# CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT IN PRIVATE SECTORS

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the conflict resolution and management in public sector. The paper discusses: the conflict, competition and cooperation views on conflict, types of conflict, causes of conflict, consequences of conflict, dynamics of conflict management of organizational stimulation, reduction and resolution method. The sample size of the study was 50(n) out of a total population of 60(N). Data was collected via primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire was shared and analyzed. The analysis therefore showed that no public sector grows in conflict. Recommendation was made that scarce resources, perception, independence of work activities, erratic individuals, ambiguities in communication, organizational ambiguities etc. should be totally eradicated to reduce conflict in organizations.*

## Introduction

A conflict is a disagreement among individuals as a result of differences in their perception, positions, status, authority, scarce economic resources which they will share among themselves, etc. Organizations are association of two or more individuals who are working together towards a common purpose. Within management, there are both positions and jobs people are occupying, these position and jobs do not see things the same way. At the same time, they do not communicate effectively and they cannot understand themselves very well. So, in management, there are conflict between the management of the university and various working groups. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has divided into two factions. The Nigeria Bar Association have internal factions, etc. However, management conflict must be kept, they may result in hatred among management employee/workers and hatred can result in assassinations in management. Conflict has both negative and positive

impact in management. This is why it is necessary to manage conflict so that it must be kept at a level where it will not result in disorganizing the activities of management in an organization thereby resulting in not allowing effective attainment of management objectives. Both conflict stimulations and reduction methods do not aim at achieving conflict but keeping them at a management level within the organization. Conflict resolution method deals directly with the individual in a conflict. In order to achieve the objective of this paper, the following will be discussed.

1. Definition of conflict
2. Conflict, competition and cooperation
3. Views on conflict
4. Types of conflict
5. Causes of conflict
6. Consequences of conflict
7. Dynamics of conflict management or organizational
   (a) Conflict stimulation method
   (b) Conflict reduction method
   (c) Conflict resolution method

**Definition of conflict**

Management conflict is a disagreement between two or more organization members or groups arising from the fact that they must share scare resources or work activities and/or from the fact that they have different status, goals, values or percentages. Organizational members or sub-units in disagreement attempt to have their own cause or point of view prevail over that of the other (Stones, 1972).

**Conflict, Competition and Cooperation**

In management also, we have conflict, competition and cooperation among organizational members. Understanding the way the above three concepts help to understand the meaning of management conflict. In a situation of conflict, some employee or management participants attempt to hinder or block other from attaining their goals. The opposite of cooperation is not conflict but lack of cooperation. In the management of conflict, managers find a way to balance and cooperate.

**Views on Organizations Conflict**

There are two major views about conflict in organizations. One is the traditional views about conflict and the other is on interactional view on organizational conflict (Robins, 1974). The traditional view is that conflict shows that things are not working well within an organization. The interractionalist, so, conflict is a negative sign managers should try to eliminate when they emerge. So, traditionally, conflict were viewed as

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unnecessary and harmful to the organization. The interactionalist viewed about organizations conflict is that conflict is inevitable in organization. Managers should not try to suppress conflicts but should manage them and keep them at levels where they can be functional for organizational performance.

## Types of Management Conflict

There are five types of conflicts (see Stoner) within an organization, these are:

1. Conflict within the individual
2. Conflict between individuals
3. Conflict between individuals and groups
4. Conflicts between groups in the same organization
5. Conflict between organizations

The typical conflict which is the focus of this journal is the conflict between groups (No. 4) in the same organization.

## Causes of Organizational Conflict

The sources or causes of organizational conflict are diverse and many. However, the following sources of organizational conflicts will be mentioned here. These are:

1. Scarce resources to be shared.
2. Interdependent nature of work activities.
3. Differences in values and perceptions

4. Erratic individuals
5. Ambiguous definition of work activities

## Consequences of Organizational Conflict

The following are the consequences of organizational conflicts (Mizafer and Carolyn, 1966):

1. Increased cohesion
2. Rise of leaders
3. Distorted perception
4. Increase in negative stereotypes
5. Selection of strong representation
6. Development of "Blind Spot"

## Increase Cohesion

One of the major consequences group cohesion or group solidarity is when two groups are in conflict the members of each of the groups may be forced to forget their internal differences and reconcile to face a common enemy. One can observe this here in schools among the various departments. Also, we can observe that when families in the village are in conflict their respective members tend to be more united to face a common enemy.

## Rise of Leaders

When groups are in conflict new leaders arise among the group to help their members to win the conflict. It is not difficult to identify the new leaders. They

are ones that are ready to resist the opposing group, they are the ones that have the resources, they are the ones that are knowledgeable about the crisis, they are the ones that are fearless etc.

## Distorted Perception

Many people do not reason properly or perceive things clearly during group conflicts or crisis. This is as a result of group cohesion of solidarity. Even the ones that are honest or straight forward, outspoken or objective may distort their perception. Hypocrisy is the dominant behaviour. Distortion is perceived tends to keep the two groups far away from settlement.

## Increase in Negative Stereotypes

Stereotyping is when we generalize either positive or negative about group because of a single fact we know about the group. However, in a situation of conflict those positive things about a group are forgotten and everything about the group becomes negatively continuously not positively.

## Selection of Strong Representative

When the groups in conflict are about to find ways of settling their differences or the conflict either through a mediator or arbitration, group members select strong representative or hard-liners. These are
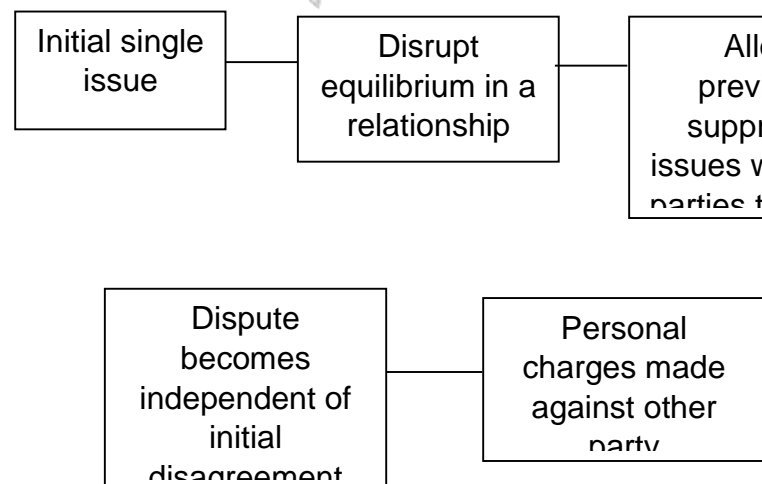
strong representative who will be unyielding such situation create statement in settlement.

## Development of "Blind Spot"

Irrespective of differences among groups in conflict, they have some area where they can achieve cooperation for their mutual interest and benefits. These groups develop "blind spot about the areas of mutual benefits/interest. Here in Nigeria we have tribal differences and some tribal groups are choosing the part of independent nations instead of "one Nigeria" but are serious "blind spot" they are ignoring.

## Dynamic of Conflict

How do conflicts develop and escalate in groups. Fig 1 below table shows how conflicts develop and escalate in groups. Generally, conflicts start with a specific issue, after it has started, previously suppressed issues are remembered.

| Initial single issue | Disrupt equilibrium in a relationship | All[...] prev[...] suppr[...] issues v[...] parties t[...] |

| Dispute becomes independent of initial disagreement | Personal charges made against other party |

**Fig 1:** Conflict dynamics (Colemon, Vallacher & Bui, 2007)

Later on conflict or dispute becomes independent of the original issues that give rise to it. Then personal issues enter the conflict and the parties feel totally bad and this lead to hatred. Hatred can result in bodily injuries or death. Unresolved conflict can be prolonged and the consequences can be fatal for certain organizational members.

**Management of Organizational Conflicts**

Members should keep organizational conflicts at manageable levels. There are three approaches to manage conflicts. There are conflict stimulation methods, conflict reduction method and conflict resolution methods.

**Conflict Stimulation Method**

This method is used in some organizations where the level of conflict for improvement of performance is lacking. Such organizations lack innovative skill, creativity and low standard of competition and performance among staff. In these

types of organizations, conflict can be stimulated at the level where it can improve performance. Conflict stimulation methods include:

a.   Bringing in outsiders

b.   Breathing normal work procedure and regulation (going against the book)

c.   Restructuring the organization

d.   Encouraging competition

**Conflict Reduction Methods**

Conflict reduction methods aim at reducing the conflict but not eliminate the conflict within the organization. In a research carried out by sheriff and his colleagues, they tired some methods to reduce conflict among groups in a boy's lamp. First of all, they stimulated conflict among and when it became intense, they wanted to reduce it.

**Conflict Resolution Methods**

Both conflict stimulation and reduction methods do not aim at elimination conflicts but keeping them at manageable levels within the organization. Conflict resolution deals directly with the individual in a conflict. Other conflict resolution methods are restructuring the organization which will affect the positions of those in conflict or a special group with the organization like

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committees, liaison individuals, etc. can be set up purely to deal with conflict situations.

**Integrative Problem Solving Method**

This is another conflict resolution method. Here inter group conflict converted in to a joint problem solving techniques. Together, parties to the conflict try to solve the problem that has risen between them. Instead of suppressing conflict or trying to find a compromises the parties openly to find a solution they all can accept. The major emphasis here is that the groups or conflict are members of the same organization. Organizations are working towards the same purpose. So when there is conflict among group in the same organization they should find solution. The interrogative problem solving methods include:

a. Consensus

b. Confrontation

c. Use of super-ordinate goals

**Methodology**

This design is to show the process of procedures that the journal will adopt in obtaining data. The discussion of the method and procedures is significant especially when it is considered that the method have direct and indirect bearing on this work.

**Research Design**

Nwana (1981) sees design as a term used to describe a number of decisions which need to be taken regarding the collection of data before ever data are collected. Research design is the plan for a research project. It provides guidelines, which direct the research towards solving the problem. And it may vary, depending on the nature of the problem being studied. In the design to be used in this study, the source of data and information will be clearly stated. Appropriate research instrument will be used in the collection of data and information.

For the purpose of this journal, descriptive research designs were used. A well-structured questionnaire will be administered to the chosen sample and collected for use in analysis.

**Population of Study**

Population is any group of people or objects, which are similar in one or more ways and which form the subject of the study in a particular survey. This journal targets at the conflict resolution and management in private sector . The population for this study comprises the management and staff of ROSONS INDUSTRIES ENUGWU-UKWU which is sixty (60).

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**Sample Size**

According to Hair et al (2000) there are 2 statistical formulae for determining the sample size based on a predicted population mean (n) and a population proportion (p). He expressed that the formula is fundamental in estimating the appropriate sample. Hair also stated that in those situations whose estimate of population is of coercion, the standardized formula for calculating the needed sample size is

$$N = (2^2 \; BCL) \; \frac{(P \; x \; Q)}{a^2}$$

Where

ZBCL =  Standard Z – value associated with the level of confidence

P = estimate of expected population proportion having a desired characteristics based

on intention or prior information

Q = (1 – P) or the estimate of expected population proportion not holding the

characteristics of interest.

A = accepted tolerance level or error (stated in percentage point)

Therefore, sample size is determined using an estimate of 100% as population estimate of Anambra, 90% confidence level will be used in determining the sample size. An acceptable level of error (a) of 10% was allowed by the researcher.

$$N = (2^2 \; BCL) \; \frac{(P \; x \; Q)}{a^2}$$

N  =  $\dfrac{(22 \; x \; 78) \; x \; 1.65^2}{10^2}$

N  =  $\dfrac{22 \; x \; 78 \; x \; 2.7225}{100}$

=  18.24 x 2/7225

=  64.6584

N  =  50

The sample size of this study is 50.

**Sampling Method**

This refers to how the members of the sample size will be chosen from the population of the study. The sample size selection procedure used in this study is random sampling. The reason for sampling random sample is that it gives all the members of the population equal opportunity of being chosen.

**Sources of Data**

The collection of data for this journal is multi-dimensional involving a wide spectrum of research instruments which include:

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(a) Primary data: Hair et al (2000) posited that primary sources of data are those sources where information or data for the purpose of particular research at hand are collected. For the purpose of this study, data is collected through the use of questionnaire.

(b) Secondary data: Eboh (1998) opined that secondary sources are those sources where information or data collected for other purposes are kept. The sources of secondary data for this study are:
   (i) University libraries
   (ii) Thesis/project thesis
   (iii) Monographs
   (iv) Dictionary

## Questionnaire Design

Questionnaire is an instrument for obtaining specific information about a defined problem, which after analysis and interpretations, a better solution to that problem will result. To avoid being based the "drop off" method of distributing questionnaire will be used. Besides, the question conveyed were multiple-choice which gives the respondents the opportunity answer "Yes or No". However, the researcher avoided ambiguous questions since the literacy level of some respondents are low.

## Result

From the questionnaire analysis, it was seen that many people pointed accusing fingers on conflict as a drawback to organizational development.

## Conclusion

Consequences of conflict are enormous; including: increase in group cohesion, distorted perceptions, increase in negative stereotyping, selection of strong representatives and development of "blind spot". It was found out that organizational conflict can be managed through conflict stimulation, conflict reduction and resolution. Hence, this paper concludes that for an organization to grow, conflict must be resolved completely.

## Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the journal therefore, recommends the following measures to make the prevailing conflict resolution and management:

For conflict resolution and management to be reduced, there must be a corporate planning of all departments concerned. Marketing department, purchasing, technical, production, personnel and others should cultivate a team spirit to enable them work in unity and be more productive.

More powers of authority should be delegated to each department to make for effective operations instead of a highly centralized system of management. This will enable them use their own initiative whenever the need arises, instead of sticking to rigidly established guidelines.

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