

Conflict Management and Labour Relations in Nigeria's Government Agencies. An Appraisal.

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ABSTRACT

This study is focused on the appraisal of conflict management and labour relations in Nigeria's government agencies. It is aimed at examining the roles government plays in resolving conflicts among its agencies and parastatals in view of the fact that no agency or parastal can function properly when there is conflict. The study adopted content analytical approach and oral interview. It was discovered that most governments in Nigeria put in appreciable effort at resolving conflicts in government organization in collaboration with labour unions; that communication gap on dysfunctional communication breeds conflict in organization and consequently bring about untold behaviour among staff. For conflict to be minimized or cut to size in government organizations, it is recommended that a well designed conflict management system be established, that seminars/workshops be organization regularly for employees to enable them be acquainted with conflict resolution strategies for conflict is part of human existences,

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I. INTRODUCTION

Recent changes in the contemporary world, particularly the emergence of globalization has made it inevitable for hitherto isolated socio-political and economic units and agents to make closer to each other, and unavoidably work together in order to achieve sometimes varied objectives.

Conflict among workers in an organization is inevitable. If it's manages properly, it will bring catalyst for change and can have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and performance of the organization. Conversely, unmanaged conflict negatively impacts both employee satisfaction and job performance. When organizational leaders ignore workplace conflict they send a message that unsatisfactory job performance and inappropriate behaviour are acceptable.

Awan and Anjum (2015) posited that properly managed conflict promotes open communication, collaborative decision making, regular feedback, and timely resolution of conflict, open communication and collaboration enhance the flow of new ideas and strengthen work relationship, which can have a positive effect on employee morale. Regular feedback and timely resolution of conflict has the potential of improving employee satisfaction and job performance.

Awan and Anjum (2015) argue that a negative work environment that does not promote conflict resolution and management can result in poor employee behaviour and job performance. Unmanaged conflict promotes dysfunctional communication and poor behaviour among staff. Poor behaviour on the part of one employee has the power to affect overall employee morale, which results in lower productivity. According to Dana (2000), "conflict is not just an annoyance. It costs money and those costs can be calculated, in terms of wasted time, bad decision, lost employees". In the health care industry, patients' health and even their lives can be affected by unmanaged conflict.

Ibrahim (2015) contends that if the individuals do not have the communication or interpersonal skills to resolve their disputes, the conflict can grow and spread to others, eventually affecting their job performance, which, in turn, affects the job satisfaction of others, as well in addition to the staff not having the communication skills to address their disputes, their leaders often lack the necessary skills to be effective in

conflict resolution. Once human resources personnel are involved, the process becomes punitive and results in disciplinary action, which contributes to an even greater reduction in employee morale and employee satisfaction.

Within any organization, there are usually different positions and jobs. People occupying these positions have different perceptions, goals, thought and concerns. It is difficult to conceptualize society or an organization without inherent differences and contradictions and these leads to conflict.

Ahson (2015) say that conflict is a natural and inevitable part of people working together and should be kept at a manageable level where it will not disorganize the activities of the organization towards the attainment of its objectives. He further add that conflict may also be beneficial to the organization where it brings about radical change in the organizational power structure, current interaction pattern and entrenched attitude and also can leads to increase in productivity, while some conflicts are functional others are not. It can also affect the organization negatively when it is associated with decreased employee satisfaction, insubordination, decreased productivity, leads to economic loss, fragmentation to mention but a few.

Conflict might escalate and lead to non-productive results, or conflict can be beneficially resolved and lead to quality final products. Therefore, learning to manage conflict is integral to a high performance team.

Although, very few people so looking for conflict, more often than not, conflict results because of miscommunication between people with regard to their needs, ideas, beliefs, goals or values.

It is the management major responsibility to device strategies in bringing down conflict as low as possible, which will enable the organization to still function to succeed (Robbins & Sanghi, 2006).

Conflict management is the Principe that all conflict cannot necessarily be resolved, but learning how to managing conflict can decrease the odds of non-productivity escalation. Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict modes, conflict communication skill, and establishing a structure for management of conflict in our public organizations.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict management for the purpose of industrial development has been of serious concern to many Nigerians. It even transcends both local and international co-existence to the ludicrous extent that it is currently at the centre of our collective human concerns. Conflict management is the ability to be able to identify and handle conflicts in government agencies, parastatals, and organizations. Conflict in government agencies and organizations are caused by: poor communication/miscommunication, poor organizational structure, poor performance, repetitive negative behaviour, strong negative misperceptions, perceived breach of faith and trust between individual, personality clashes/ego problem, differences in value, goal differences, unresolved disagreement that has escalated to an emotional level, issues of wages and salaries, unfavourable government policies, lack of cordial relationship between labour and management (Bryman and Cramer, 2005).

Some of the effects of conflict to government agencies are: communication breakdown, low morale, low quality, low productivity, lack of direction, lack of new ideas, economic loss, competitiveness among conflicting parties, insubordination and fragmentation, and underdevelopment.

Eliminating conflict completely is highly impossible, circumstances and individuals who are involved changes. Managers who try to eliminate conflict do not last long, while those who manage conflict well typically experience both organizational benefits and personal improvements.

Conflict has been seen as having a demoralizing effect on the performance of business organizations. John Draft (2010) argues that conflict has to be effectively managed for the organization to perform effectively and achieve its goals. This argument tends to portray the detrimental effect of conflict. Conflict is disastrous and creates unnecessary loss that the organizations and the society as a whole must bear.

Sometimes, conflicts result to strike, stress, frustration and blackmail. It is pertinent to note that the cost of conflict is not expressly stated in a company's account and in most organizations, management is unaware of the causes and consequences. Awareness of true cost of conflict will stimulate management to take appropriate action to reduce the cost. Conflict is an inevitable result in any type of business organization. Hence, Richard Hyman (1983) said that conflict is endemic in the society; that you cannot stop it.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview of Conflict Resolution and Management

Conflict occurs because individuals have different perceptions, beliefs and goals. Barki and Hartwick (2004) explain conflict as "a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals". Jehn and Bendersky (2003) defined it as "perceived incompatibilities of discrepant views among the parties involved". Conflicts can produce severe problems in an organization; it can certainly hurt an organization's performance and lead to the forfeiture of employees. Despite this, studies conclude that not all conflict is bad.

Conflicts sometimes bring about positive consequences such as new ideas, stimulating creativity, motivate changes, and serves as a safety value to indicate problems.

However, when conflict in an organization turns negative, it becomes necessary to take measures that might lead to consequences such as resource wastage, breaking of group cohesions creating of negative climate, threatens psychological wellbeing, increase hostility and aggressive behaviours.

According to Nahavandi and Malakzadeh (1998), conflict reduction or prevention can use the behavioural or attitudinal approach to manage conflicts. Behavioral conflict reduction and prevention methods include enforcing rules, separating employees, assigning clear task, having a common enemy, outside competition, increasing resources and rewarding cooperation.

Attitudinal conflict resolution methods include, having a common enemy, rotating employees, increasing resources, team building and organizational development. Nahavandi (1998) also stated that since conflict can also bring about positive consequences, managers can stimulate conflict through introduction of change, increasing task ambiguity and creating interdependence or competition.

Robbins and Langton (2001), defines conflict management as the use of resolution and stimulating techniques to achieve the desired level of conflict. They however identified the resolution technique as problem solving (face-face meeting), expansion of resources, avoidance, altering the structural variable that is changing the formal organizational structure and interaction patterns of conflicts parties through job design and transfer. They also identified the stimulation techniques as communication where threatening messages are used to increased positive conflict level, appointment of devil's advocate and restructuring of the organization.

Debra and Campbell (2005), indicate that for effective resolution and management of conflict, measures or techniques such as appealing to subordinate goals, expanding resources, changing personnel, changing structure, confronting and negotiation could be put into effect. They also stated that in negotiation, managers can use variety of conflict management styles including avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising and collaborating. In addition, managers should strive to create a conflict positive organization that is one that values diversity, empowers employees and seeks win-win solution to conflicts.

The Conflict Process

The development of conflict and its resolution tend to follow a pattern. This is however based on the work of Pondy (2007), where he identified six steps of conflict process;

(a) **Antecedent Conditions:** A number of conditions have been linked with the degree of conflict (Walton, Dutton and Cafferty, 2009, Corwin, 2009). They are not necessarily causes of conflicts but they seem to be associated with higher rate of conflict and may well predispose a situation in that direction. These conditions create room for conflicts to arise. According to Robbins and Judge (2011), the antecedence conditions can be condensed into three categories: communication, structure and personal variables.

(b) **Perceived Conflict:** Another part of the conflict process has to do with how parties perceived the situation of each other, this is an independent group. Parties often engage in conflict because one party perceives that his interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another. The parties also engage in conflict because they perceive a situation as involving limited alternatives.

(c) **Felt Conflict:** In addition to perception, Pondy (2007), posit that feelings and attitudes alter the relationship between objective conditions and potentially result in conflictive outcome. Where parties value cooperation and believe that success in their relationship depends upon the attainment of the needs of both, their behavior is likely to be different then when the parties value competition and believe that one can win only at the other expense. Robbins and Judge (2011) explain this stage as a level which characterized by emotions such as anxiety, frustration, tension or hostility.

(d) **Manifest Behaviour:** Eventually "something happens". The game being, the fight breaks out, the argument starts, the negotiation begins. It is also possible that the parties will perceive a problem to exist and begin problem solving behavior at this point, without ever having engaged in conflict. If conflict does occur, the parties will engage in activities which in some way interfere with the goal attainment of each other.

(e) **Conflict Resolution or Suppression:** Conflict resolution or suppression activities are those which are directed at reducing or sending such conflict. A variety of methods are used to resolve conflict. Some of these essentially involve the victory of side and the defeat of the other. Others involve splitting the difference, compromising or the use of problem solving. However, Filley (2009) suggested that the prevalence of the former method of domination and compromise over problem solving is probably due to the fact that they are so widely parched.

(f) **Resolution Aftermath:** The resolution of conflict leaves a legacy which will affect the future relations or parties and their attitude about each other. Where one party wins and the other loses, the defeat may lead to antagonistic or self-depreciation feelings on the part of the loser. Burke et al (1994), were of the view that they have given more than they have received, exhibit feeling of defeat, and manifest a low level of commitment to

agreements. Finally, when conflicts are solved, it is likely that trust, commitment and future conflict will be handled effectively than when resolution are not the result of problem solving.

Forms/Classification of Conflict

Different scholars have tried to classify conflict into various forms. The first classification is the relationship, task and process conflict. There is, however, considerable conceptual overlap between these different forms of conflict (Dirks and Parks, 2003).

(a) **Relationship Conflict:** This exists when there are interpersonal incompatibilities among group members, including personality clashes, tension, animosity and annoyance (Jehn, 1995). This type of conflict produces negative individual emotions, such as anxiety, mistrust, or resentment (Jehn, 1995), frustration, tension and fear of being rejected by other team members (Mrmnigham and Conlon, 1991).

(b) **Task Conflicts:** These are disagreement about the content of a task and work goals, such as distribution of resources, procedures and interpretation of facts (John, 1995; 1997). Task conflicts including differences in view points, ideas and opinions, and may coincide with animated discussions and personal excitement. In contrast to relationship conflict, findings concerning task conflict are not as conclusive. Task conflict has been associated with several beneficial effects such as improving the use of debate within a team (Jehn, et al, 1999), which results in quality ideas and innovation (Amason, 1996; West and Anderson, 1996) and leads to better service delivery (Tjosvold, Dann & Wong, 1992). In addition, studies have shown that task conflict can also be associated with several harmful effects, such as job dissatisfaction, lack of team work (Kabanoff, 1991; Jenn, et al, 1997), and increased anxiety (Jehn, 1997).

(c) **Process Conflicts:** This refers to disagreement about how a task should be accomplished, individuals' responsibilities and delegation (Jehn and Mannix, 2001), e.g. when group members disagree about whose responsibility it is to complete a specific duty. Process conflict has been associated with lower morale, decreased productivity (Jehn, 1997) and poor team performance (Jehn, 1999). Another form of classification or levels of conflict is as follows:

- i. Interpersonal conflict;
- ii. Interpersonal conflict/intra group conflict;
- iii. Inter group/inter departmental conflict and
- iv. Inter organizational conflict.

Types of Conflict

So far, it is quite evident that to say that conflict is all good or bad is inappropriate and naïve. Whether a conflict is good or bad depends on the type of conflict. Specifically, it is necessary to differentiate between functional and dysfunctional conflicts.

Functional or Constructive Conflict: The interactionist view does not propose that all conflicts are good. Rather, some conflicts support the goals of the group and improve its performance; these are functional, constructive forms of conflict (www.csupomona.edu). Robbin (2001) defines functional conflict as the conflict that supports the goals of the group and improves its (group's) performance. The argument is that if conflict leads to normal competition among groups and the groups work harder and produce more, it is advantageous to the group and the institution. It is viewed as a confrontation between two ideas, goals and parties that improves employees and organizational performance (<http://www.slideshare.net>).

One of the main benefits of constructive conflict is that it gives its members a chance to identify the problems and see the opportunities. Also, it can inspire to new ideas, learning, and growth among individuals (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2008).

Dysfunctional/Destructive Conflict: There are conflicts that hinder group performance; these are dysfunctional or destructive forms of conflict (www.csupomona.edu). Conflict is inevitable and desirable in organizations, but when not effectively handled, conflict can tear relationships apart and, thus, interfere with the exchange of ideas, information and resources in groups and between departments. Dysfunctional conflict hinders and prevents organizational goals from being achieved (<http://www.slideshare.net>).

Dysfunctional conflict usually hinders organizational performance and leads to decreased productivity. This conflict orientation is characterized by competing individual interests overriding the overall interest of the business. Managers withhold information from one another. Employees sabotage other's work, either intentionally or through subtle, conflict-motivated disinterest in team work (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2008).

Causes of Conflict

Conflict can occur as a result of structural or personal factors.

Structural Factors

- i. Specialization:** Employees tend to become specialists in a particular job or get a general knowledge of many tasks. If most employees in an organization are specialists, it can lead to conflicts because they have little knowledge of each other's job responsibilities. For instance, a receptionist at a camera repair store can say that a camera can be repaired in an hour, even though the repair will take a week. Since the receptionist does not know much about the technician's job she should not give an unrealistic deadline when the camera will be ready. This situation can lead to conflict between the receptionist and the technician (Skemman.is/en/category/view).
- ii. Common Resources:** In many work situations, we have to share resources. The scarcer the resources in the organization, the greater the chance for a conflict situation. Resources scarcity leads to a conflict because each person that needs the same resources necessarily undermines others who pursue their own goals. Limited resource may include money, supplies, people or information. For example, The Redmond Washington based software company may dominate several markets, but its staff members still disagree over limited resources (Mcshare and Glinow, 2008). Sartorial support computer time can contribute to conflict. Considering the company that stalls a new computer for administrative and research purpose, at first, there is plenty of computer time and space for both uses. However, as both factions make more and more use of the computer, access becomes a problem, and conflict may erupt at this point.
- iii. Goal Difference:** Very often, the possibility of conflict increases substantially when departments in the organization have different or incompatible goals. For instance, the goal of a computer salesperson is to sell many computers as fast as possible. The manufacturing facility may, however, be unable to meet the sales person's promises. In this case, conflict may occur as two persons have different goals (Skemman.is/en/category/view).
- iv. Interdependence:** The possibility of conflict usually has a tendency to increase with the level of task interdependence. When a person has to depend on someone else to complete his/her task, it becomes easier to blame a co-worker when something goes wrong. As a rule, interdependence exists when team members must interest in the process of work and receive outcomes which depend on the performance of others (Skemman.is/en/category/view).
- v. Authority Relationships:** In many companies, there is an underlying tension between managers and employees because most people do not like being told what they have to do. In many organizations, managers have privileges (flexible hours, freed personal long-distance calls, and longer breaks). It is observed that very strict managers often have conflicts with their employees. Sometimes people try to engage in conflict to increase their power or status in an organization (skemman.is/em/category/view).
- vi. Roles and Expectations:** A role is a behavior that is expected from an employee. Every employee has one or more roles in the organization. These roles include such elements as job title, description of duties, and agreement between the employee and the organization. Manager-subordinate conflict can result when the subordinate's role is not clearly determined and each party has a different understanding of that role (Whitlam and Cameron, 2012).
- vii. Jurisdictional Ambiguities:** When the lines of responsibility in an organization are uncertain, then jurisdictional ambiguities appear. Employees have a tendency to pass unwanted responsibilities to another person when responsibilities are not clearly stated (skemman.is/en/category/view). Ambiguous goals, jurisdictions, or performance criteria can lead to conflict. Under such ambiguity, the formal and informal rules that govern interaction breakdown. Ambiguous jurisdictions are often revealed when new programmes are introduced. This is a common occurrence in universities. Ambiguous performance criteria are a frequent cause of conflict between superiors and subordinates.

Sources of Conflict

Fajana (2000) identified two sources of conflict and they include:

Internal Sources: This is so called because they refer to factors which are inherent within the framework of an organization. Fajana (2000) states that the major prime factor of internal sources of conflict is the "Opposing interests" of industrial actors. These "divergent interests" will bring about conflict in attempts by the two parties in organizations to try to share what Ajibade (2004) calls "industrial cake". Apart from the above, it is another statement of fact that there is usually "power relationship" between the two actors in an industry which no doubt produce conflict and make such inevitable (<http://encylopedia.tfd.com>).

The External Sources: These are so called because they are outside the four walls of an organization. It may occur when the third party intervention to industrial dispute becomes one sided or biased. A good example is where government as the third and regulatory part tries to formulate policy or enact laws that favour one party at the detriment of the other. Such may generate conflict (<http://encylopedia.tfd.com>).

Strategies for Dealing with Conflicts

Neill (2000) identified that the various methods for dealing with conflict may be grouped according to their outcomes. These outcomes may be called win-lose, lose-lose and win-win.

(a) **Win-Lose Methods:** Methods that typically results in win-lose outcomes include dominance through power or authority, ignoring attempts at influence, majority rule and railroading. The use of dominance through powers or authority is common. Through it, arbitrary actions are justified by saying "you must follow my orders because I am the boss, parents or teachers and I know what is good for you". The effect of this exercise of unilateral power is predictable. Losers typically engage in non-productive behaviour than winners. they screen communication to the winners making it feel positive, address more remarks to the winner; become non aggressive in their statements and fail to identify with goals of organizations. the creation of losing feelings may actually alter the energy creativity, and measure intelligence of the loser in a negative direction.

Neill, also continued to identify that, ignoring or failing to another can result in a win-lose outcome, For example, in a company sale conference, if a sales person says 'I think we ought to reorganize the sales territories' and no one responds, the person will properly feel he has lost.

Failing to deal with employees' complaint may also have this similar effect. A third win-lose method is majority rule. Majority rule appears to be functional where groups votes together over a period of time and voting factions are not fixed. Thus one person may win on some votes and lose on others. It also works where the voting alternatives are all acceptable to the parties, with some merely preferred more than others. It is not functional however, when a group split into fixed factions and when the result of voting is a disgruntled minority.

(b) **Lose-Lose Methods:** According to Neil (2000), these methods are based on the notion that "half a loaf is better than none", or that something beats nothing all to hell". Typically lose-lose methods are compromise, bribing resort to arbitration and resort to rule. Arbitration is the settlement of disputes between two parties by means of the binding decision of an impartial power. In compromise, the parties generally disagrees about two solutions and settle for something in-between. Example, a lose-lose strategy involves side payment or bribes, as when company overpays people who dislike their work.

A lose-lose method is the resort to third parties as arbitrator. The reason why arbitration is sometimes lose-lose method is that, the third party seems to want an outcome in which each party can get something. Therefore neither party wins at all or what they want. Finally lose-lose outcome frequently occurs when parties resort to rules for solution to a conflict like arbitration by third party, resort to rule may result in a lose-lose outcome. The result of such approaches is illustrated when a driver runs out of gasoline and attempts to purchase some with a check. If the station owner emphasizes that the station policy of not taking checks, both parties lose. (The station master may choose to problem solve, of course by determining a way to provide the driver with gasoline without running the risk of accepting a bad check).

(c) **Win-Win Methods:** The third set of method is distinctly, they involve consensus and integrative decision making. Consensus decision occurs when group of two or more people, who are dealing with judgmental issues, reach a decision which is not unacceptable to anyone.

Hall (2001), has shown that when certain group's process rules are used, the group decision is frequently better than the individual decision. For the reason, consensus decision is recommended for the final selection of alternatives in integrative decision making.

Filley (2009) conducted a stimulation exercise where groups of people were requested to rank in order, groups of items of their desirability for a trip across the moon. Typically process rules that lead to consensus decision in such case suggested that participants focused on defeating the problem rather than each other; that they avoid voting, trading or avenging to make their decision.

They use facts rather than force to solve problems that they accept conflict as helpful, providing that does not elicit threat or defensiveness; and avoid self-oriented behaviour to exclusion of consideration for others needs or position.

The second win-win method is integrative decision making, integrative method involves a joint identification the needs and values of both parties, an exclusive search for alternative which might meet these goals and selection of the best alternative. This process is quite familiar, its relevance is highlighted, however, when one observes that conflict ordinarily occur because of arguments about two solutions. Integrative methods change such solution-minded situations into problem oriented situations, and for that reason they are useful when two parties are polarized in their positions.

Conflict Resolution Mechanism

It is important for management to realize that conflicts at the place of work are inevitable. Employers and employees will always have issues especially in relation to employment contracts and wage payments.

Management should come up with an employment tribunal that will deal with the problems whether individual or collective. When some of the conflicts are so complicated, there is the need for mediation to take place as soon as possible. Employers need to address issues at the workplace as quickly as possible. Postponing will only make the situation more complicated. Mediation helps a lot in solving conflicts before they become more complex. It provides a neutral ground for employer and employees' to discuss their issues and come up

with solutions that are mutual. Mediation should encourage open communication and should be done by professionals that can develop solutions.

According to Collins et al., (2005, pp.124), leaders should define to their practices, team building, and talent management. A manager should clearly state actions that will not be tolerated. In addition, it is important for organizations to hit conflicts facing them head-on. Employers should seek out issues that will bring conflicts and intervene as soon as possible. This will help avoid some conflicts from coming up.

Avoiding conflicts by helping others achieve their objectives will provide a platform to conflict resolution (Clegg, 2003, pp.22). Clegg believes that before solving conflicts it is essential for every party to understand the 'what's in it for me' factor. It is very critical for all sides to understand the motivation of others before trying to resolve the conflict.

Stakeholders in Conflict Resolution in the Labour Market

i. Trade Unions and Employees

According to Trade Union and Labour Resolutions (Consolidated Act 1992) a trade union is an organization with workers as its members, whose primary function is to regulate the relationship between employees and employers or Employers' Unions. The main purpose of a trade union is to protect and promote the interests of their workers who are their members.

Trade unions try to get highest wage payment for its members and influence the rules and regulations that govern employment. In addition, they work as employees' source of power as they control the government to formulate laws that benefit the employee.

According to Budd et al. (2004, pp.26), employers need to recognize trade unions because they provide a mechanism at the place of work that improves communication. It also helps to regulate employee-employer relationship. In addition trade unions maintain active employment culture in labour relations. Most employers, however resist trade unions because they pose a challenge to the authority of the leaders in the organization causing potential disruption of work at the firm. Some unions may not be willing to co-operate promoting rise in strikes and strikes. Many managers prefer other useful channels of addressing employees' grievances than use of trade unions.

ii. The Government

Trade Union and labour relations (Consolidated) (Edwards, 2006, p. 108), defines the government as a state of the day, including the other agencies that perform their will through implementation of labour policies and their wide responsibility.

iii. The Employer

According to Fox (1996, p.6) the employer is responsible for supplying its workforce with employment contracts that are favourable and abide by the labour laws in the United Kingdom. At the same time, they should provide a working environment that is beneficial to the employee. As much as their primary goal is to maximize profits it is important for the employer to mind the needs of a worker. Budd et al. believes that the company should acknowledge trade unions and use them as opportunities to move to the next level. Trade unions push employees' agenda and if companies can use the issues raised to benefit the employee then performance will improve automatically as most employees will feel satisfied (2004 pp.14).

Conflict Management Styles

The success of the organization depends on the ability of conflict recognition and the very way of conflict management. Conflict management implies integration of all factors which can contribute to conflict resolution or its prevention (Whetten and Cameron, 2007). Those factors are improvement of communication and practicing discipline in the organization, as well as having in mind the life phases of parties included. Different authors know about various approaches to conflict management. Besides five 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 arbitrator. This third party in organization are managers which by using their experience have to constantly develop new strategies and tactic for conflict resolution and management by using their experience. Moreover, it is generally acknowledged that conflict represents the most severe test of manager's interpersonal skills.

There are approaches, or strategies of conflict management. Basic features of each approach (strategy) are state below:

Dominance: It occurs when the cooperation is extremely low, and the persistence in satisfying of personal interests 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 medium 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's interest before its own.

III. CONCLUSION

Conflict among workers in an organization is inevitable. If managed properly, it will bring catalyst for change and can have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and performance of the organization. Conversely, unmanaged conflict negatively impacts both employee satisfaction, job performance, and the organization. When organizational leaders ignore workplace conflict, they send a message that unsatisfactory job performance and inappropriate behaviour are acceptable.

Conflict in government agencies does not differ from that of other organizations. For government agencies to curtail conflict and maintain good labour relations, a well-designed conflict management system (CSM) should be established; this can have a significant impact on the quality of life of its employees, as well as its bottom line. Specifically, addressing the cost of conflict in the workplace can have a transformative impact on the overall health and well-being of an organization.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although conflicts have both negative and positive effects, the management (government) and the employees should work towards achieving the positive effects rather than the negative.

According to Adomi and Anie (2005), managers should develop appropriate strategies to resolve conflicts as they arise in their organizations. In the light of the research findings and conclusions above, the study hereby recommends the following suggestions:

1. That management (government) must adopt conflict management strategies that will improve on the performance of the organization.
2. That management should ensure a free flow of communication between the management and the employee.
3. Management should encourage and promote interpersonal relationships among co-workers to improve on their morale.
4. There is need for constant dialogue between management and the employees to clarify issues and exchange ideas.
5. Management should re-orient employees on the effect of conflict on organizational performance.
6. Group interaction and activities should be followed up so as to ensure a degree of functionality compatible to conflict. Positive conflicts will only be possible if particularizes of the organization are analyzed.
7. Efforts should be made by the management to organize seminars/workshops on organizational conflict management from time to time for the employees. This will enable employees learn about conflict and how it can be effectively managed for individual and organization effectiveness.
8. Government should work with labour unions whenever conflict arises in between them and its employees.
9. Finally, good leadership on the part of management and employee representatives can be a strategy for preventing conflicts.

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