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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED BRANCHES OF FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA, AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract
This study focused on conflict management and organizational performance on selected branches of First Bank of Nigeria, in Awka, Anambra. The specific objectives were focused on the relationship between of collaboration strategy and work relationship among the employees; and between compromise strategy on and goal attainment; in the selected branches of First Bank of Nigeria, in Awka, Anambra. The study was anchored on Contingency Theory by Fiedler. The study adopted survey research design and simple random sampling technique was used to select the branches of first banks in Awka, Anambra State. The population of the study is 189 and Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 128. Data were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire, while other data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (arithmetic mean). Findings revealed that there is positive relationship between conflict management and organizational performance in selected branches of First Bank Plc, Awka, Anambra State by indicating that there is positive relationship between collaboration strategy and work relationship; and between compromise strategy and goal attainment. The study concluded that conflict management technique of collaboration and compromise are effective and as such foster healthy work environment towards outstanding performance of the organization. Therefore, the study recommended that management should establish a platform where employees discuss grievances so as to treat errors on the tables before it results in conflict in the organization.

Key Words: *Collaboration Strategy, Compromise Strategy, Conflict Management, Goal Attainment, Organisational Performance, Work Relationship.*

Introduction
In every aspect of human society and endeavor, conflict is seen as a natural phenomenon that is inevitable as long as human relationships are involved. It is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has been negatively affected or is about to be negatively affected about something that the first party cares about (Robbins, Judge & Vohra, 2012). As a result of people interacting with each other, friction, disagreements or arguments may arise resulting from actual or perceived differences or incompatibilities, thereby escalating to conflict. Thus, conflicts in organisations can take many forms such as interpersonal conflict, task conflict and process conflict which give rise to diverse approaches to conflict management (Budd & Colvin, 2013). Gluckman

(1956), Gulliver(1963), and Nanda (1994) agree with a view that conflict is a part of social life and society is impossible without it. Further, Marxian view conflict not only as built into the social system but also as the primary stimulus for social change (Seymour-Smith 1986: 51)

First Bank of Nigeria Limited, is a Nigerian multinational and financial services company headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria. The organisation is often faced with the issue of employee welfare. Employee welfare is an important source of motivation to employees and the lack of it has led to employees having grievances against management which has most times resulted into conflict between both parties and the resulting effect has affected not only the performance of the employees but the organisation. Managing the organisational conflict became necessary so as to improve its performance. Robbins, Judge, Millett and Waters-Marsh (2008); Robbins, Judge, and Vohra (2012) identified five major strategies for managing conflict in organisations based on assertiveness and cooperativeness which, according to Adeyemi & Ademilua as cited in Lazarus (2014), are the internal mechanisms used by the various authorities in resolving conflict. Assertiveness means the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns while cooperativeness means the degree to which one party attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns. They include: collaboration, compromise, accommodation, competition/domination and avoidance. In the context of this work, collaboration and compromise will be considered. This is because the three conflict management strategies provide a satisfactory balance for both parties involved in conflict in terms of assertiveness and cooperativeness. The accommodation and domination strategies will not be considered in the study because they do not provide satisfactory balance to the parties involved in conflict. This is because it leads to one party benefiting at the expense of the other.

Collaboration strategy refers to assertiveness and cooperativeness as it allows both parties goals to be completely achieved by putting the concerns of both parties into consideration. Mughal and Khan (2013) assumed that collaboration strategy enables people take time to listen to others in order to find the best solution to handle the conflict. Compromise strategy refers to mid-range assertiveness and mid-range cooperativeness as it requires parties to conflict to give up something in order to settle the conflicting problem, as such, there is no clear winner or loser. This usually happens when employees get a sense of fear to lose any relationship with their colleagues or with their managers. Each of the above techniques is unique in its own way and will be considered with a view to ascertaining the performance level of the organisation. Organisational performance is seen as the result of an activity which has been achieved by an organisation related to its authority and responsibility in achieving the goal legally, not against the law, and conforming to the morale and ethics of the organisation (Almajali, Alamro & AlSoub, 2012). Organisational performance can either be measured financially (earnings per share, return on equity, return on asset) or non-financially (market share, customer satisfaction, employee morale). The appropriate measure selected to assess organisational performance (financial or non-financial) is considered to depend on the type of organisation to be evaluated, and the objectives to be achieved through that evaluation. However, improved organisational performance is dependent on the

appropriate conflict management strategy(s) such as, collaboration strategy, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy adopted by the organisation in managing conflict. Applying the appropriate strategy will improve employees' performance resulting to an improved organisational performance. On the other hand, the inability of the organisation to apply the appropriate conflict management strategy(s) will lead to a decline in employee's performance which in turn will result in a decline in organisational performance.

Statement of the Problem

Managers spend approximately twenty percent of their time dealing with conflict situations due to the growing complexity of organisations, use of teams and group decision making, and globalization (Mullins, 2005). This proved the fact that conflict cannot be totally eliminated within an organisation because wherever you find human beings interacting at whatever levels, there is bound to be conflict. What is however important is the way conflicts are managed to forestall future occurrence. The existence of conflict is an issue of concern in the selected branches of First Bank of Nigeria, Awka, Anambra (Aroma Branch, Unizik Branch, Nimo Branch and Ekwulobia Branch). The organisations are confronted with the issue of negotiation of staff bonuses, usually at the end of the year. The lingering issue results into conflict between management and employees of the organisation which manifested in form of employees nursing grievances against management, change of attitude or behavior, decrease in effort towards work, physical confrontation between both parties and stoppage of production activities as employees refuse to work. This affected the effectiveness and performance of the individual employees and the organisation as a whole. Attempt by management to resolve the conflict has only led to conflict suppression. This is because management made use of domination strategy which is of benefit to them at the expense of the employees. As a result, there is a need for First Bank of Nigeria, Awka to devise an effective means of resolving the organisational conflict.

Since conflict is inevitable in an organisation, its management will determine whether it will generate positive or negative effect on organisational performance (Uchendu, Anijaobi & Odigwe, 2013). Therefore, this study seeks to examine the conflict management using collaboration strategy and compromise strategy on the performance of First Bank of Nigeria, Awka.

The main objective of this study is to examine conflict management and Organisational performance on selected branches of First Bank of Nigeria, in Awka, Anambra. The specific objectives are to:

i. examine the relationship between of collaboration strategy and work relationship among the employees in the branches of First Bank of Nigeria, in Awka, Anambra.
ii. ascertain the relationship between compromise strategy and goal attainment in First Bank of Nigeria, in Awka, Anambra.

The research questions addressed in this study are:

a. What is the relationship between collaboration strategy and work relationship in the performance of First Bank of Nigeria, Awka?
b. What is the relationship between compromise strategy and goal attainment in the performance of First Bank of Nigeria, Awka?

In line with the research objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H_{01}: Collaboration strategy has no significant relationship with work relationship in the performance of First Bank of Nigeria, Awka.

H_{02}: Compromise strategy no significant relationship with goal attainment in the performance of First Bank of Nigerian, Awka.

Literature Review

Concept of Conflict Management

Conflict management is seen as a broad concept including conflict resolution, the transforming of the nature of conflict to be good and the fostering of peaceful coexistence (Mohammed, 2006) According to the author, it is a long term arrangement involving official organisation and institutions for stopping and preventing the conflict whenever it is about to arise. In other words, conflict management is the label for the variety of ways by which people handle grievances, standing up for what they consider to be right against what they consider wrong. Conflict management requires a combination of analytical and human skills. It influences individual wellbeing, group performance and organisational effectiveness (Carsten, Arne, Bianca, Esther, & Aukje as cited in Yusuf & Anuar, 2014). As such, conflict management involves doing things to limit the negative aspects of conflict and to increase the positive aspects of conflict with the aim of enhancing learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in an organisational setting (Rahim, 2011). Conflict management is deemed to be successful if it has achieved its goal by reaching a win-win approach-approach or consensual agreement which is acceptable by both parties. Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently. Since conflicts in a business are a natural part of the workplace, it is important that there are people who understand conflicts and know how to resolve them.

Strategies for Conflict Management

Collaboration Strategy

There is cooperation and the search for a mutually beneficial outcome, when each party to conflict desire to fully satisfy the concerns of all parties, that is, high concern for self and others (Ezeanyim, 2010). As such, the intentions of the parties are to solve the problem by clarifying differences rather than by accommodating various points of view through openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach a solution acceptable to both parties. This strategy requires an open discussion of all the issues and concerns, exploration of alternative solutions and honesty and commitment from all parties. To be successful, the collaborating style participants need to be able to surface concerns in a non-threatening way and think imaginatively. This strategy also builds a friendly environment of an organisation where both employers and employees

feel confident and free to share their knowledge or perceptions in order to make a single point, that is, reach a single decision in order to combat conflict.

Compromise Strategy

It is a traditional method for resolving intergroup conflicts and it is also referred to as the middle of the road approach. Ezeanyim (2010) opines that when each party to the conflict seeks to give up something, sharing occurs, resulting in a compromised outcome, as such there is no clear winner or loser. Rather, there is a willingness to ration the object of the conflict and accept a solution that provides incomplete satisfaction of both parties' concerns. The distinguishing characteristic of compromising therefore, is that each party intends to give up something. Victor as cited in Violetta (2012), sees it as a "give-and-take" approach with moderate levels of both assertiveness and cooperativeness.

Concept of Organisational Performance

the concept of organisational performance is very common in the academic literature, as it is one of the most widely used variable in organisational research today, yet at the same time, it remains one of the vaguest and loosely defined constructs (Rogers et al. as cited in Jahanshahi, Reraei, Nawaser, Ranjbar & Pitamber, 2012). Its definition is difficult as there are many definitions of organisational performance and no two definitions agree on the precise characteristics (Abusa, 2011). According to Griffin (2003), organisational performance is described as the extent to which the organisation is able to meet the needs of its stakeholders and its own needs for survival. Organisational performance according to Iravo (2011) is rapidly becoming more accepted as necessary to enhance the productivity and profitability of organisations and is consequently expanding.

Work Relationship

Work relationship is the connection between employees and employers through which individuals sell their labor. This might consist of an immigrant day laborer paid by the bushel to pick fruit in the hot sun, a salaried manager who has been working in an air-conditioned office for the same company for 40 years, or innumerable other situations. Irrespective of situation, all employees and employers have fundamental interests they pursue through the employment relationship, all forms of this relationship are mediated by labor markets and states, and each instance of this relationship is governed by some form of a contract, ranging from explicit union contracts and civil service rules to implicit expectations and understandings. These common building form the foundation of an array of organizing processes: they explain how employees manage their careers and make work (and life outside of work) enjoyable, how managers lead employees, how employees coordinate work across their roles, and how and why alliances between organizations succeed or fail (Budd, 2017)

Goal Attainment.

An organization's effectiveness should be judged by whether it has achieved what it sets out to achieve (its organizational goals). Examples of organizational goals are: achieving certain quality outcomes, achieving certain profit objectives, increasing market share. Consequently, successful goal accomplishment can be considered an appropriate measure of effectiveness. But the use of goals implies additional assumptions that must

be valid if goal attainment is to be a viable measure of effectiveness. These assumptions are: organizations must have goals; the goals must be explicit, adequately clear, and widely known. There should be a manageable number of goals which reflect areas important to the organization (thus, organizations cannot set to achieve too many goals) and progress towards goals must be measurable and there should be a time limit attached to them.

Conflict Management and Organisational Performance

Managing conflict to increase organisational performance is to ensure that the level of conflict is not too high or too low but rather, it should be encouraged at the optimal level. Brown as cited in Iravo (2011) posits that the role of conflict management in organisational performance depends on a circumstance that is, contingency. Thus, Contingency Theory recognizes the influence of a given solution on organisational behavior patterns. According to Rivers as cited in Zafar, Ashfar, Ali and Imran (2014), the hidden costs of unresolved conflict in organisations are enormous and finding effective ways to manage and resolve organisational conflicts can have a significant impact on productivity and hence organisational performance. Individual and organisational performance suffer when people are consumed emotionally, mentally and behaviorally by conflicts.

Theoretical Framework

Contingency Theory

This study is anchored on Contingency Theory. This theory is a behavioral theory developed by Fred Fiedler in 1964.The assumption of the theory is that there is no universal or one best way to manage an organisation and that an organisational/leadership style that is effective in some situations may not be successful in others. The theory argued that a manager's effectiveness is based upon the interplay of task, or relation, motivation and the circumstance. In other words, certain circumstances require different management approaches with a focus either on motivating for task completion or maintaining harmonious group relations.

It can be summarized as an "it all depends" approach. The appropriate management actions and approaches depend on the situation. Managers with a contingency view use a flexible approach, draw on a variety of theories and experiences, and evaluate many options as they solve problems. In the contingency perspective, managers are faced with the task of determining which managerial approach is likely to be most effective in a given situation. It is a recognition of the extreme importance of individual manager performance in any given situation and the contingency approach is highly dependent on the experience and judgment of the manager in a given organisational environment. Contingency theory is however made of six independent constructs (strategy, task, technology, organisational size, structure and culture) and two dependent constructs (efficiency and organisational performance). The study looks at the aspect of strategy being the independent variables and organisational performance being the dependent variable.

Empirical Review

Hotepo, Asokere and Ajemunigbohun (2010) carried out an empirical study to examine the effect of conflict on organisational performance in some selected service organisations in Nigeria. The study employed descriptive research design and uses questionnaire to collect data from 96 managers in some selected Airlines, Road Transport and Insurance companies in Lagos Metropolis. The research revealed that the most used means of managing conflict among the managers in Nigerian service industry is bargaining, collaboration, and avoidance. The significant effect of the conflict management strategies on the dependent variable was not empirically done, thus, the study only identified the strategies used by the case study.

Nneka (2019) conducted a research on conflict management and organizational performance with particular reference to selected breweries (Nigerian Brewies, Enugu, Interfact Beverages, Onitsha, Consolidated Brewies, Imo) in the South East, Nigeria. The objectives aimed to determine the relationship between conflict management strategies (negotiation, joint consultation, collective bargaining and alternative dispute resolution) and organizational performance. The study reviewed relevant theoretical and empirical literatures. This study is anchored on unitary, pluralist and radical theory. Survey research technique was adopted as the design of the study. The data used were sourced from primary sources. A total of five brewery companies were sampled. The data generated were analyzed using frequency tables and percentage analysis. Regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses formulated. The study revealed that all the conflict management strategies studied namely negotiation, collective bargaining, joint consultation and alternative dispute resolution were found to have significant positive relationship with organizational performance. The study concludes that conflict management has significant positive relationship with organizational performance in selected brewery companies in South East Nigeria. The study recommends that Managers should adopt the conflict management strategies above since they are found to be effective in managing conflicts in organization.

Mba (2013) also carried out a research on conflict management and employees' performance in Julius Berger Nigeria Plc Bonny Island, Bayelsa State. A descriptive research design was used in executing the study using 50 purposively selected sample respondents consisting of 25 managerial employees and 25 non-managerial employees of Julius Berger. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result from analysis indicated that significant relationship exists between conflict management strategies and employees‟ performance which have been relatively useful in minimizing the incidence of disruptive conflicts while impacting positively on employees‟ productivity. However, the study makes use of employees' performance which is an aspect of organisational performance.

Sima, Pika and Bugnyar (2012) examined the conflict management strategies and job stress on the staff of emergencies in Mashhad hospitals, Iran. Using descriptive design with copies of questionnaire distributed to 55 employees, the study found that avoidance strategy has a negative and meaningful effect on job stress, solution-oriented strategy has

a positive and meaningful effect on job stress, and control has a positive and meaningful effect on staff's job stress. The study was conducted on a different dependent variable.

A study conducted by Obasan (2011) examined the impact of conflict management on organisational performance in First Bank of Nigeria Plc Lagos branch. Using a student t- distribution to test the significance of response and purposive sampling techniques to administer a self-design questionnaire to 50 respondents, it was revealed that managers prefer the compromise, problem solving, and dominating strategies. The result also showed that the conflict management strategies in place at the organisation have been relatively useful in minimizing the incidence of disruptive conflicts and that conflict management strategies have a positive impact

Oparanma, Hamilton and Ohaka (2009) conducted an investigation on managerial strategies to conflict management of not for-profit organisations in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the descriptive study pattern with the use of questionnaire and personal interview. A total of 80 copies of questionnaire were distributed to both the junior and senior staff. The investigation found that there was a significant positive relationship between conflict management and organisational performance and it was concluded that conflicts in non-profit making organisations can be resolved where administrators indulge in collective bargaining agreement, understanding of employees and acceptance of subordinate goals.

Gap in Knowledge

From the studies reviewed, none of the researchers carried out works on Conflict Management and Organisational Performance in selected commercial Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. Thus creating a gap which the researcher intends to fill. The Researcher filled the gap by studying Conflict Management and Organisational Performance in selected branches of First Bank PLC, Anambra state, Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

Descriptive Survey Research Design was adopted in this study because the study aimed to adopt a system that will support the direct collation of data from respondents. Since descriptive survey research design is one of the research design that supports the collation of data via primary approach such as the use of questionnaire, observation or interview method, descriptive survey research design is considered appropriate. In this study, the target population comprised employees from select branches of First Bank of Nigeria, in Awka Anambra State. The combined number of staff from the selected branches of First Bank was 189. Hence, the total population of the study was 189. The departments and Staff strength are presented in the table below;

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Table 1 Department and Staff Strength.

S/N	Departments	Aroma Branch	UNIZIK Branch	Ziks Avenue	Total
1	Retail and Corporate banking	20	19	21	**60**
2	Investment and capital Operation	12	10	7	**29**
3	Marketing	15	11	12	**38**
4	Public relations	9	14	10	**35**
5	Asset Management and Trusteeship	7	12	8	**27**
	Total	**63**	**66**	**58**	**189**

Source: Internal Records from the departments, 2021.

The study adopted the use of the Taro Yamane Formula (Yamane,1967 quoted by Botes, 2009; Alugbuo, 2005) to determine the sample size with a confidence level of 95%. The formula was applied thus:

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

Where:
n = sample size
N = Population (189)
e = tolerable error (100% - 95% = 5)

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{189}{1 + 189(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{189}{1 + 189(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{189}{1.473}$$

$$n = 128$$

Sample size for this study is 128

For this study, primary source of data was used. The Primary data was sourced from a well-structured questionnaire that were distributed to employees of the selected branches in the study. The structured questionnaire was used to collect information concerning the variables of the study.

The reliability of instrument was obtained through Cronbach Alpha method through Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS version 21). 30 copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents of Fast Chow Restaurant, Awka, Anambra State. The questionnaire was restructured and redistributed to the same respondents. Upon testing the reliability of responses to the items in the test instrument using correlation analysis a figure of 0.87 was obtained which shows that the instrument is very reliable. Below is the table reliability figure using Cronbach Alpha;

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Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.869	1.000	30

Cronbach Alpha (SPSS version 21)

Bio data collected were presented using simple frequency and percentage tables. The data generated were analyzed using Descriptive Statistics (Arithmetic Mean) and hypothesis one was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient while hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested using on Statistical packages for Social Science (version 21) at 5% level of significance. Utilising the following decision rule, Accept the Alternate hypothesis (H_a) if P-value is less than 0.05 (P-value < 0.05); otherwise accept the Null hypothesis (H_o), the study study was able to obtain relevant findings.

Results and Discussion

Table 3 Response Rate

Questionnaire	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Copies of Questionnaire Returned	111	85
Copies of Questionnaire Lost	17	13
Questionnaire Copies distributed	128	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table .3 above shows that a total of 128 copies of questionnaire were distributed, 111 (85%) were collected and 17 (13%) were not retrieved.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Collaboration strategy has no significant relationship with work relationship in the performance of First Bank of Nigeria, Awka.

Table 4 Correlation between Collaboration Strategy and Work Relationship

Correlations

		Collaboration strategy	Work relationship
Collaboration strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	.771**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.014
	N	111	111
Work relationship	Pearson Correlation	.771**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	
	N	111	111

Table 4 shows that there is positive relationship between collaboration strategy and work relationship in the performance of First Bank of Nigeria, Awka with r=0.771, n=111 and p value of 0.014 (p<0.05). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that

there is positive relationship between collaboration strategy and work relationship in First Bank of Nigeria, Awka.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: Compromise strategy no significant relationship with goal attainment in the performance of First Bank of Nigerian, Awka..

Table 5 Correlation between compromise strategy and goal attainment

Correlations

		Compromise strategy	Goal attainment
Compromise strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	.742
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.043
	N	111	111
Goal attainment	Pearson Correlation	.742	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	
	N	111	111

Table 5 shows that there is significant relationship between compromise strategy and goal attainment with r=0.742, n=111 and p value of 0.043 ($p<0.05$). Therefore, we accept the alternate Hypothesis and conclude that there is significant positive relationship between compromise strategy and goal attainment in First Bank Plc, Awka branches, Anambra State.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that conflict management technique of collaboration and compromise are effective and as such foster healthy work environment towards outstanding performance of the organization. The study deduced that collaboration strategy is an effective approach as it opens up the bottled grievances of parties involved in the conflict which could result in amendment. Collaboration strategy fosters healthy work environment. It was concluded in the study that compromise as a strategy would compel employees to let go of the bottled grievances and personal interests but rather work towards attaining goals in the organization. Compromise strategy is tolerance oriented as employees tolerate the erring staff in course of getting the job done.

Based on the findings of this study, the following were recommended;

i. Management should establish a platform where employees discuss grievances so as to treat errors on the tables before it results in conflict in the organization. This will create healthy work environment.
ii. There is need to adopt a system of compromise through sensitization of staff as it will give them the right job behave

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