

Assessment of Business Manager's Conflict Resolution Skills and Organizational Productivity of Textile Industries in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the assessment of business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria. In order to carry out this study, two specified research objectives were drawn from which null hypotheses were formulated and used for the study. The research design for this study is an Expost Facto design. The population of the study consisted of all business in South-South and South West geo-political zones in Nigeria. A sample of 1325 textile business managers was used for the study using Yaro Yamane out of the population. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts in Test and Measurement, University of Calabar, Calabar. Crombach Alpha reliability technique was used for testing the reliability of the instrument and reliability index of .77 was realized, hence the instrument was regard as being reliable. Data from 1325 completed questionnaires was subjected to pearson products correlation analysis. The findings showed and concluded that there is significant relationship between business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria. The organization's management and other organization should employ the use of integration method of managing conflicts because of it enormous advantages over other methods. Since organizational performance is a function of conflict management, its mechanism in organization should be straighten more in order to further the improvement in the organization's performance

Introduction

Conflict resolution skill is very important for any manager. It is rooted primarily in the fields of business, sociology, and psychology, but not in communication or education. It is complicated to define conflict as it is difficult to come to a consensus concerning the definition of this term (Borisoff and Victor, 1998). Thomas (2005) defines a conflict as a "disagreement in opinions between people or groups, due to differences in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs. In the business world, differences in such characteristics as work experience,

personality, peer group, environment, and situation, all lead to differences in personal attitudes, beliefs, values or needs.” From the definitions it is obvious that there is no just one practical definition of conflict. Each person has an individual way of thinking and behaves differently from others in similar situations. It can be concluded that conflict can affect everyone to varying extent (Leung, 2010).

Working in an organization means to be involved in a conflict, as people working together have various personalities and different views on life. Consequently, they can't avoid conflicts in the workplace. During the past 25 years, organizations have changed, so did their attitude to conflict management. Companies try to adopt a strategic approach to managing organizational conflicts (Aula and Siira, 2010). Generally, there are four types of organizational conflict:

Interpersonal conflict - conflict that can take an interpersonal form. The sources of this conflict may be personal dislikes or personality differences (Gareth and Jennifer, 2008). A California State University Sacramento report notes that people respond in different ways to disagreements, with personal feelings, attitudes and goals contributing to the conflict. The manager usually wants his employees to settle their differences without his personal intervention, but sometimes he needs to step in (Green, 2012).

Intragroup conflict - is the conflict within an internal group, team or department. This type of conflict involves more than one person within a group (Gareth and Jennifer, 2008). The harmony within departments of the company is essential. It helps to maintain productivity and workplace morale, among other things. When two or more people do not get along together, that personal conflict can affect everyone around them. Intragroup conflict may be connected with ethnic, religious or gender prejudice, and also various personality differences. Depending on how strong the conflict is, a manager may need outside help to resolve the issues. At this stage, it could be useful for a manager to have a trusted or otherwise objective third party who has experience in conflict management and settling disputes.

Intergroup conflict - is the conflict between different groups, teams and departments. Battles between accounting and operations teams or between frontline workers and online customer service agents can be a big problem, especially if customers are involved. One group of employees can unite against other group. Such conflicts can arise from the differences in status and contradicting goals of the groups. Intergroup conflict usually leads to miscommunication or even to no communication, affecting an organization's ability to function. The manager can try to resolve the problem through problem solving tactics or following an internal dispute resolution process. Sometimes a facilitator can be useful to help discuss issues of conflict and related concerns. Such types of conflicts should be solved quickly as if problem continues it can destroy the organization (Green, 2012).

Interorganizational conflict - is the conflict between different organizations (Jones and George, 2008). There are three types of interorganizational conflict: substantive conflict, emotional conflict and cultural conflict. Interorganizational conflict most often can be resolved through mediation and acknowledging cultural differences (Morgan, 2012).

Hammed and Ayantunji (2002), observed that the industrial conflict as is found in most organizations today bother on conflict-handling behaviour (negotiation patterns) of both labour leaders either elected or/and appointed officers and the representatives of the management. In line with the views of Hammed and Ayantunji (2002), Akanji (2005) asserts that work place conflicts are mostly due to interpersonal squabbles between trade union

leaders and the management of organizations. Negotiation, according to Fisher et al (2000) is a structural process of dialogue between conflicting parties about issues in which their opinions differ. In a more concise form, Miall, Ramsbothan and Woodhouse (1999) described negotiation as the process whereby the parties within the conflict seek to settle or resolve their conflict. However, the University of Peace as cited in Miller (2003) sees negotiation as communication, usually governed by the pre-established procedures between representatives of parties involved in a conflict or dispute. In his contribution, Best (2007) sees negotiations as a direct process of dialogue and discursion taking place between at least two parties who are faced with a conflict situation or a dispute. He stresses further that negotiation implies that both parties in conflict have come to the realization that by talking to each other they can find possible solution that is acceptable to both parties on the issues over which they apparently disagree.

According to Ashkagnasy and Daus, (2002), emotional intelligence is one of the contemporary and topical concepts often referred to when discussing about management and effective leadership in organizations today. It is imbibed as a conflict resolution skill. It has been acknowledged that individual and ultimately organizational performance is influenced either positively or negatively by the emotional content of leadership behaviour (Macalcer and Shannon, 2002). Thus, the growth in interest in emotional intelligence is associated with increasing organizational change and organizational contextual volatility that is frequently attributed to emotional conflict or interpretive conflict (Downing, 1997). Using the framework of Salovey and Mayer (1990), Goleman (1999) identifies five basic components of emotional intelligence skills needed at work:

Self-Awareness (SA) - It refers to the ability to recognize and understand one's own moods, emotions and drives, as well as their effect on others.

Self-Regulation (SR) - It refers to the ability to control or redirect one's disruptive impulses and moods.

Motivation (MO) - It refers to a passion to work for 'reasons that go beyond money or status. In essence, it has to do with the "gathering up" of your feelings and directing yourself towards a goal, despite self-doubt, inertia and impulsiveness.

Empathy (EM) - It refers to the ability to understand the emotional framework of others. In other words, it has to do with being sensitive to others' feelings and concerns and taking their perspectives into considerations; appropriate the differences in how people feel about things.

Social Skill (SS) – It refers to profitability in managing relationships and building networks. Drawing inference from the analysis of Goleman, Aremu (2007) describes emotional intelligence as the management of one's emotional in such a way that those emotions do not constitute a nuisance to the individual and significant others in and around him. He stresses that bringing emotional intelligence into the realm of academic acceptance has helped to

dislodge the earlier position on Intelligent Quotient (IQ) as the main determinant of life success.

Conflict Management Styles

The success of the organization depends on the ability of conflict recognition and the very way of conflict management implies integration of all factors which can contribute to conflict resolution or its precaution.

Those factors are improvement of communication and practicing discipline in the organization, as well as naming in mind the life phase of parties grievances. Different authors know about various approaches to conflict management. Besides fine typical approaches and strategies on conflict management which we will show and explain, it is important to point out that an important role bears also the organization itself as the third party in conflict. The organization appears as the mediator between adversaries or as arbitrators. This third party in organization are managers which by using their experiencing have to constantly develop new strategies and tactics for conflict resolution by using their experience. Moreover, it is generally acknowledged that conflict represents the most severe test of manager's interpersonal skills (Okoh, 2006).

There are approached or strategies of conflict management. Basic features of each approach (strategy) as state by Paula (2007) are as follows:

- **Dominance:** it occurs when the cooperation is extremely low and the persistence in satisfying of personal interest high. By this strategy conflict is resolved in a way to satisfy the needs of one party damaging the other party involved in the conflict.
- **Integration:** Cooperation is high, as well as the persistence in satisfying of one's own needs. So there is to be sought for the appropriate solution for all parties involved in the conflict.
- **Compromise:** There is an equal wish for median level of cooperation and persistence in satisfying of one's personal needs. So the conflict is resolved so that each party involved in conflict gives up the part of the value.
- **Avoiding:** when the cooperation as well as persistence in satisfying of one's personal needs is very low. In that case the conflict resolution will be solved by withdrawal or repression of conflict.
- **Cooperativeness:** the readiness for cooperation is extremely high and the conflict is resolved by putting the other party in interest before its own.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Relation Management Theory

The human relation theory was postulated by Mayo, (1933), he examined the effects of social relations, motivation and employee satisfaction on factory productivity. Mayo stressed on the power of natural groups, in which social aspects take priority over functional organizational

structures, the need for reciprocal communication, in which communication is two way, from worker to chief executive as well, and the development of high quality leadership to communicate goals and to ensure effective and coherent decision making. Companies need their employees to be able to successfully communicate and convey information, to be able to interpret others' emotions, to be open to others' feelings, and to be able to solve conflicts and arrive at resolutions as this theory does not recognize conflict as a creative force. By acquiring these skills, the employees in management positions and the customer can maintain more compatible relationships. Some of the conflict management strategies are linked to this theory, whereby integrating strategy aims at solving conflicts through two way communication and it shows concern for both self and other employees, also

conflict is seen as bad or a problem just like avoiding strategy does. This theory may be of essence to business managers if they choose to use integrating and avoiding strategy to manage conflicts.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

A survey design was used for this study. This approach was considered most appropriate because it helped the researcher to describe, examine, record, analyze and interpret the variables that were found in the study. It is also useful because of the relatively large population from which the information was collected. Ezejulue and Ogwo (1990) explain that the purpose of a survey research is not the collection of data per se but the discovery of meaning in the data collection, so that facts and events can be better understood, interpreted and explained.

Area of the Study

The study area for this research consists of two geo-political zones in Nigeria namely: South-South and South West. South-South states are six in number and made up of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers state while the South-West, also six in number, are made up of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo state. In all the six geo political zones in Nigeria, there appears to be more major business organizations in the South-South and South West as a result of massive oil exploration in these zones hence the zones were considered for this study.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is composed of business managers in some select textile business organizations (Sunflag Group Nigeria Limited, Haffar Industrial Company Limited, African Textile Manufacturers Limited, Da Viva Textile, AAJ Textile Design, Woollen And Synthetic Textile Manufacturing Limited)in South-South and South West geo-political zones in Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 1325 textile business managers was used for the study using Yaro Yamane.

Research Instrument

The instrument to be used for this study will be a research questionnaire to obtain data. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Sections A and B. Section A measured the demographic data of the respondents such as sex of the respondent, age, marital status, educational qualification and years of administrative experience, while section B contained both the independent and dependent variables.

Validity of Research Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher, vetted and validated by the thesis supervisor. One expert in test, measurement and evaluation in faculty of education in the University of Uyo was also contacted for the validation of the research instrument.

Reliability of Research Instrument

The reliability study was conducted with the use of forty (30) respondents who did not form part of the main study. To further test for the reliability of the research instruments, Cronbach Alpha techniques were used to ascertain the reliability of instrument.

Method of Data Collection

Introduction letter was given to respective heads of administration of the organizations visited. This was done accordingly and there was cooperation among them in respect of administration and retrieval of questionnaires such that an assistant was assigned to the researcher to help identify the respondents, administer and retrieve the questionnaires without the problem of mistaken identity.

Scoring of the Instrument

For analytical purpose, the researcher developed a key of which, every information to be received from the respondents will be assigned to values for easy analysis. The items are classified according to the variables measured. Items in the instrument will be scored independently.

For each variable, scores will be obtained by summing up the responses. Each of the respondents therefore, will receive a separate row of data which will be used for data analysis.

The responses to the items in the questionnaire are on four-point Likert type scale of:

Very much - - - - - 4 points

Much----- 3 points

Little----- 2 points

Very little----- 1 point for positively worded items and vice versa for all negatively worded items.

Procedure for data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical technique such as descriptive statistics for research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlational analysis was used to test the null hypothesis.

Research Objectives

- ❖ To examine the relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on avoiding strategy
- ❖ To examine the relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on integrating strategy

Research Questions

- ❖ What is the relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on avoiding strategy
- ❖ What is the relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on integrating strategy

Hypotheses

- ❖ There is no significant relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on avoiding strategy
- ❖ There is no significant relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on integrating strategy

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on avoiding strategy. In order to test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables as show on table 1

PPMC Test of Significant Relationship between business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on avoiding strategy

Variable	ΣX	ΣX^2	ΣXY	r
	ΣY	ΣY^2		
avoiding strategy	34035	887389		
			2145209	0.778*
conflict resolution skills	83341	5255995		

*significant at 0.05 level; df =1325; N=1327 critical r-value=0.062

Table 1 presents the result of the data analysis on the relationship between business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on avoiding strategy. From the result of data analysis, the obtained r-value was (0.778). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.062) at 0.05 level with 1325 Degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.778) was greater than the critical r-value (0.062). This means that there is significant relationship between business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on avoiding strategy.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on integrating strategy. In order to test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables as show on table 2

Table 2

PPMC Test of Significant Relationship between business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on integrating strategy

Variable	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	R
Integrating strategy	67166	3418842		
			4237558	0.940*
Conflict resolution skills	83341	5255995		

*significant at 0.05 level; df =1325; N=1327 critical r-value=0.062

Table 2 presents the result of the data analysis on the relationship between business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on integrating strategy. From the result of the data analysis, the obtained r-value was (0.940). Base on the decision rule, this value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.062) at 0.05 levels with 1325 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.940) was greater than the critical r-value (0.062). This means that there is significant relationship between business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria based on integrating strategy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the data analysis of the study, it was concluded that there is significant relationship business manager's conflict resolution skills and organizational productivity of textile industries in Nigeria. The study recommends that Problem solving techniques should be devoid of bias on the part of management of the organizations. Conflict is a daily reality in organizations. It is the duty of management to manage such conflicts. If employees perceive a reasonable element of bias in management decision it can generate further conflict. The best problem solving techniques is one based on the rule of natural justice and due process. It simply states that anyone who has anything to decide should listen to all parties involved and a man should not be a judge in his own cause. This implies that all parties to a dispute or an erring employee should be given a formal hearing before a decision can be reached by management in solving problems. Management should follow the legal concept of due process. Due process refers to systematic orderly procedures, including individual's right to controvert and to be heard concerning action pending against him. The organization's management and other organization should employ the use of integration method of managing conflicts because of it enormous advantages over other methods. Since organizational performance is a function of conflict management, its mechanism in

organization should be straighten more in order to further the improvement in the organization's performance.

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