



Research Article

# Impact of Conflict Management on a Nigerian Public Sector Organization: The Performance Of Specific Employees in Kogi State.

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**Abstract:** This study looked into how employees' performance in a Kogi State public sector organization was affected by conflict management. The survey research design was used in this investigation. There were 100 responders in all were chosen for the study by the use of stratified sampling. A survey was employed to gather primary data. Descriptive statistics were used to assess the acquired data. Regression analysis and the correlation coefficient were used to examine the hypotheses. The results showed that an organization's conflict management system affects employee performance inside the company and that successful conflict management improves employee performance within the organization. In order to foster a positive work environment and ensure that there is effective communication between all employee categories within the organization, it was suggested that the organization start training and retraining its staff in conflict management. As a result, there will be less conflicts within the company.

**Keywords:** *Conflict management, Employee performance, Industrial relations, Public sector organization*

## 1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, organizational attitudes toward conflict have undergone significant transformation, leading to increased scholarly attention on conflict management within organizational literature (Abalaka, 2023). Conflict management programs have been shown to yield multiple benefits, including extended work hours, enhanced self-regulation in conflict situations, improved interpersonal communication, reduced suspensions and detentions, prevention of workplace violence, and a heightened ability to appreciate diverse perspectives and opinions among employees. Consequently, conflict management is regarded as more critical than conflict avoidance, as it fosters constructive engagement and organizational resilience (Ajiteru, 2023).

Sulaiman (2017) posits that conflict can be considered positive when it is addressed constructively. He distinguishes between constructive and destructive workplace disputes, noting that constructive conflict resolution enables parties to reach solutions under reasonable terms. Conversely, poorly managed conflict is associated with increased absenteeism, diminished morale, reduced productivity, higher turnover of skilled personnel, loss of man-hours and machine-hours, and a rise in defective outputs due to weakened employee commitment. In contrast, effectively managed conflict enhances employee performance and contributes positively to organizational outcomes (Abalaka, 2023).

In the context of Kogi State, the majority of industrial disputes within factories stem from the failure of management to uphold collective bargaining agreements with workers. These disputes often persist due to ineffective conflict management strategies (Ajiteru, 2023). As a result, employees may resort to industrial actions such as strikes or work-to-rule campaigns. Such actions typically lead to low morale, decreased production, loss of skilled

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labor, reduced operational efficiency, absenteeism, increased defective goods, and health-related issues arising from stress and depression. Given the persistence of labor unrest in Kogi State, it is imperative to examine how dispute resolution strategies influence employee performance (Sulaiman, 2023).

Although numerous studies in both developed and developing nations have explored the relationship between conflict management and employee performance, relatively few have focused on the brewery industry. This gap in the literature provides the rationale for investigating the impact of conflict management on employee performance in Kogi State, Nigeria (Ajiteru, 2023). The primary objective of this study is to assess how conflict management affects employee performance in Kogi State, with a specific focus on examining the influence of conflict resolution on employee morale. Based on this objective, Abalaka (2023) proposes the following null hypothesis: conflict resolution has no significant effect on employee morale in Kogi State.

Conflict in organizations arises when individuals perceive that the actions of others threaten or obstruct their goals. In Kogi State, conflict is particularly prevalent due to the government's failure to honor collective bargaining agreements with workers, prompting industrial actions such as strikes and work-to-rule campaigns. These actions often result in reputational damage, loss of skilled personnel, reduced productivity, diminished man-hours and machine-hours, and overall organizational inefficiency (Abalaka, 2023). Although labor unrest has not been constant since the state's mobilization in 1996, the persistence of disputes underscores the importance of examining conflict resolution practices and their impact on employee performance from both managerial and non-managerial perspectives (Abalaka, 2023).

The incompatibility of organizational members' interests, objectives, and values—often manifested in competition for jobs, resources, power, recognition, and security—raises the following research questions: Is there a significant correlation between employee performance and conflict resolution techniques in Kogi State? Do managerial and non-managerial staff differ significantly in their perceptions of the effectiveness of conflict resolution techniques in Kogi State?

The study aims to: Determine the extent to which employee performance in Kogi State is related to conflict management techniques. Assess the degree to which managerial and non-managerial staff members' perceptions of conflict resolution effectiveness differs within Kogi State.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Concept of Conflict**

Conflict in organizations arises when individuals or groups perceive that their goals, interests, or values are being obstructed by others. Scholars such as Fajana (2015) and Sulaiman (2017) emphasize that conflict is an inevitable aspect of organizational life, often linked to competition for scarce resources, authority, or recognition. While conflict is frequently associated with inefficiency and dysfunction, it can also stimulate innovation, problem-solving, and improved decision-making when constructively managed (Abalaka, 2023; Ajiteru, 2023).

### **Sources of Organizational Conflict**

Organizational conflict typically stems from disagreements over shared resources, divergent ideologies, incompatible goals, and resistance to change (Fajana, 2015; Armstrong, 2020). In Nigeria, conflicts often emerge from breaches of collective bargaining agreements, disputes over compensation, and employer–employee prerogatives (Abalaka, 2023). External

pressures, such as economic change or policy shifts, can further exacerbate internal disputes, highlighting the need for effective conflict management strategies.

### **Functional vs. Dysfunctional Conflict**

Conflict can be functional when it enhances organizational performance by encouraging creativity, clarifying viewpoints, and resolving long-standing issues. Conversely, dysfunctional conflict undermines collaboration, reduces morale, and leads to absenteeism and turnover (Sulaiman, 2023). Ajiteru (2023) notes that conflict has both positive and negative effects, depending on how it is managed.

### **Conflict Management Techniques**

Effective conflict management involves strategies such as joint consultation, mediation, collective bargaining, conciliation, arbitration, compromise, coercion, and negotiation (Ajiteru, 2023; Sulaiman, 2023). These approaches aim to reduce disputes, foster cooperation, and align organizational subsystems toward shared goals. Blake and Mouton (2019) argue that successful conflict management requires shifting relationships from competitive to cooperative orientations, emphasizing transparency, consultation, and participatory decision-making.

### **Conflict Management in Nigeria**

In the Nigerian public sector, particularly in Kogi State, conflict resolution mechanisms include joint consultation, mediation under the Trade Disputes Act, and collective bargaining rooted in voluntarism (Abalaka, 2023). These mechanisms are designed to prevent industrial crises and maintain organizational stability. However, their effectiveness depends on consistent application and genuine commitment from both management and employees.

### **Employee Morale and Performance**

Employee morale—defined as job satisfaction, attitude, and well-being—directly influences performance outcomes. High morale fosters productivity and innovation, while low morale leads to absenteeism, turnover, and reduced organizational efficiency (Nicole, 2021; Greg, 2020). Studies show that unresolved conflict negatively impacts morale, whereas effective conflict management enhances employee commitment and performance (Sulaiman, 2017; Abalaka, 2023).

### **Empirical Evidence**

Empirical studies in Nigeria confirm a strong correlation between conflict management and employee performance. Obasan (2019) found that well-managed conflict improves morale and productivity in the banking sector. Similarly, Sulaiman (2023) reported that conflict resolution techniques at Julius Berger Nigeria Plc positively influenced worker performance, with no significant differences between managerial and non-managerial staff perceptions. However, Henry (2019) observed that scarce resources remain a major driver of conflict, and in some cases, conflict resolution showed limited impact on performance. These findings highlight the contextual nature of conflict management outcomes in Nigerian organizations.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Conflict management in organizations is theorized to influence employee performance through its impact on morale. As the literature suggests, conflict arises from incompatible goals, scarce resources, and breaches of collective bargaining agreements (Fajana, 2015; Abalaka, 2023). When constructively managed through techniques such as mediation,

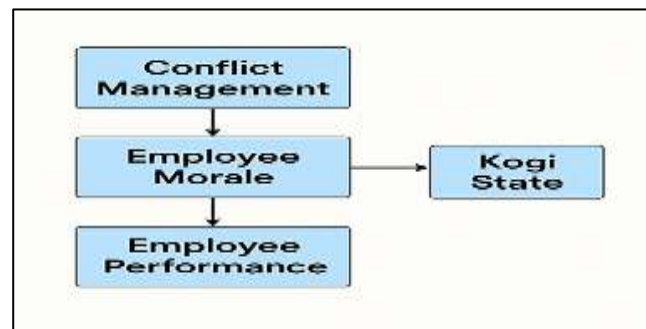
collective bargaining, compromise, and negotiation, conflict can enhance employee morale by fostering job satisfaction, commitment, and well-being (Sulaiman, 2017; Ajiteru, 2023). High morale, in turn, translates into improved employee performance, reflected in productivity, efficiency, and innovation (Nicole, 2021; Greg, 2020).

In the Nigerian public sector, particularly in Kogi State, the effectiveness of conflict management strategies is critical due to recurrent labor unrest. The framework therefore posits a causal chain: Conflict Sources → Conflict Management Techniques → Employee Morale → Employee Performance. This relationship is moderated by organizational context, including adherence to collective bargaining agreements and managerial commitment to participatory resolution processes.

#### Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework and literature review, the following hypotheses guide the study:

1. H1: Effective conflict management affects employee's performance
2. H2: Conflict management system influence employee performance in an organization



The conceptual framework illustrates the dynamic relationship between conflict management, employee morale, and performance within public sector organizations in Kogi State, Nigeria. At its core, the model posits that effective conflict management—through strategies such as mediation, collective bargaining, compromise, and negotiation—serves as a foundational mechanism for enhancing employee morale. When conflicts are addressed constructively, employees experience greater job satisfaction, emotional well-being, and a sense of commitment to organizational goals.

This elevated morale directly influences employee performance, leading to improved productivity, efficiency, and innovation. In the context of Kogi State, where labor unrest and disputes over collective agreements are recurrent, the framework underscores the importance of proactive and participatory conflict resolution. It suggests that organizations that invest in transparent communication and inclusive decision-making can transform workplace tensions into opportunities for growth and collaboration.

By linking conflict management to morale and performance, the framework provides a practical lens for evaluating organizational health. It also highlights the need for tailored interventions that consider both managerial and non-managerial perspectives. Ultimately, the diagram reinforces the idea that conflict, when managed effectively, is not a threat but a strategic tool for enhancing employee outcomes and sustaining public sector effectiveness in Kogi State.

### 3. Research Methods

The survey research design used in this study was utilized. To ascertain the association between organizational performance (the dependent variable) and conflict management (the independent variable), data were gathered from a sample of employees of the organizations chosen for the study. The study population in this study is the employees of Kogi State. Our respondents were chosen using a straightforward random selection technique. Every employee in the company has an equal chance of getting chosen to be one of the sample elements using this method. 115 employees make up the sample size that was chosen, and 100 of them completed and returned the questionnaire for analysis. This indicates that our response rate is 87%. Content validity, which addresses item validity and sample validity, is utilized to guarantee the validity of the research instrument for this investigation the tool of the scope suggested by the research topic.

Experts in the field also contributed to the assessment of the instrument's question items and the suitability of the population sampled by the measuring device (Ajiteru, 2023). The logical connection between the study's goals and the questions is the main factor used to determine whether an instrument is measuring what it should. Test-retest reliability was employed in this study to assess the instrument's level of consistency. In order to ascertain the degree of consistency, questionnaires were distributed twice (Sulaiman, 2017). Although the outcomes were not identical, they were strongly associated, suggesting that the research tool is trustworthy for the study. Regression, Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation, and student's t-test were used to test the hypotheses and determine the relationship between conflict management and its effects on an organization's performance, while descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data gathered from the questionnaire (Abalaka, 2023).

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### Results

The main findings from the hypothesis test are presented in this portion of the study. According to Sulaiman (2017), pertinent information obtained from the field via the questionnaire that addresses the study's goals was examined and interpreted. To ascertain the validity of the research hypotheses, tests were also conducted (Ajiteru, 2023). However, each hypothesis was examined independently to ascertain its applicability given the information at hand from information acquired and examined during this investigation. Regression analysis and the correlation coefficient were used to examine the two hypotheses (Abalaka, 2023).

Hypothesis 1

Ho: Effective conflict management does not affect employee's performance

H1: Effective conflict management affects employee's performance

**Employee morale will be affected as result of conflict in an organization**

Null hypothesis (Ho)	Tcal	Ttab	Df	Decision
Effective conflict management does not affect employee performance	6.78	2.35	0.05	Reject Ho and Accept Hi

Decision Rule: The decision rule here is to reject Ho if T-calculated is greater than Ttable ( $t_{cal} > t_{tab}$ ). Therefore, the above table depicts the t-calculated to be 6.78 while the t-table is 1. This shows that effective conflict management affects employee morale and this will affect employee's performance in an organization.

The null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected while the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

### Hypothesis 2

Ho: Conflict management system does not influence employee performance in an organization.

H1: Conflict management system influence employee performance in an organization.

#### Conflict in an organization will lead to low employee performance

Null hypothesis (Ho)	Tcal	Ttab	Df	Decision
Conflict management system does not influence employee performance in an organization	7.39	2.35	0.05	Reject Ho and Accept Hi

Decision Rule: The decision rule here is to reject Ho if T-calculated is greater than Ttable ( $t\text{-cal} > t\text{-tab}$ ). Therefore, the above table depicts the t-calculated to be 6.78 while the t-table is 2.35. This shows that conflict management system influence employee performance in an organization and this will lead to low employee performance. Thus the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted Abalaka, (2023).

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that conflict management significantly influences employee performance in public sector organizations in Kogi State, Nigeria. The rejection of both null hypotheses confirms the theoretical assertions presented in the literature review. Specifically, the first hypothesis test yielded a t-calculated value of 6.78, exceeding the critical t-table value of 2.35, thereby validating the alternative hypothesis that effective conflict management positively affects employee performance. This result aligns with the conceptual framework and supports the view that conflict, when constructively managed, enhances employee morale, which in turn improves performance outcomes (Sulaiman, 2017; Abalaka, 2023).

The second hypothesis further reinforces this relationship, with a t-calculated value of 7.39 also surpassing the critical threshold. This suggests that the presence of a structured conflict management system within an organization directly influences employee performance. These findings are consistent with Ajiteru (2023), who emphasized that unresolved conflict leads to diminished morale, absenteeism, and reduced productivity, while proactive conflict resolution fosters collaboration and commitment.

The empirical results validate the functional perspective of conflict outlined by Blake and Mouton (2019), who argue that conflict, if managed through participatory and consultative approaches, can be a catalyst for innovation and organizational growth. Moreover, the strong statistical significance observed in both tests supports the argument that conflict management should be viewed not merely as a reactive tool but as a strategic mechanism for enhancing workforce effectiveness.

In the context of Kogi State, where industrial disputes are often rooted in breaches of collective bargaining agreements and resource scarcity, these findings underscore the importance of institutionalizing conflict resolution practices such as mediation, joint consultation, and negotiation. As the literature suggests, these techniques not only mitigate the negative consequences of conflict but also promote a culture of transparency and shared purpose (Fajana, 2015; Armstrong, 2020).

Ultimately, the study confirms that conflict management is a critical determinant of employee morale and performance. Organizations that invest in robust conflict resolution frameworks are better positioned to harness the constructive potential of workplace disputes, thereby fostering a more engaged, productive, and resilient workforce.



## 5. Conclusion

This study provides clear evidence that conflict management is not merely a reactive mechanism but a strategic tool for sustaining organizational effectiveness. By fostering employee adaptability, commitment, and collaboration, effective conflict resolution contributes to higher levels of organizational performance and ensures the achievement of institutional goals. Conversely, unresolved disputes between management levels pose risks to organizational survival, highlighting the urgency of proactive intervention.

Based on these findings, several practical recommendations emerge. First, management should recognize conflict as a critical organizational issue and invest in regular training and retraining programs on conflict resolution. Second, transparent and efficient communication across all levels of staff is essential to minimize misunderstandings and prevent escalation. Third, proactive measures should be taken to address issues related to resource allocation and employee welfare, ensuring fairness and equity. Finally, organizations must establish clear policies and procedures for resolving disputes promptly, thereby preventing disruptions and fostering a workplace environment where employees can thrive.

In conclusion, the study affirms that effective conflict management has a cascading effect: it strengthens employee morale, enhances performance, and ultimately secures the long-term success of public sector organizations in Kogi State.

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