MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract:

The study sought to identify the causes of conflicts, the challenges encountered in managing organizational conflicts, and the appropriate strategies adopted by selected public sector organizations in Nigeria in managing organizational conflict. The study has population size of 75 out of which a sample size of 63 was realized using Taro Yamane's formula at 5% error tolerance and 95% level of confidence. Instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and interview. A total number of 63 copies of the questionnaires were distributed while 55 copies were returned. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The hypotheses were tested employing Pearson chi-square using SPSS. The findings indicate that inadequacy of resources; personality differences and communication problems are the causes of conflict in Nigerian public sector organizations. Secondly, coping with change and effective implementation of strategy are the challenges encountered in managing organizational conflict. Thirdly, collaboration style, accommodation style and avoidance style are the strategies adopted by public sector organizations in managing conflict. The study recommends that managers should develop appropriate strategies such as collective bargaining and negotiation, to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before escalating to unmanageable level.

Keywords: conflict, conflict management strategies, public sector organisations

1. Introduction

Whenever people work together, conflict will certainly occur for one reason or the other. Conflicts begin when an individual or group perceives differences and opposition between him or herself and another individual or group about interests, beliefs or values that matter to him or her. According to Wall and Callister (1995), conflicts are inevitable part of organizational life since the goals of different stakeholders such as directors and staffs are often incompatible. Conflict is an

unpleasant fact in any organization as long as people compete for jobs, resources, positions, power, recognition and security.

Organizational conflict can be regarded as disputes that occur when interest, goals or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible with each other (Blake, 1994). This results into a situation where by they frustrate each other in an attempt to achieve their objectives. Conflict arises in groups because of the scarcity of freedom, position and resources while people who value independence tend to resist the need for interdependence and to some extent, conformity within a group. People who seek power therefore struggle with others for position or status within the group (Bison, 1998).

Azamosa (2004) observes that conflicts involve the total range of behaviors and attitudes that is in opposition between mangers and working people. It is a state of disagreement over issues of substance or emotional antagonism and may arise due to anger, mistrust or personality clashes. Irrespective of the factors resulting conflict, it has been observed that organizational conflict produce considerable effects on organizations and should be consciously managed as much as possible (Bono, 1985).

For people to progress at work and other aspect of life, there must be cooperation which is essential to ensure task attainment and stability in life. However, it would be wrong to reach the conclusion that cooperation is good while conflict is bad, this is because both concepts are pervasive and co-exist in our social life. Unfortunately, the term "conflict" has only the connotation of "bad" for many people, so much that they think principally in terms of suppression, giving little or no attention to its more positive side. Pondy (1992), states that the absence of conflict may indicate autocracy, uniformity, stagnation and mental fixity, the presence of conflict may be indicative of democracy, diversity, growth and self-actualization.

Conflict has both positive and negative effects. It can be positive when it encourages creativity, new looks at old conditions, the clarification of point of views, and the development of human capabilities to handle interpersonal differences. Conflict can be negative when it creates resistance to change, establishes turmoil in organization or interpersonal relations fosters distrust, builds a feeling of defeat, or widens the chasm of understanding (Tjosvold and Van, 1994).

Furthermore, conflicts is considered psychologically and socially health (Derling and Wall, 2001). It is psychologically healthy because it provides a breather for frustrations and enables a feeling of participation and even for joy. It is also sociable healthy because it encourages opposition to the status quo and provides conditions for social chances and democracy stemming from pluralism and respect to diversity. Therefore, conflict is ubiquitous, not necessarily dysfunctional and can be required to defy people to perform and stimulate progress (Wall, 2001).

The problem necessitating this study was that the inability to identify and manage workplace conflicts systematically has rendered conflict dysfunctional in some public sector organizations in Nigeria. This is evidenced by the observed high frequency of strike action, sabotage at workplace, slow work, labour turnover, lack of

productivity, unhealthy rivalry between and among sub-units and individuals within an organization etc.

According to Jung (2003), enduring conflict deteriorates the work climate and may rekindle more problems that negatively affect the physical and psychological well-being of the individuals involved. In other words, the occurrence of conflict at work place results in decline both physical and emotional functioning which in the long run produces a feeling of burn out among the employees.

Parker (1974) argues that "if conflicts arises and are not managed properly, it will lead to delays of work, disinterest and lack of action and in extreme cases it might lead to complete breakdown of the organization. However, some past studies have shown that outcome of conflict is determined largely by the conflict management behavior exhibited by management behavior of the parties in conflict is critical to the outcome of the conflict. Without conflict in an organization, there may be an indication of autocracy, uniformity, stagnation while the presence of it may be indicative of democracy, growth, diversity and self-actualization. If we can learn to manage conflict, then we are less apt to practice destructive behaviors that will negatively impact on our team. It is therefore against these backdrops that the researcher embarked on management of conflict and its implication on Nigerian public sector organizations.

Arising from the problem, the study sought to identify the causes of conflicts in Nigerian public sector organizations, to assess the challenges encountered in managing organizational conflicts, and to examine the strategies adopted by public sector organizations in managing conflicts.

The study sought to answer the following research questions regarding the Nigerian situation:

- What are the causes of conflicts in Nigerian public sector organizations?
- What are the challenges encountered in managing organizational conflicts?
- What are the strategies adopted by a public sector organizations in managing conflicts?

The following hypotheses were proposed;

H₁: Lack of resources, personality differences and communication problems are not causes of conflict in Nigerian public sector organization.

H₂: Coping with change and effective implementation of a strategy are not the challenges encountered in managing conflict.

H₃: Collaboration, accommodation and avoidance are not strategies adopted by public sector organizations in managing conflict.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Nature, Types and Causes of Organisational Conflict

Conflict arises when the interest of two or more parties clash and at least one of the parties seeks to assert its interest at the expense of another party's interest. Conflict has also been described as a social phenomenon that can result from gradual changes that

create diverging interest and needs. Conflicts can involve two parties or several parties (Multiparty conflicts) and can arise in numerous levels and over numerous issues.

Ikeda (2005) observes that organizational conflict involves interpersonal conflicts with colleagues or supervisors, and intergroup conflict within different sections of an organization.

There are two essential types of conflict in organizations; vertical and horizontal (Robbins, 1998). Vertical conflict occurs in groups of different hierarchical levels such as supervisors and employees, whereas horizontal conflict occurs between individuals of the same level such as managers/administrators in the same organization. In vertical conflict, differences in status and power between groups are in general larger than in the horizontal conflict because these aspects tend to equalize in equivalent hierarchical levels. Robbins (1998) states that when vertical conflict takes place between operational workers and administrators, their sources refer to as;

1) Psychological distance: Workers don't feel involved in the organization and feel that their needs are not met.
2) Power and status: Workers feel powerless and alienated;
3) Differences in value and ideology: This differences represents underlying beliefs on objectives and goals of an organization
4) Scare resources: Disagreements regarding to benefits, salaries and work conditions.

In vertical conflict, apparently individuals in lower organizational level seek to avoid conflicts with higher hierarchical levels. According to Pondy (1992), it is expected that the top management peers perceive more conflict internally between their groups than those of lower position. This happens because of the following reasons;

1) People in higher hierarchical level are engaged in non-routine activities where orientation for the actions are less clear and chances for disagreement and;
2) People in higher hierarchical level rather than the lower ones, are probably less flexible in their points of view. Hence, conflict resolution is more difficult.

In any organization, there are many causes of conflicts; however, conflicts within an individual usually arises when a person is uncertain about what task he or she is expected to perform; if not clearly defined by the supervisor or the person in charge. If the task of an individual working as a group is not clearly defined by the management, may lead to more conflicts. Conflicts between individuals may result from role-related pressures. Conflicts could arise between individuals and groups if the goals were not specified for individuals within a group. According to Nye (2005), there are innumerable aspects of organizational dispute and each produces its own variety of effects. They are as follows;

1) Scare Resource: When resources are limited, conflict potential in any organization is enhanced. Such scare or limited resources may include, operating funds of organization, office equipment, facilities etc.
2) Personality Differences: The workplace brings together a wide array of personalities. In the myriad of different backgrounds, genders, cultures, political and religious beliefs, there are countless opportunities for ruffled feathers.

3) Interpersonal Disagreement: Disagreement between individuals in an organization example, disagreement between the subordinate and the supervisors, supervisors and the employees or among themselves as a result of power tussles.

4) Task Independence: This is refers to as a situation where individual or groups depend upon each other for assistance; they need to synergize in order to be productive.

5) Poor Communication: Breakdown in communication due to distortion or lack of communication often lead to party dislike, distrust or feeling angry towards the other. As information is passed up and down the hierarchy, it is susceptible to ambiguity and breakdown.

6) Power struggle: The power struggles that put persons and groups against one another to achieve their own selfish objectives.

7) Past unresolved conflict: Conflict which remain unsettled over time create anxiety and stress can further intensity existing conflict.

8) Lack of cooperation: When the employees do not together as a team may result to a problems in their workplace.

9) External pressures: When forces outside the enterprises that breed internal pressures as the system to adapt, but not to disrupt its internal order.

As conflict has its positive effects, so as its negative effects varies. Positive effects are to builds cooperation, organizational innovativeness and productivity, individual development, improving quality decision and conflict management skills. Negative effects are interferes with organization operators, lack of cooperation, wasting of resources and time, no productivity and no cohesion.

In many cases, effective conflict resolution can make the difference between positive and negative outcomes. If conflict is rationally and effectively resolved, it will;

1) Increased understanding: The discussion needed to resolve conflict expands people's awareness of the situation, giving them an insight into how they can achieve their own goals without undermining that of other people.

2) Increased group cohesion: When conflict is resolved effectively, members can develop stronger mutual respect and a renewed faith in their ability to work together.

3) Improved self-knowledge: Conflict pushes individuals to examine their goals in close detail, helping them understanding the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and enhancing their effectiveness.

However, if conflict is not handled effectively, the results can be damaging. Conflicting goals can quickly turn into personal dislike. Teamwork breaks down. Talent is wasted as people disengaged from their work, and it is easy to end up in a vicious downward spiral of negativity and recrimination.

2.2 Conflict Management, its Strategies, Resolutions and Challenges

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflicts while increasing its positive aspects. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning

and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting (Rahim, 2002).

According to Bison (1998), a conflict management strategy is an operational plan to achieve a conflict goal. Conflict can be managed in different ways, some focusing on interpersonal relationships and other on structural changes. When conflict arises, we need to be able to manage them properly, so that it becomes a positive force, rather than a negative force which would threaten the individual or group. If conflicts arise and are not managed properly, it will lead to delays of works, disinterest and lack of action and in extreme cases, it might lead to complete breakdown of the group. Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann (1978) identified two theories relevant in resolving conflict. They are; conflict styles theory and theory of interest-based relational approach.

In theory of conflict style, he identified five main styles of dealing with conflict that vary in their degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness. They agreed that people typically have a preferred conflict resolution style. However, they noted that different styles were most useful for different situation. These styles are;

1) **Competitive:** People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand and know what they want. They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. This style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be make fast; when the decision is unpopular, or when defending against someone who is trying to explicit the situation selfishly.

2) **Collaborative:** People tending towards this style try to meet the needs of all people involved. These people can be highly assertive but unlike the competitors, they cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important. This style is useful when you need to bring together a variety of viewpoints to get the best situation, or when the situation is too important for a simple trade off.

3) **Compromising:** People who prefer this style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone. Everyone is expected to give up something and the compromiser also expects to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming.

4) **Accommodating:** This style indicates a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs. The accommodator often knows when to give in to others, but can be persuaded to surrender a position even when it is not warranted. Accommodation is appropriate when peace is more valuable than winning, or when you want to be in a position to collect on this "favor" you gave. However, peoples may not return favors, and overall this approach is unlikely to give the best outcomes.

5) **Avoiding:** People tending towards this style seek to evade the conflict entirely. This style is typified by delegating controversial decision, accepting defaults decisions, not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. It can be appropriate when

victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial, or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem.

The second theory is commonly referred to as the "Interest-based relational approach". This type of conflict resolution respects individual differences while helping people avoid becoming too entrenched in a fixed position (Thomas and Kilmann, 1978).

In resolving conflict using this approach, the following rules are taken;

1) Make sure that good relationships are the first priority;
2) Keep people and problems separate;
3) Pay attention to the interests that are being presented;
4) Listen first, talk second;
5) Set out the "facts";
6) Explore options together.

By following these rules, you can often keep contentions discussions positive and constructive. These help to prevent the antagonism and dislike which so-often causes conflict to spin out of control (Thomas et al, 1978).

Rahim (2002) identifies the following ways for managing and resolving conflict situation;

1) **Collective Bargaining**: Here, groups of people come together to resolve conflict with one voice. Each group comes together with a mandate to work out a solution collectively.
2) **Conciliation:** This process occurs whereby groups who are in conflict and who have failed to reach agreement can come together once again to attempt to settle their differences.
3) **Negotiation:** Is a process where marketed representatives of groups in a conflict situation meet together in order to resolve their differences and to reach agreement.
4) **Mediation:** Is a process in which the parties in a conflict, with the assistance of a mediator, identify the issues, develop options, consider alternative and endeavor to reach an agreement.
5) **Arbitration:** Arbitration means the appointment of an independent person to act as an adjudicator (or judge) on a dispute, to decide on the term of settlement.

Below is table that illustrates the various technologies applicable to each major cause of conflict given the three different approaches (Derr, 1975).

Table 2.1: Conflict management paradigm

Causes of conflicts	Conflict management technologies		
	Collaboration	Bargaining	Power play
External pressures	Open systems planning	Negotiating	Force and threats of force, use of laws of forces, strategic use of information, coalition building
Individual stress	Counseling, coaching, problem solving	Contracting	Transfer, careful job description
Power struggles	Building organizational	Negotiation, solve	Use of legitimate

	climate, make decisions close to information source, best ideas prevail, encourage participation problem-solving	substantive issues of scare resources, allocation, establish power party.	authority, co-optation, coalition building favor system.
Low interdependence	Increasing group interaction	Negotiation to enhance interaction	Use of legitimate authority to structure more interaction.
Role disputes, differentiation, high independence	Team building, communication skills, problem solving, confrontive style, imaging third party consultation, climate		Support with formal authority and rewards.

Source: Derr, G.B. (1975*): Major Causes of Organizational Conflict: Diagnosis for Action; working paper,* Naval postgraduate School, Monterey; California.

Thomas *et al.* (1978) identifies the following challenges of conflict management choosing the right conflict mode: The most fundamental conflict challenge is the ability to select the conflict mood suitable for a given situation.

1) Implementing mode/strategy effectively: Choosing an effective strategy to successfully implement can pose a problem.
2) Reducing the cost of a strategy: This involves reducing the cost of negative consequences on the strategy chosen. Administers who are less skilled at conflict management often accept some collateral damages as normal or inevitable.
3) Problem of styles: Team members often misunderstand team mate with conflict style different from their own. Each conflict style comes with underlying set of values; people with a given style tend to see other styles as opposing their values.
4) Reducing excessive behaviour: Each strategy sometimes comes with "temptations" that should be guarded against. These temptations involve behaviors that are excessive in some way and create problems for the team.
5) Overcoming the challenges of team style: Teams with different conflict styles tend to operate with very different behavior and have quite different atmosphere. Even though each conflict style is an attempt to make a positive contribution to the team, these styles often have unintended consequences at the team level.

2.3 Theoretical Framework
To justify belief in our conclusion, we drew upon numerous theories throughout this paper.

2.3.1 Individual Needs and Identities
However, at the most basic yet profound level, this augmentation is John Galtung's (1996) model of needs, goals and positions. It originates from Maslow (1954, in Miller,

2006) and other classical motivational theorist. The model illustrates how individuals formulate goals in order to fulfill needs, and positions to help reach goals. Galtung describe needs as:

1) Survival, as opposed to death, individually and collectively
2) Well-being, meaning food, shelter, cloths, health
3) Identity, something to live for, not only live from
4) Freedom, having choices for the three above
   According to Galtung the model serve two purposes:
1) To understand when a conflict becomes hard a conflict on scarce resources to fulfill basis needs.
2) To ensure preservation of conflict parties different needs in a resolution or transformation process.

Furthermore, the model can be helpful in understanding a conflict. The model emphasizes the difference between needs goals and positions. The relationship between the three is not always easy to understand as they are influenced the individuals rational as well as irrational beliefs of how to reach the goals and how to fulfill the needs (Rosenberg, 2003). This is my reason for using this theory. It serves as justification for as usage of later theories and methods to communicate needs rather than positions. Another theory by Galtung is my definition of conflict. In his Transcend method he proposes his ABC model. Attitude + Behavioural + Core contradiction = Conflict. Conflict become more than merely perceived incompatibility in goals which needs for communication-seeing conflict and its transformation as a process.

2.3.2 Constructive vs. Destructive Process of Conflict

Conflicts are proof of something wants to change, and its potential change to the better. In the resolution perspective, a conflict can follow a constructive or destructive pattern (Deutsch, 2006). As mentioned in the introduction that a conflict is not necessarily negative unless it turns destructive.

Morton Deutsch theories posit the conditions that gave rise to a constructive and cooperative pattern rather than destructive and competitive with the theory. Deutsch basically state, that those conditions are the same as those determining the pattern of a social relationship. And those are the degree of perceived similarity in belongs and attitudes.

In connection to this Galtung (1996) words the attitudes, beliefs and core contradictions (from his ABC model of conflict) for both the destructive and constructive pattern: Attitudes of hatred, distrust an apathy; behavior of physical and verbal violence and a blocked contradiction is connected to the destructive pattern of conflict, whereas attitudes of empathy a non-violent behavior; and creative thoughts on the contradiction is connected to the constructive pattern. Therefore, destructive vs. constructive is the core of conflict resolution as it is emphasizing the need for action to change these attitude and behavior as described by Galtung.

2.3.3 Conflict Styles and Transcendence Method

The concept of conflict styles refers to a person's (communicative) orientation towards a conflict. The original notion of conflict styles originates from Blake and Mouton's managerial Grid (originally designed describe management styled. Since, numerous theorists have further evolved new models such as Thomas-Kilmann's (1978) conflict mode survey. Their model is generally one of the most referred to and describes five conflict styles in X-(cooperativeness), y-(assertiveness) axis competing (assertive, uncooperative), avoiding (unassertive, uncooperative), Accommodating (unassertive, cooperative), collaborating (assertive, cooperative), and compromising (intermediate assertiveness and cooperativeness).

Galtung employ his model to show conflict outcomes and not style an individual subscribe to in a conflict scenario. Galtung dictates that transcendence is the preferred conflict outcome. It is equal to what "collaborating" describe on the Thomas-Kilmann model. We used Galtung's transcendence as a tool for directing conflict. It provides a tool box of what is necessary for turning the conflict from a destructive pattern into a constructive pattern.

2.3.4 NVC

Non-Violent communication is another tool for avoiding destructive patterns. With NVC, Marshall Robernberg (2003) formulates specially how to communicate from needs rather than misdisguided goals and positions. Robenberg (2003) explains NVC as "communication with the heart". However, what it actually means is that he encourages empathy in both expression and listening at the same time. He emphasizes the important of being aware of one's needs and that way avoid judging, misinterpretation and revenge. Doing so, successfully, is very important in conflict situations and thus we choose propose NVC as a tool.

2.4 Some Relevant Empirical Literature

Osabiya (2005) carried out a study on conflict management and resolution in Nigeria Public Sector. The study focused on the factors that informed an organization's decision to seek and alternative means of handling conflict to traditional discipline and grievance procedures; and also looked at the barriers and facilitators to integrating mediation into workplace practice and culture. The study adopted survey research design. Two hypotheses were formulated to determine the source of conflict and conflict resolution in the Nigeria Public Service. The study makes use of descriptive statistics to analyze the data collected from a sample of 170 employees of the Nigeria Public Service. Percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the responses collected from the respondents. The findings showed that conflict can be resolved through compromise between the employee and management. That leadership styles can lead to conflict in the organization. The study recommended that workers should be more involved in decision making process in Nigeria Public Service so as to reduce the rate of conflict. There should be effective communication network between the workers and the management.

Olukayode (2015) investigated on the impact of workplace conflict management on organizational performance in a Nigerian manufacturing firm. Participants comprised 250 employees selected through the use of stratified random sampling technique. Data were generated through the use of validated structured questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze data collected from the respondents. Employing Spearman correlation analysis, the results of the empirical tests showed a significantly positive relationship between conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, compromise, and accommodation) and organizational performance. Non-integrative conflict management strategies (competition, domination and avoidance) had a negative statistically determinate effect on organizational performance. Also, the result of the regression analysis indicated that collective bargaining strategy displayed the highest significant positive correlation with organizational performance. The findings of the study revealed that conflicts arose over multiple factors of organizational experiences based on economic and goal incompatibility orientations in the workplace. Union-management conflict was discovered as the most prevalent type of industrial conflict in the organization. The study concluded that conflict was an unavoidable phenomenon in organizational life and it could contribute to or detract from organizational performance depending on the conflict management methods adopted in the workplace.

Olu and Adesubomi (2008) conducted a research on the impact of conflict management on employees' performance in a public sector organization, a case of Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). This study adopted the survey research design. A total of 100 respondents were selected for the study using stratified sampling technique. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Hypotheses were tested through regression analysis and correlation coefficient. The findings revealed that effective conflict management enhance employee's performance in an organization and that organization's conflict management system influences employee performance in the organization. The study recommended that organization should embark on training and retraining of its employees in area of conflict management so as to create a conductive working environment for the employees and that there should be efficient and effective communication between and among all categories of the employees the organization for this will reduce conflicting situations in the organization.

3. Methodology

This study was carried out using descriptive and survey design. Primary data were obtained through the use of interviews, questionnaire and observations while secondary data were obtained through books, journals and the internet. The population of the study was (75) drawn from employees of the National orientation Agency in Enugu state of Nigeria. A sample size of 63 was determined from the population using Taro Yamane's sample size determination method. The instrument used for data

collection was a questionnaire structured in 4 point Likert scale. The reliability test was done using test retest method. A total of sixty-three (63) copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, fifty-five (55) copies were returned while (8) eight copies were not returned. The three hypothesis formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Pearson chi-square was used to test hypotheses one, two and three respectively by the aid of computer aided Microsoft Special Package for Social Science (SPSS).

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

The data obtained from the field were presented and analyzed with descriptive statistics to provide answers for the research questions while the corresponding hypotheses were tested with Pearson's Chi-square at 0.05 alpha level. Table 1 shows the responses to question 1.

Table 1: What are the Causes of Conflicts in Nigeria Public Sector Organization?

S/No		Agreement	Disagreement	Total
1	Lack of resources brings conflicts in an organization	49 (51)	6 (4.3)	55
2	Personality differences arouses conflict	51 (51)	4 (4.3)	55
3	Communication problems increase organizational conflict	52 (51)	3 (4.3)	55
	Total	152	13	165

Source: Researchers' field work tabulation.

Table 2 shows the responses to question 2.

   H1: Lack of resources, personality differences and communication problems are causes of conflict in Nigeria public sector organizations.

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests computed from the Frequency Cross Tabulation

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.016(a)	4	.061
Likelihood Ratio	10.996	4	.027
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.911	1	.027
N of Valid Cases	55		

Table 2 is the output of the computed Chi-Square values from the cross tabulation statistics of observed and expected frequencies with the response options of agree and disagree based on the responses of the research subjects from the selected organisation. Pearson. Chi-Square computed value (X^2_c = 19.016) is greater than the Chi –Square tabulated value (X^2_t = 9.49) with 4 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of alpha (X^2_c =19.016, p,< .05)

4.1 Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis if the computed Chi- Square value was greater than tabulated Chi-Square value otherwise reject the null hypothesis.

4.1.1 Decision

Since the Pearson Chi- Square computed X^2_c= 19.016 is greater than Chi- Square table value X^2_t = 9.49, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, we conclude that lack of resources; personality differences and communication problems are causes of conflict in Nigeria public sector organizations.

Table 3 shows the responses to question 3.

Table 3: What are the Challenges Encountered in Managing Organizational Conflict?

S/No		Agreement	Disagreement	Total
1	The ability to cope with change is a challenge to conflict mode is a challenge to conflict management	52 (50.33)	3 (5)	55
2	Implementation of effective strategy pose a problem in management of conflict	48 (50.33)	7 (5)	55
3	Reducing excessive behavior is a challenge to management of conflict	51 (50.33)	4 (5)	55
	Total	151	14	165

Source: Researchers' field work tabulation.

Table 4 shows the responses to question 4

H₁: Coping with change and effective implementation of a strategy are the challenges encountered in organisational conflict.

Table 4: Chi-Square Tests from the Frequency Cross Tabulation

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.772(a)	4	.067
Likelihood Ratio	11.645	4	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	.550	1	.458
N of Valid Cases	55		

Table 4 is the output of the computed Chi-Square values from the cross tabulation statistics of observed and expected frequencies with the response options of agree and disagree based on the responses of the research subjects from the selected organisation. Pearson. Chi-Square computed value (X^2_c= 18.772) is greater than the Chi –Square tabulated value (X^2_t = 9.49) with 4 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of alpha (X^2_c = 18.772, p,< .05)

4.2 Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis if the computed Chi- Square value is greater than tabulated Chi-Square value otherwise reject the null hypothesis.

4.2.1 Decision

Since the Pearson Chi- Square computed X^2_c= 18.772 is greater than Chi- Square table value X^2_t = 9.49, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, we conclude that selection of the right conflict mode and effective implementation are the challenges encountered in organisational conflict.

Table 5 shows the responses to question 5.

Table 5: What are the Strategies adopted by Management in Managing Organizational Conflict?

S/No		Agreement	Disagreement	Total
1	Collaboration find a creative solution acceptable to everyone in resolving conflict	45 (49)	10 (6)	55
2	Accommodation strategy wishes to keep the peace or perceives the issue as minor	50 (49)	5 (6)	55
3	Avoidance strategy seeks to put off conflict indefinitely	52 (49)	3 (6)	55
	Total	147	18	165

Source: Researchers' field work tabulation.

Table 6 shows the responses to question 6.

H₁: Collaboration, accommodation and avoidance are the strategies adopted by public sector organizations in managing conflict.

Table 6: Chi-Square Tests from the Frequency Cross Tabulation

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.364(a)	4	.174
Likelihood Ratio	8.163	4	.086
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.885	1	.170
N of Valid Cases	55		

Table 6 is the output of the computed Chi-Square values from the cross tabulation statistics of observed and expected frequencies with the response options of agree and disagree based on the responses of the research subjects from the selected organisation. Pearson Chi-Square computed value (X^2_c= 26.364) is greater than the Chi –Square tabulated value (X^2_t = 9.49) with 4 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of alpha (X^2_c = 26.364, p,< .05)

4.3 Decision Rule

The decision rule is to accept the alternate hypothesis if the computed Chi- Square value is greater than tabulated Chi-Square value otherwise reject the null hypothesis.

4.3.1 Decision

Since the Pearson Chi- Square computed X^2_c= 26.364 is greater than Chi- Square table value X^2_t = 9.49, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, we conclude that collaboration, accommodation and avoidance are the strategies adopted by public sector organizations in managing of conflict.

5. Implications of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Finding of the study include the following
1) Inadequacy of resources, personality differences and communication problems are causes of conflict in the Nigeria public sector.
2) Coping with change and effective implementation of a strategy are the challenges encountered in managing conflict in the Nigerian public sector.
3) Collaboration, accommodation and avoidance are the strategies adopted by Nigerian public sector organizations in management of conflict.

The study concludes that conflict management is the key for organizational growth and survival. Conflict is something that organizations need to deal with because conflict significantly affects employee morale, turnover and litigation, which affects the prosperity of an organization either constructively or destructively.

Arising from the findings, it is recommended that:
1) Managers should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before escalating to unmanageable level;
2) Employees should be educated on how to manage their superiors and subordinates in order to enhance organization harmony and develop a culture of good human relations.
3) Efforts should be made by 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 organization effectiveness

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