

Mediation Tactics for Resolving Conflicts in Trade Unions: A Quantitative Case Study of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Conflict is an inherent part of labor-management relations and has significant implications for

organizations. To manage and resolve conflicts effectively, various mediation tactics have been developed to minimize costs, satisfy interests, build relationships, and control resource expenditures. This research aims to explore the utilization and effectiveness of mediation tactics in resolving conflicts within the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation's (NNPC) Research and Development Department in Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria. The study examines the causes of organizational conflict and investigates the role of mediation in public enterprises. Data were collected using a self-made questionnaire distributed to 100 respondents in the Research and Development Department. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale to measure opinions and perceptions. The research utilized a descriptive approach, and data analysis involved non-parametric statistics, such as frequency distributions and percentage values. The findings indicate that industrial conflicts frequently arise between employers and employees in the Research and Development Department. However, the study reveals that these conflicts can be effectively managed through mediation with the involvement of the workers' representative trade union. Therefore, the research highlights the importance of regular review of labor agreements and encourages effective employer-employee consultation and negotiation to reduce conflicts, promote industrial harmony, and enhance productivity. This study emphasizes the significance of mediation tactics in resolving conflicts within trade unions. It provides insights into the specific context of the NNPC's Research and Development Department and offers recommendations for organizations and stakeholders in industrial relations to foster conflict resolution, industrial harmony, and increased productivity.

Keywords: conflict resolution, mediation tactics, trade unions, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, industrial conflicts, organizational conflict, industrial harmony

1. Introduction

Conflict is a ubiquitous and complex phenomenon that occurs in various spheres of human interaction, including societal groups, government relations, and individual interactions. The workplace is no exception, as conflicts often arise and impact the delicate balance of labor-management relations. Failure to foster cooperation and constructive industrial relations amidst the marvels of modern technology and industrialization can have disastrous consequences (Ubeku, 1985). Conflicts are an inherent and unavoidable aspect of organizational life, stemming from the inherent incompatibilities among different stakeholders, such as managers and staff (Jones, George, & Hill, 2002a). In any organization, conflicts become an unpleasant reality as individuals contend for jobs, resources, power, recognition, and security (Hotepo, Asokere, Abdul-Azeez, & Ajemunigbohun, 2010). Organizational conflict arises when the goals, interests, or values of individuals or groups within an organization clash, hindering their ability to achieve their objectives and giving rise to discord (Coleman, 2003; Francis, 2003; Rahim, 2002; Mayer & Locico, 2010). strategies and the promotion of industrial harmony within trade unions in Nigeria.

1.1 Organizational Conflicts

Organizational conflicts can be categorized into three types, as identified by Jones, Gorge and Hills (2002b). The first type is interpersonal conflict, which occurs between individual

members of an organization due to differences in goals or values. The second type is intra-group conflict, which arises within a specific group, team, or department. The third type is inter-group conflict, involving conflicts between different groups, teams, or departments.

1.1.1 The Causes of Industrial Conflicts

The causes of industrial conflicts can be broadly classified into two categories. Economic causes include issues related to compensation such as wages, bonuses, allowances, working conditions, working hours, unpaid leave, unjust layoffs, and retrenchment. Non-economic factors encompass victimization of workers, ill treatment by staff members, sympathetic strikes, political factors, and indiscipline (Benjamin & Hideaki, 2004a). Mediation is a process employed to facilitate the resolution of disputes or conflicts.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The management of conflict within organizations has been a topic of interest for scholars. Organizational settings often experience various forms of conflict, including conflicts between management and staff, conflicts among staff members, and conflicts arising from differences in values and beliefs due to the diverse nature of modern industrial complexes. Conflict theory and research have traditionally focused on conflict management strategies in relation to individual and team effectiveness and productivity. Public enterprises in Nigeria face significant challenges in effectively managing numerous industrial disputes and establishing a productive and harmonious industrial atmosphere to achieve the objectives for which these enterprises were established.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to explore conflict management practices in public enterprises, with a specific focus on the use of mediation tactics. It aimed to examine the causes of interpersonal conflict within public enterprises and understand the factors contributing to conflicts between individuals within the organization.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the causes of interpersonal conflict in public enterprises?
2. What are the causes of conflict between management and staff in public enterprises?
3. What are the causes of task-oriented conflict in public enterprises?
4. What are the processes involved in the management of conflict in public enterprises using mediation tactics?

1.5 Statement of the Research Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H01): When disputants do not belong to the same regime but have a high level of trust in a mediator, directive mediation strategies are not more effective than non-directive mediation strategies.

Null Hypothesis (H02): When the issues involved in the conflict are intangible and disputants have a high level of trust in a mediator, directive mediation strategies are not more effective than non-directive mediation strategies.

Null Hypothesis (H03): When disputants have a high level of trust in a mediator, do not belong to the same regime, and the issues in dispute are intangible, directive mediation strategies are not more effective than non-directive mediation strategies.

These null hypotheses are tested to explore the effectiveness of directive and non-directive mediation strategies in different scenarios, including situations where disputants do not belong to the same regime, where the issues in dispute are intangible, and where there is a high level of trust in the mediator.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on interpersonal conflicts, management-staff conflicts, and task-oriented conflicts within the Research and Development Department of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation. These conflicts may arise due to differences in goals, values, or responsibilities among individuals or groups within the organization.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Historical Background

The Research and Development Department is a public enterprise in Nigeria and a subsidiary of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation. Public Enterprises in Nigeria are not recent; their origin can be traced to the colonial period. The government intervened in economic management through departmental organizations, which did not involve creating autonomous public bodies. In the alternative, it would grant the license to a private enterprise to manage natural or national monopolies. Laleye (2002) provides insights into the emergence and growth of public enterprises, highlighting their solid appearance after the First World War. According to Laleye, these enterprises were established for various reasons, including managing post-war consequences and addressing the economic crisis of the 1930s. The history of public corporations in Nigeria can be traced back to establishment of specific departmental bureaus responsible for various sectors such as railways, ports, electricity, postal services, natural resources, and oil and gas. These bureaus were initially created to handle non-commercial services on behalf of the colonial government's regular agencies, and this desire to assume responsibility for non-commercial services established public enterprises in Nigeria (Hanson, 1959). Many of Nigeria's earliest and largest public enterprises, including Nigeria Railways, Nigerian Port Authority, National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) and Nigerian Postal and Telecommunication Corporation, were initially established as government departments. Akinsanya (1995) highlighted that the history of public enterprises in Nigeria can be traced back to 1949 when the various regions in Nigeria established regional development institutions. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, a wave of new public enterprises was established in Nigeria, initially in partnership with private interests and later acquired by the government. Some notable examples of these public enterprises include Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigerian Airways,

Nigerian National Shipping Lines, Nigerian Telecommunications, and Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Company. Among these enterprises, the Research and Development Department is a Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation subsidiary (Akinsanya (1995) The history of labor and management relations in Nigeria dates to 1938. According to Ejue (2000a), this period marked the beginning of organized industrial relations in the country. To facilitate negotiations between unions and management, the government established conciliation and arbitration machinery in 1941. The establishment of the Department of Labor in 1942 and the subsequent creation of a specialized Trade Union Division within the department in 1946 further supported the development of labor and management relations in Nigeria (Ejue, 2000b).

2.1.1 Theoretical Consideration

Conflict and its resolution can be viewed from different perspectives, offering unique insights and approaches regarding the Marxist, pluralistic, and unitary perspectives.

2.1.2 Marxist Perspective

Marxist perspective on industrial conflict. Marxist theorists, including Marx and Engels, analyze industrial conflict due to social stratification and class differences inherent in capitalist societies. They argue that conflict and dissatisfaction in the workplace stem from specific interactions shaped by historical forces and relations of production. According to the Marxist viewpoint, industrial conflict represents a struggle between different social classes, namely the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) and the proletariat (working class). This conflict arises when the bourgeoisie imposes its values and interests on the proletariat, leading to a clash of goals and values. The core concept in the Marxist thesis on industrial conflict is that discord emerges when the objectives, interests, or values of individuals or groups within the capitalist system are incompatible, causing hindrance and frustration in achieving their respective goals (Marx & Engels, 1975).

2.1.3 Pluralistic Perspective

The pluralistic perspective perceives an organization as consisting of powerful and divergent sub-groups, namely management and trade unions or employee representatives. It acknowledges that conflicts of interest and disagreements between managers and workers over issues like the distribution of profits are normal and inevitable in organizational settings. The pluralistic perspective recognizes that conflicts can arise due to managers' and workers' differing interests and objectives (Benjamin & Hideaki, 2004b).

2.1.4 Unitary Perspective

The unitary perspective on conflict in organizations views the organization as an integrated and harmonious system where all members, including management and staff, share the same objectives, interests, and purposes. It perceives the organization as one big family working together towards shared mutual goals (Richard, 1980).

2.1.5 The Concept of Mediation

Mediation is a well-established and widely used method of conflict resolution. When applied effectively, it can help manage and resolve conflicts. Mediation involves the intervention of a neutral third party, acceptable to all parties involved in the conflict. The mediator facilitates communication and negotiation between the disputing parties to reach a mutually agreeable settlement (Bercovitch & Houston, 2000). The concept of mediation emphasizes several key characteristics that contribute to its effectiveness. When the mediator is acceptable to all sides, it increases the likelihood of their participation and willingness to engage in the mediation process (Mareschal, 2002).

3. Methodology

3.1 Population of the Study

The study was conducted in Port Harcourt River State in Nigeria, and the study population consists of individuals from the Research and Development Department of a Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation subsidiary. The population includes trade union executives, management staff, and non-management staff. Specifically, the population is composed of 25 trade union executives, 30 management staff, and 45 non-management staff, totaling 100 people.

3.1.1 Approval and Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted in Port Harcourt, River State in Nigeria, and the School of Business and Human Resources Management at the National Open University of Nigeria, Port Harcourt Study Center, approved and allowed the researchers to conduct the research. The researchers adhere to ethical guidelines that include obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and privacy, minimizing potential risks or harm to participants.

3.1.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where researchers purposefully select participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research purpose. However, researchers aim to gain in-depth insights from a specific group that meets their research criteria. The purposive sampling technique was adopted due to the small population size and the homogeneity of the group. According to Ali (2006a), purpose sampling suits small, homogeneous populations where all individuals meet the research criteria and are selected accordingly. Based on this sampling approach, the entire population of the study, which consists of 100 people, was included as the sample. Each trade union executive, management staff, and non-management staff from the Research and Development Department of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation subsidiary was selected to participate in the study.

3.2 Data Collection

The questionnaire used for data collection focused on assessing the mediation tactics and strategies for resolving conflicts in a trade union within the Research and Development

Department, a Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation subsidiary. The instrument used was Instrument for Assessing the Mediation Tactic (Strategy) in Resolving Conflict in Trade Union (IAMTRCTU) and the Likert rating scale. The questionnaire comprises 42 items and utilizes a four-point modified Likert rating scale.

Table 1. Descriptions of Likert rating scale

Scale	Description
1	Strongly Disagreed
2	Disagreed
3	Agreed
4	Strongly Agreed

Questionnaire Sections include A and B sections where section A contains the Socioeconomic background of the respondents regarding their age, gender, educational level, job position, years of experience, etc. Section B focuses on the respondent's perception of the best approach to industrial conflict management and industrial harmony within their organization. It may include questions about their views on mediation tactics, strategies, and approaches to resolving conflicts within the trade union.

3.3 Reliability and Validity

To validate the instrument, the instrument, which the researcher drafted, was given to the project supervisors and other experts on organizational behavior with research interest in organizational conflict management. The observations and comments of the supervisor and the two experts were noted in drafting the final questionnaire. Those who validated the instrument do so in terms of clarity, relevance to the research questions, and wordings of the instrument. Thus, the instrument's validation basis was face and content validity. Ali (2006b) states that validity is the measure of the veracity of the instrument measuring what it purports to measure. Thus, the type of validity adopted is construct validity because the questionnaire is designed to assess the concept of organizational conflict and the mediation Tactic (strategy) used to resolve conflict (Asika, 2009).

The test-pretest method is adopted to determine the reliability of the instrument. The validated instrument is administered to a pilot study group of twenty (20) people, who are: 8 trade union executives, 6 management staff, and 6 non-management staff. After two weeks of administering the questionnaire, the same questionnaire was sent to the pilot group, and the two sets of questionnaires were analyzed and correlated using the Pearson product-moment correlation. Therefore, the correlation coefficient measures the strength of the association between two variables. Additionally, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient measures the strength of the linear association between variables. Thus, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient only measures Linear relationships. Therefore, a correlation of zero does not mean zero relationships between two variables; instead, it means zero linear relationships. The typical formula for computing a product-moment correlation coefficient (r) is below.

$$r = \frac{\Sigma(xy)}{\sqrt{[(\Sigma x^2) \times (\Sigma y^2)]}}$$

Where Σ = the symbol of summation

$X = x_i - \bar{x}$, x_i is the x value for observation i . Thus, \bar{x} is the mean x value. $Y = y_i - \bar{y}$, y_i is the y value for observation i , and \bar{y} is the mean y value. The calculated reliability coefficient was 0.75, which indicates that there is consistency in the responses of the respondents in the pilot study. The researchers calculated the reliability coefficient of the instrument to be 0.75. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 indicates a moderate level of consistency in the respondents' responses in the pilot study.

Reliability refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument consistently produces similar results when used repeatedly under the same conditions. In this case, the test-retest method assessed the instrument's reliability. The questionnaire was administered twice to a pilot study group, with a two-week interval between administrations. The responses from the two questionnaires were then analyzed and correlated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. A correlation coefficient of 0.75 suggests a moderate positive linear relationship between the measured variables. This level of reliability indicates a reasonable degree of consistency in the respondents' answers, providing some confidence in the instrument's ability to measure the intended constructs.

Validity is another crucial consideration, ensuring the instrument accurately measures the intended constructs. Therefore, content validity was established by obtaining feedback from supervisors and experts in the field and efforts to ensure the questionnaire is clear, relevant, and aligned with the research objectives.

3.4 Procedure for Data Collection

The procedure for the study uses a questionnaire. It is administered by the researchers and trained researcher assistants. The data collection method utilized a questionnaire and was designed using a modified Likert rating scale, typically involving respondents indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements using a numerical scale and it was a four-point Likert scale. The researchers trained three research assistants to assist in administering the questionnaire. Each research assistant was assigned to a specific group and the test aimed to assess their understanding of the questionnaire and ability to administer it effectively. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, who filled them out according to the instructions provided. All 100 questionnaires distributed to the respondents were filled in and returned, resulting in a 100% response rate.

3.5 Data Analysis

The questionnaire was analyzed using mean statistics in respect of the research questions. Any response 2.5 and above is accepted, while any means from 2.49 and below were rejected. Thus, to determine the criteria of acceptance or rejection, the weighted numbers are added and divided by the number of the response Thus is shown as $4+3+2+1 = 10$. $10 \div 4 = 2.5$.

To test the hypothesis, the z-score statistics are used. These statistics are adopted because these statistics are usually used to compare differences in phenomena. The standard normal distribution is a particular case of the normal distribution. The distribution occurs when a standard random variable has a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. However, a normal random variable of a standard normal distribution is a standard score or a z-score. The following equation can transform every standard random variable x into a z-score.

Where x = average mean of responses

SD = standard Deviation (σ)

N = number of respondents

And the formula for calculating the standard.

Deviation SD or σ is:

$$Z = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{SD_1 + SD_2}{N}}}$$

$$SD(\sigma) = \frac{\sum(\bar{x}_1 - N)^2}{N}$$

Where x_1 = average means of response

μ = means of the x v values of the response

N = number of the respondent.

3.6 Hypothesis Testing

In hypothesis testing, we use inferential statistics because it allows us to measure behavior in samples to learn more about the behavior in populations that are often too large or inaccessible.

We begin by stating the value of a sample mean in a null hypothesis which we presume is true. The null hypothesis (H_0), stated as the null, is a statement about a sample parameter, such as the sample mean, that is assumed to be true. The null hypothesis is a starting point. We will test whether the value stated in the null hypothesis is likely valid. However, we are testing the null hypothesis because we think it is wrong. We state what is wrong with the null hypothesis in an alternative hypothesis.

An alternative hypothesis (H1) is a statement that directly contradicts a null hypothesis by stating that the actual value of a sample parameter is less than (<), greater than (>). So, the alternative hypothesis reports what we perceived as inaccurate about the null hypothesis, which is needed for step two. We collect data to show that the null hypothesis is invalid based on the likelihood of selecting a sample mean from a population. So, in setting the criteria for a decision, we state the significance level for the test. Therefore, the likelihood or level of significance is typically set at 5% in behavioral research studies. However, the significance level indicates a criterion regarding judgment on a decision is made about the value mentioned in the null hypothesis. Additionally, the criterion is the probability of obtaining a statistical measure in a sample if the value stated in the null hypothesis was actual. Therefore, the probability of obtaining a sample mean is less than 5%.

We used the value of the test statistic to decide on the null hypothesis. Therefore, given that the value stated in the null hypothesis is actual, the decision upon the probability of obtaining a sample mean. If the probability of obtaining a sample mean is less than 5% when the null hypothesis is true, then the decision is to reject the null hypothesis. If the probability of obtaining a sample mean is greater than 5% when the null hypothesis is true, then the decision is to retain the null hypothesis.

The probability of obtaining a sample mean shows that the value reported in the null hypothesis is accurate and is mentioned by the p-value. The p-value is a probability: It varies between 0 and 1 and can never be negative. We compare the p-value to the criteria we set in step two to decide. The p-value for obtaining a sample outcome is compared to the significance level. Significance, or statistical significance, describes a decision concerning a value stated in the null hypothesis. When the null hypothesis is rejected, we reach significance. When the null hypothesis is retained, we fail to reach significance.

4. Results

4.1 Description of Statistics

Table 2. Causes of Interpersonal Conflicts in Research and Development Department, a Subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Trade Union

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Rank	Remarks
Interpersonal conflict occurs when subordinates want to boss his superior	28 (112)	38 (114)	22 (44)	25 (25)	2.63 3	Accepted
Interpersonal conflict occurs when an individual is being egocentric	31 (124)	18 (54)	20 (40)	43(43)	2.33 5	Rejected
Interpersonal conflict occurs when employees are intolerable to others in organization	16 (64)	18 (54)	32 (64)	2.04	7	Rejected
Interpersonal conflict occurs when employee imposes their social value system on others in organization	49 (196)	35 (105)	12 (24)	3.05	1	Accepted
Interpersonal conflict occurs when employees impose their religious value system on others	26 (104)	40 (120)	32 (64)	2.70	2	Accepted
Interpersonal conflict occurs as a result of unclear job description	28 (112)	38 (114)	20 (40)	2.61	4	Accepted
Interpersonal conflict occurs as a result of department disagreements	13 (52)	25 (75)	36 (62)	2.07	6	Rejected
Grand Means μ				2.49		

Table 2 shows that out of 7 items, 4 were accepted with a mean above the criterion of rejection. The table shows that in item 1, which is on whether interpersonal conflicts occur when subordinates want to boss over their superiors, the mean response of the respondents is 2.63, which is above the criterion mean of rejection. Consequently, it is accepted that interpersonal conflict occurs in an organization when subordinates boss over his superior. Item 4, which is whether interpersonal conflict occurs when employee imposes their social values system on others in the organization, the mean response of the respondents is 3.05, which is above the criterion mean of rejection, and thus, it is accepted that employee imposes their social values on others in the organization and this causes interpersonal conflicts. In item 5, the mean response of respondents is 2.70, which is above the criterion mean of rejection.

Table 2 shows that in item 6, the mean response of the respondents is in 2.61, which is above the criterion mean of rejection. So, it is accepted that unclear job description causes interpersonal conflict in an organization. It shows that items 2, 3, and 7 have mean scores below the criterion mean of rejection, so the items are rejected. In item 2, whether the

interpersonal conflict is caused by an individual being egocentric, the mean response is 2.33, below the criterion mean of acceptance. Consequently, it is rejected that egocentrism causes interpersonal conflicts.

In item 3, on whether interpersonal conflict occurs when employees are intolerable to others in the organization, the mean response of the respondents is 2.04, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance; consequently, the statement in item 3 is rejected. In item 7, which is whether interpersonal conflict occurs as a result of departmental disagreement, the mean response of the respondents is 2.07, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance. Consequently, a statement in item 7 needs to be accepted.

Table 3. Causes of Management-Employee Conflict in Research and Development Department, a Subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Trade Union

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Xi	Rank	Remark
Management-employee conflict occurs over absence of good work facilities	42 (168)	28 (84)	19 (38)	23 (23)	2.3 0	2	Accepted
Management employee conflict occurs over the absence of good work environment	21 (84)	22 (66)	40 (80)	29 (29)	2.3 1	6	Rejected
Management employee conflict occurs over payment of salary	48 (192)	25 (75)	21 (42)	29 (18)	2.9 2	1	Accepted
Management employee conflict occurs over unfair treatment	24 (96)	25 (75)	44 (88)	19 (19)	2.4 8	5	Rejected
Management employee conflict occurs over policy on redundancy/retirement	30 (120)	35 (105)	21 (42)	26 (26)	2.6 2	4	Accepted
Management employee conflict occurs over promotion and appointment matter	34 (136)	37 (111)	20 (40)	21 (21)	2.7 5	3	Accepted
Management employee conflict occurs over goals and policy objective	18 (72)	23 (69)	44 (88)	27 (27)	2.2 9	7	Rejected
Grand Mean – μ						2.6 0	

Table 3 shows that out of 7 items, 4 items were accepted; these items have a mean response above the criterion means of rejection. Item 1 concerns whether management-employee conflict occurs over the absence of good work facilities. The mean response of the respondents is 2.80, which is above the criterion mean of rejection. Item 3, which is on whether management-employee conflict occurs over payment of salaries, the mean response is 2.92, which is above the criterion mean of rejection; consequently, it is accepted that salary matters, most often, results in management-employee conflict. Item 5, which is on whether management employee conflict occurs due to policy on redundancy and retirement, the mean response of the respondents is 2.62, which is above the criterion means of rejection. It is accepted that management-employee conflict is often caused by organizational policy on redundancy and retirement. Item 6, which is on whether management-employee conflict occurs over promotion and appointment matters, the mean response of the respondents is 2.75,

which is above the criterion mean of rejection.

Table 4. Causes of Management-Employee Conflict in Research and Development Department, a Subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Trade Union.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Xi	Rank	Remarks
Task oriented conflict occur when there is no clear job description	50 (200)	25 (75)	17 (34)	20 (20)	2.94	1	Accepted
Task oriented conflict occur when jobs and responsibilities overlap	41 (164)	33 (99)	20 (40)	18 (18)	2.87	2	Accepted
Task oriented conflict occur when units or departments scramble for functions	20 (80)	18 (54)	46 (92)	28 (28)	2.27	5	Rejected
Task oriented conflict occurs because of desire of people to work	19 (76)	13 (39)	44 (88)	28 (28)	2.06	7	Rejected
Task oriented conflict occurs as a result of poor job design	43 (172)	30 (90)	16 (32)	23 (23)	2.83	3	Accepted
Task oriented conflict occur as a result of poor communication system	29 (116)	17 (51)	44 (88)	24 (24)	2.49	4	Rejected
Task oriented conflict is caused by the personality style of the employee	20 (80)	20 (60)	38 (76)	34 (34)	2.23	6	Rejected
Grand Mean – μ						2.53	

Table 4 shows that out of 7 items as identified as possible causes of task-oriented conflict in the Research and Development Department, a subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, 3 items 1, 2, and (5) were accepted as these items having means response above the criterion mean of rejection. The table shows that in item 1, which is on whether task-oriented conflicts occur when there is no clear job description, the mean response of the respondents and, consequently, the statement that task-oriented conflicts occur when there is no clear job description is accepted. In item 2, which is on whether task-oriented conflicts occur when jobs and responsibilities overlap, the mean response of the respondents is 2.87, which is above the criterion mean of rejection.

In item 5, which is on whether task-oriented conflict occurs because of poor job design, the mean response of the respondent is 2.83. Item 3, which is on whether task-oriented conflict occurs when units or departments scramble for function, the mean response of the respondents for this statement is 2.27, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance and, consequently, the statement that task-oriented conflict occurs when units or departments scramble for the function is rejected. In item 4, which is on whether task-oriented conflict occurs because of the desire of people to work, the mean response of the respondents is 2.06, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance. Item 6, which is on whether task-oriented conflict occurs because of poor communication system, the mean response of the respondents is 2.49, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance and, consequently, the statement that task-oriented conflicts occur because of poor communication system is rejected. Item 7 ranks second to last, with a mean response of respondents of 2.23.

Table 5. The Tactics of Mediation in Resolving Interpersonal Conflict in Research and Development Department, a Subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Trade Union

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Xi	Rank	Remarks
Management emphasizes accommodating one another in resolving interpersonal conflict	36 (144)	40 (120)	20 (40)	19 (19)	2.88	2	Accepted
Management ensures the most objective and fair resolution of interpersonal conflict without any fear or favor to both sides	45 (180)	44 (132)	15 (30)	13 (13)	3.27	1	Accepted
Management looks for ways to maintain an ongoing and future relationship rather than apportioning blame for actions in the past in resolving interpersonal conflict	25 (100)	24 (72)	44 (88)	19 (19)	2.49	5	Rejected
Management adopts diversity management to avoid interpersonal conflict	24 (96)	24 (72)	39 (78)	25 (25)	2.42	6	Rejected
Management tends to effect behavioral change to reduce interpersonal conflict	21 (84)	25 (75)	38 (76)	28 (28)	2.35	7	Rejected
Management facilitate and promotes the option of forgiveness in resolving interpersonal conflict	32 (128)	39 (117)	26 (52)	15 (5)	2.79	4	Accepted
Management help to clear the misunderstanding at a relatively early stage in resolving interpersonal conflict	39 (156)	33 (99)	19 (38)	28 (28)	2.87	3	Accepted

Table 5 shows that out of 7 items as identified as possible tactics of mediation in resolving interpersonal conflict in the Research and Development Department, a subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, 4 items 1, 2, 6, and 7 were accepted as these items having means response above the criterion mean of rejection. Item 1, which is on management, emphasizes accommodating one another in resolving interpersonal conflict; the mean response of the respondents is 2.88 above the criterion mean of rejection. In item 2, which is on management ensuring the most objective and fair resolution of interpersonal conflict without any fear or favor to both sides, the mean response of the respondents is 3.27, which is above the criterion mean of rejection and consequently, the statement that management ensures that most objective and fair resolution of interpersonal conflict is accepted.

Item 7, which is on management help to clear the misunderstanding at a relatively early stage in resolving interpersonal conflict, the mean response of the respondent is 2.87, and this item ranks third among the items identified in the mediation tactics in resolving interpersonal conflict. Because the mean response of the respondents is above the criterion mean of rejection, the statement that management helps to clear the misunderstanding at a relatively early stage in resolving interpersonal conflict is accepted. Item 6, which is a management facilitates and promotes the option of forgiveness in resolving interpersonal conflict, the mean response of the respondents for this statement is 2.79, which is above the criterion

means of rejection, and consequently, the statement that management facilitates and promotes the option of forgiveness in resolving interpersonal conflict is accepted.

Item 3, which is on management looking for ways to maintain an ongoing and future relationship rather than apportioning blame for actions in the past in resolving interpersonal conflict, the mean response of the respondent is 2.49, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance. The statement is rejected, implying that management looks for ways to maintain an ongoing and future relationship rather than apportioning blame for actions in the past.

Item 4, which is management adopts diversity management to avoid interpersonal conflict, the mean response of the respondents is 2.42, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance, and consequently, the statement that management adopts diversity management to avoid interpersonal conflict is rejected. Item 5 has a mean response of respondents of 2.35.

Table 6 shows the Tactics of Mediation in Resolving Management-employee Conflict in Research and Development Department, a Subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Trade Union

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Xi	Rank	Remarks	
Management adopts dialogue to avoid management-employees conflict	43 (172)	42 (126)	20 (40)	7 (7)	3.08	1	Accepted	
Management adopts problem solving to resolve management-employee conflict	21 (84)	23 (69)	32 (64)	36 (36)	2.26	7	Rejected	
Management adopts compromise in resolving management employees conflict	22 (88)	36 (108)	29 (58)	25 (25)	2.49	5	Rejected	
Management involves an exchange of information about priorities and preferences in resolving management-employee conflict	29 (116)	21 (63)	18 (36)	44 (44)	2.31	6	Rejected	
Management promotes information exchange and a deeper understanding of issues, needs, interests and concerns in resolving management –employee conflicts	37 (148)	43 (129)	20 (40)	12 (12)	2.94	3	Accepted	
Management improve communication in resolving management-employee conflict	42 (168)	38 (114)	22 (44)	10 (10)	3.00	2	Accepted	
Management adopts rebuilding damaged working relationships, facilitating development of new ones and promoting reconciliation in resolving management-employee conflict	26 (104)	38 (114)	33 (66)	15 (15)	2.67	4	Accepted	
Grand mean μ							2.68	

Table 6 shows that out of 7 items, 4 items 1, 5, 6, and 7 were accepted; these items have a mean response above the criterion means of rejection. Item 1 is on whether management adopts dialogue to avoid management-employee conflict. The mean response of the

respondents is 3.08, which is above the criterion mean of rejection. Item 6, whether management improves communication in resolving management-employee conflict, the mean response is 3.00, above the criterion mean of rejection. Item 5, which is on whether management promotes information exchange and a deeper understanding of issue needs, interests, and concerns in resolving management-employee conflicts, the mean response of the respondents is 2.94, which is above the criterion means of rejection, and consequently, it is accepted. Item 7, which is on whether management adopts rebuilding damaged working relationships, facilitating the development of new ones, and promoting reconciliation in resolving management-employee conflict, the mean response of the respondents is 2.67. The table shows that items 2, 3, and 4 have mean responses below the criterion means of acceptance and consequently rejected. In item 3, which is on whether management adopts compromise in resolving management-employee conflict, the mean response of the respondents is 2.49, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance. Consequently, it is not accepted. In item 4, which is on whether management involves exchanging information about priorities and preferences in resolving management-employee conflict, the mean response of the respondents is 2.31, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance.

Item 2, whether management adopts problem-solving to resolve management-employee conflict, the mean response of the respondents is 2.26.

Table 7 show the Tactics of Mediation in Resolving Task-oriented Conflict in Research and Development Department, a Subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Trade Union

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Xi	Rank	Remarks
Management tends to expand resources to resolving task-oriented conflict	31 (124)	41 (123)	23 (46)	16 (16)	2.76	2	Accepted
Management effect a structural change in resolving task-oriented conflict	29 (116)	40 (120)	28 (56)	15 (15)	2.74	3	Accepted
Management helps the parties to understand each other's positives in resolving task-oriented conflict	22 (88)	27 (81)	26 (52)	37 (37)	2.30	6	Rejected
Management tends to model the attitude and behaviors of the parties in resolving task-oriented conflicts	24 (96)	15 (45)	37 (74)	36 (36)	2.24	7	Rejected
Management tends to give a clear job description in resolving task-oriented conflict	39 (156)	43 (129)	20 (40)	10 (10)	2.99	1	Accepted
Management effect a progressing grievance in a less confrontational manner in resolving task-oriented conflict	29 (116)	22 (66)	20 (40)	41 (41)	2.34	5	Rejected
Management tends to avoid the overlapping of jobs and responsibilities in resolving task-oriented conflict	25 (100)	36 (108)	31 (62)	20 (20)	2.59	4	Accepted
Grand Mean - μ					2.57		

Table 7 shows that out of 7 items as identified as possible tactics of mediation in resolving task-oriented conflict in the Research and Development Department, a subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, 4 items 1, 2, 5, and 7 were accepted as these items have means response above the criterion means of rejection. The table shows that in item 1, which is on management tends to expand resources to resolving task-oriented conflict, the mean response of the respondents is 2.76, which is above the criterion mean of rejection, and, consequently, the statement that management tends to expand resources to resolving task-oriented conflict is accepted. Item 2, which is on the management effect of a structural change in resolving task-oriented conflict, the mean response of the respondents is 2.74, which is above the criterion mean of rejection. Consequently, the statement that management affects a structural change in resolving task-oriented conflict is accepted. Item 5, which is on management, tends to give a clear job description in resolving task-oriented conflict; the mean response of the respondent is 2.99.

Item 7, which is on management tends to avoid the overlapping of jobs and responsibilities in resolving task-oriented conflict, the mean response of the respondent is 2.59, which is below the criterion mean of rejection and, consequently, the statement that management tends to avoid the overlapping of jobs and responsibilities in resolving task-oriented conflict is accepted.

Items 3, 4, and 6 have mean responses below the criterion means of acceptance and consequently rejected. Item 3, which is on whether management helps the parties to understand each other's positions in resolving task-oriented conflict, the mean response of the respondent is 2.30, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance. Therefore, the statement is rejected, and it implies that management helps the parties understand each other's position in resolving conflict. Item 4, which is on management tends to model the attitude and behaviors of the parties in resolving task-oriented conflict, the mean response of the respondents is 2.24, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance, and consequently, the statement that management tends to model the attitude and behaviors of the parties in parties in resolving task-oriented conflict is rejected. Item 6 ranks fifth, and it has a mean response of respondents of 2.34, which is below the criterion mean of acceptance, and it is therefore rejected.

4.3 Test of Hypothesis 1

H₀: It indicates that there is no significant difference in the tactics of mediation in resolving management–employee conflicts and tactics of mediation in resolving task-oriented conflict.

Table 8. X-score calculation for test of hypothesis 1

Variables	μ	SD	Diff (N)	Cal Z	Crit Z	Decision
Management-employee conflict	2.68	0.31			1.96	Accepted
Task oriented conflict	2.57	0.21	112	1.54		

Table 8 shows the calculated z-score and standard deviation for the test of hypothesis 1. The

mean response of management employee conflict is 2.68. Similarly, the task-oriented conflict is 2.49. The standard deviation (SD) for the management-employee conflict is 0.31, while that of task-oriented conflict is 0.26. The computed z-score is 1.54, the critical table value is 1.96, and the number of respondents is 112. Since the computed z-score of 1.54 is less than the Z critical table value of 1.96, we accept the null hypothesis. In conclusion, the tactics of mediation in resolving management-employee conflict and those of mediation in resolving task-oriented conflict are the same.

4.4 Test of Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant difference between the tactic of mediation in resolving interpersonal conflicts and that of the tactics of mediation in resolving task-oriented conflicts.

Table 9. X-score calculation for test of hypothesis 2

Variables	μ	SD	Diff (N)	Cal Z	Crit Z	Decision
Interpersonal conflict	2.71	0.28			1.96	Rejected
Task oriented conflict	2.57	0.26	112	2.02		

Table 9 shows the calculated Z score and standard deviation for the test of hypothesis 2. The mean response to interpersonal conflict is 2.71, while the mean response of the task-oriented conflict is 2.57. The Standard Deviation (SD) for interpersonal conflict is 0.28, while that of task-oriented conflict is 0.26. The computer z-score is 2.02, the critical table value is 1.96, and the number of respondents is 112. Since the computed z-score of 2.02 is greater than the Z critical table value of 1.96, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference between the tactics of mediation in resolving interpersonal conflicts and that of the tactics of mediation in resolving task-oriented conflicts.

5. Discussion of Finding

The study reveals that interpersonal conflict is a common form of conflict in the Research and Development Department, a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

The study's findings corroborate Mayer and Louw (2009) that conflict may arise from situations in which beliefs and values differ in an organization and that values orientation are patterns of thoughts and actions. Interpersonal conflicts include when an employee imposes their social value system on others, an employee imposes their religious value system on others, or subordinates want to boss over their superior because of the unclear job description. The conflict experienced by people touched on core values of honesty, transparency, and truth, which he claimed for himself and the organization and its employees. However, these values were not linked to individual identity but rather to the organizational system or work-related organizational identity aspects, which he viewed as the base of the organization's corporate identity. The study also reveals that management tends to expand an organization's resource base, thereby reducing task-oriented conflict, and is in line with the observation of De Dreu and Weingart (2003) that disputes in the distribution and allocation of resources cause task-oriented conflict. Slabbert (2004) pointed out that most organizations generally display

an inability to manage conflict constructively, and an organization that cannot effectively manage conflict not only escalate conflict, but such an organization is a broader threat of entropy.

5.1 Limitation

The study primarily employs quantitative methods for data analysis, such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. While these techniques provide valuable insights into the relationships among variables, they may need to capture the nuances and intricacies of trade union conflicts fully. Supplementing the quantitative analysis with qualitative methods, such as interviews, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the limitations.

6. Conclusion

Organizational conflict is multidimensional; it can take the form of personality make, management-employee conflict. In whatever form it takes, conflict in an organization is generic. Interpersonal conflict has been a dominant conflict, followed by management-employee conflict. Resolving the management-employee conflict has been quite successful and satisfactory to the employee. In comparison, interpersonal conflict has been a daunting problem, with most employees not satisfied with the measures adopted to manage it. Conflicts are part of human nature, and it is essential to study them for theoretical purposes and organizational practice. Conflict analysis and its resolutions are vital in private, public, and political organizations, as well as in judicial and work disputes, military operations, and many other institutions. The results from the study indicate that the primary cause of organizational conflicts is a lack of resources. To manage and resolve conflicts, they have tried to develop procedures that improve relationships, minimize suffering, and control unnecessary expenditures of emotional and physical energy or tangible resources. Mediation is one of the oldest and most common conflict resolution mechanisms. When applied correctly, it can help manage or settle a conflict. If an organization is to achieve its goals, managers must be able to resolve conflicts.

6.1 Recommendations

Managers should be taught basic skills of diversity management to improve their skill of resolving value-oriented conflict in an organization. There should be an open communication system and regular exchange of ideas, thoughts, and feelings on conflict. The personality test should be part of the recruitment and selection test so that people with the right personality makeup are engaged, and in doing job analysis and description, the personality profile of the individual to hold the position should be determined.

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