization causes disaffection among management or employees of other organization.

Causes of Conflicts

Several factors have been identified as causes of conflicts in organizations. These include;

Poor Communication

Communication is the exchange of ideas, information or knowledge between individuals. Through communication, management information employees about decisions taken on the workers’ welfare and the workers inform management about their needs and problems. Thus, communication enhances interpersonal relationships in the organization and fosters understanding among everybody in the organization.

However, Ugbaja (2002) observes that when communication is ineffective, there is information gap between the management team and employees on the one hand and between the employees on the other, and even among the managers. This situation is bound to create mistrust, misunderstanding and suspicion. The result is organizational conflict as employees would not understand why certain decisions are taken as they are not consulted.

2. Organizational Policies and Objectives

Organizational policies and objectives are always conflict prone areas in corporate organizations. Organizational goals are always task-oriented
and not always welfare-oriented. Darel (2003) states that this always creates tension and conflicts in the organization as such goals often conflict with employee’s goal. For instance, the policy of profit plough-back leaves little fund for improvement of workers” welfare.

3. **Individual Goals and Objectives**

Individual employees have personal goals while working in the organization. In fact, the essence of taking up a job in the organization is to have a means of attaining personal goals. In many instances, these personal goals. Darel (2003) also states that such goal incongruence when employees are unable to achieve their personal aims and objectives.

4. **Nature of Assignments**

The nature of tasks undertaken by workers could be a source of conflict. Some tasks are easy and do not stress the individuals to perform. Others are very difficult and stressful to perform. Ankwor (2006) remarks that difficult and stressful tasks are a serious factor that causes conflicts in organizations especially where the principle of job rotation dose not obtain, Such jobs give workers frustrations.

5. **Management Style**

This can also be referred to as leadership style or employer employee or superior-subordinate relationship. Generally, workers resent dictatorial or autocratic management or leadership style. Ankwor (2006) observes that this leads to oppressive or master-slave relationship in corporate organizations. Feeling of resentment and anger associated with such relationship often leads to conflict.

**Impact of Conflict on Organizational Performance**

Chandan (2005) expresses that where they not brought under control in good time, conflicts could work against the achievement of organizational goals. Individual and group responses in conflict situations could range from sabotage, slowing down the pace of work, over-load to lack of cooperation. More importantly, targets and objectives are achieved by groups and individuals and as such, more critical the conflict is to the core operations of the organization.
and the higher the position in hierarchy of persons in conflict situation, the more devastating the impact of such conflict situations. Precisely, because the goals of the organization are formulated by individuals, when the same individuals are in conflict situation some organizational goals either do not get achieved in good time or may be re-aligned or modified. Chandan (2005) observes that under conflict situation organizational performance is hampered. This is because as conflict rages on individual workers become more aggrieved, less committed to work, frustrated, unmotivated and less productive. These lead to levity, loss of time, low productivity and output. Ultimately, organizational performance is adversely affected.

McDaniel (2001) supports this by stating that the problems of organizational conflict is that if it not properly managed, it hampers productivity, lowers moral, causes more and continued conflict and breeds indiscipline and misconduct. These hamper productivity, profitability and performance of the organization. The bad consequences of organizational conflict makes it imperative for management to ensure that conflicts are promptly resolved as they occur.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Unitary Theory

The essence of the unitary theory is that the larger social system or the work enterprise as a sub system of the larger social system is a unitary organization. The theory views the organization as pointing towards a unified authority and loyalty structure. The theory emphasizes on common values, interest and objectives. Those who believe in this perspective view organizational participants as a team or family that emphasize on shared values, shared goals and common destiny. This theory implies the absence of factionalism within the enterprise (Fajana, 2000).

Conflict is viewed as irrational/bad and the sacking of striking workers is preferred to consultation or negotiation. Those holding to the perspective of unitary theory see managers and employees as having a common interest in the survival of their organizations, such that when conflicts occur it is unlikely to manifest itself to a point that will render the firm insolvent (Fidler, 1981). Divisions that do exist are assumed to be the product of personality disorders,
inappropriate recruitment and promotion practices, the deviance of dissidents, or poor communication systems in the organization. According to Rose (2008), under the unitary perspective, trade unionism is outlawed and suppressed as it is viewed as an illegitimate intrusion or encroachment on management’s right to manage; trade unions are regarded as an intrusion into the organization from outside, competing with management for the loyalty of employees. Abott (2006) adds that management must ensure the organization is promoted amongst the workforce as the single source of authority and any alternative sources of authority are eliminated from the workplace. Rose (2008) mentions that the unitary theory tends towards authoritarianism and paternalism, it is pro-management, biased and emphasizes consensus and industrial peace. The underlying assumption of this view is that the organization exists in perfect harmony and all conflict is unnecessary.

**Conflict Theory**

Conflict theory is synonymous with the pluralist frame of reference which is also credited to Fox (1966). This theory views the organization as coalescence of sectional groups with different values, interests and objectives; thus, employees have different values and aspirations from those of management, and these values and aspirations are always in conflict with those of management. Conflict theorists argue that conflict is inevitable, rational, functional and normal situation in organizations, which is resolved through compromise and agreement or collective bargaining. Conflict theorists view trade unions as legitimate challenges to managerial rule or prerogatives and emphasize competition and collaboration. This view recognizes trade unions as legitimate representative organizations which enable groups of employees to influence management decisions (Rose, 2008). Rose further states that the pluralist perspective would seem to be much more relevant than the unitary perspective in the analysis of industrial relations in many large unionized organizations and congruent with developments in contemporary society.

**Empirical Review**

Conflict is endemic to all social life; it is an inevitable part of living because it is related to situations of scarce resources, division of functions, power relations and role-differentiation (Darel, 2003). Because of its ubiquity and pervasive nature, the concept has acquired a multitude of meanings and connotations presenting us with nothing short of a semantic jungle. With the absence of a
comprehensive definition of conflict, various definitions have been offered by many researchers from multiple disciplines. Some of these have originated from disciplines such as psychology, behavioral sciences, sociology, communication and anthropology.

Ubaku, (2003) viewed conflict as a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party. Johnson and Johnson (1994) described conflict as "the process that results when one person (or a group of people) perceives that another person or group is frustrating, or about to frustrate an important concern, and accepted that it is an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities (that is individual, group, organization, etc.). Obasan (2011) conceived conflict as a process of social interaction and a social situation, where interests and activities of participants (individuals or groups) actually, or apparently, confront block and disable the realization of one party's objectives action which is incompatible with another action prevents, obstructs, interferes with, injures, or in some way makes it less likely less effective. Oppenheim, (1992) identified conflict as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities. Conflict can occur between individual, groups, organizations, and even nations. As human being interacts in organizations, differing values and situations create tension. Conflict is thereby viewed as a situation in which two or more individuals operating within a unit appear to be incompatible.

Osisioma, Osisioma, and Chukwuemeka (2012) believed that conflict was conceptually dependent on major components such as expressed struggle, interdependence, perceived incompatibility of goals, perceived scarce rewards, and interference. In light of those major components, conflict is defined as an expressed struggle between two or more interdependent parties perceiving incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals.

METHODOLOGY
Research Design
The researcher adopted survey design.

Sources of Data
Both primary and secondary source of data were utilized in gathering relevant information for the purpose of this study.
Population of the Study
The population of the study was 109 which consists of (both permanent and non-permanent) employees of Broadcasting Corporation of Abia – BCA.

Sample Size Determination
Given the nature of the study, the sample size was calculated using Taro Yamene formula which is given as:

\[ n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \]

Where \( n \) = Sample size
\( N \) = Population size
\( e \) = Margin of error. (5%)

\[ n = \frac{109}{1 + 109(0.05)^2} \]
\[ = \frac{109}{1 + 109(0.0025)} \]
\[ = \frac{109}{1 + 0.28} \]
\[ = \frac{109}{1.28} \]
\[ = 85.15 \approx 85 \text{ approx.} \]

Sampling Techniques
This study adopted random sampling techniques, which makes it possible for all the workers to have equal opportunity of being selected as the representative sample. Based on the sample size of eighty-five (85) workers of the organization, a normal confidence level of 95% and error tolerance of 5% was used.

Interview held were cross checked through the questions in the questionnaire as a confirmation of the responses received in either case.

Reliability of the Research Instrument
The questionnaire, which forms the basic instrument used, was developed after the approval of researcher's supervisor and after going through some previous work on the effect of conflict management on organizational performance.
Methods of Data Analysis
Data collected by the researcher for the study were presented using statistical tools.
The descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency distribution tables were used in analyzing study questions. Pearson moment correlation was adopted as the data analysis technique.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS
Data Presentation
A total number of Eighty-five (85) questionnaire were issued out by the researcher to the staff of Broadcasting Corporation of Abia. A total number of Seventy-Nine (79) were correctly filled and returned. The table below presents the distribution of the questionnaire to the sampled respondents. The generated data was presented and analyzed in the subsequent sub-heading below.

Table 4.1: Distributed and Collected Questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>Number Issued</th>
<th>Number Returned</th>
<th>Percentage (%) Returned</th>
<th>Number Not Returned</th>
<th>Percentage (%) Not Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation and Marketing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Hypothesis Testing
Decision rule: Reject the null hypothesis if the Sig. level (2-tailed) is lower than 0.05 significant level.

H0: There is no significant effect of conflict management on organizational productivity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Management</th>
<th>Organizational Productivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1.640**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.640**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 20.0

The table above showed the relationship between conflict management and organizational productivity. From the result of the correlation, it was observed that conflict management has positive relationship with organizational productivity. The correlation coefficient value was 0.640. Statistically, the Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.004 shows that the relationship was significant. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis that there was no significant effect of conflict management on organizational productivity.

Summary of Findings
The study examined the effect of conflict management on organizational performance (A Study of Broadcasting Corporation of Abia – BCA).

(i) The study showed that conflict management had a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance. This indicated that conflict management mechanism applied in the organization increased the employees’ attitude to work positively, while low regard to conflict management diminished the employees’ attitude to work.

Conclusion
The study had shown that conflict management positively and significantly stimulates organizational performance.

The study therefore concluded that organizational performance should be enhanced when the organization maintain an acceptable level of conflict resolution in the work environment to help coordinate and control the activities of the organization.
**Recommendations**

1. Adequate conflict resolution mechanism is recommended to be set up and maintained in order to serve as a catalyst to reduce accumulated grievance and trigger employees to better performance.
2. There is a need to continuously educate the workforce on the best way to channel their grievances. This is to ensure that the employees do not take laws into their hands.

**REFERENCES**


