



Conflict management strategies and perceived organizational commitment in some manufacturing companies in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Conflict, in some forms and degrees, is part and parcel of virtually every facet of human life. Workplace conflict is varied, pervasive, and costly to the organization in many ways. Conflict management strategy has an important place in the study of organizational commitment. The commitment of the workers of an organization is a very important factor for an organization to be successful. This research examined the influence of conflict management strategies on perceived organizational commitment. Subjects for the study were 253 respondents which comprised 198 males and 55 females. Three hypotheses were tested and the findings of the study revealed that there was a joint effect of yielding and problem-solving on organizational commitment $\{F(2,250) = 7.857; R = .243, R^2 = .059, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.052; P < .05\}$. The result also showed that the joint effect of problem-solving, compromising, avoiding, forcing and yielding was significant $\{F(5,247) = 7.514; R = .363, R^2 = .132, \text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.114; P < .05\}$. Lastly, the result also showed that there was no significant difference in the organizational commitment of male and female respondents $\{t(251) = 1.96; p > .05\}$. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that managers should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before it escalates to unmanageable levels. Hence, organizations should take time to analyze the source, type and amount of conflict before making a decision on which strategy to adopt for the effective management of the conflict.

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Introduction

Conflict, in some forms and degrees, is part and parcel of virtually every facet of human life. Generally people tend to regard conflict as an undesirable component of human life. The influence of conflict management on an organization's success cannot be overlooked; the commitment of an organization's staff is dependent on various factors one of which is on how organizational conflicts are effectively and efficiently managed. Conflict management strategy has an important place in the study of organizational commitment. The commitment of staff of an organization is a very important factor for an organization to be successful. Organizational commitment has been studied in the public, private, and non-profit sector, and more recently internationally. Early research focused on defining the concept of organization commitment and current research continues to examine organizational commitment through two popular approaches, commitment-related attitudes and commitment-related behaviors. A variety of antecedents and outcomes have been identified in the past thirty years (Angle and Perry, 1981; Mowday et al 1979; Hall, 1977). Commitment occurs when a worker has identified emotionally an idea of his organization, which is consistent with his/her own values and aspirations.

Multiple definitions of organizational commitment are found in the literature. Bateman and Strasser (1984) defined it as "multidimensional in nature, involving an employee's loyalty to the organization, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, degree of goal and value congruency with the organization, and desire to maintain membership". Mowday,

Steers, and Porter (1979) identified commitment-related attitudes and commitment-related behaviors. Porter et al. (1974) discussed the three major components of organizational commitment as being "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership". Sheldon (1971) defines commitment as being a positive evaluation of the organization and the organization's goals. According to Buchanan (1974) most scholars define commitment as being a bond between an individual (the employee) and the organization (the employer). Meyer and Allen (1991) and Dunham et al (1994) identified three types of commitment; affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Normative commitment is a relatively new aspect of organizational commitment having been defined by Bolon in 1993. Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with his organization and goals (Mowday et al, 1997, Meyer and Allen, 1993). Mowday et al (1979) further stated that affective communication is "when the employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals in order to maintain membership to facilitate the goal". Meyer and Allen (1997) emphasized that employees retain membership out of choice and this is their commitment to the organization. Continuance commitment is the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with "nontransferable" investments. Nontransferable investments

include things such as retirement, relationships with other employees, or things that are special to the organization (Reichers, 1985). Continuance commitment also includes factors such as years of employment or benefits that the employee may receive that are unique to the organization (Reichers, 1985). Meyer and Allen (1997) further explained that employees who share continuance commitment with their employer often find it very difficult to leave the organization. Normative commitment (Bolon, 1993) is the commitment that a person believes he/she has to the organization or the feeling of obligation to their workplace. In 1982, Weiner discusses normative commitment as being a "generalized value of loyalty and duty". Meyer and Allen (1991) purported this type of commitment prior to Bolon's definition, with their definition of normative commitment being "a feeling of obligation". It is argued that normative commitment is only natural due to the way we are raised in the society. Normative commitment can be explained by other commitments such as marriage, family, religion, etc. therefore when it comes to one's commitment to their place of employment they often feel like they have a moral obligation to the organization (Wiener, 1982).

Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993) say that the three types of commitment are a psychological state "that either characterizes the employees' relationship with the organization or has the implications to affect whether the employee will continue with the organization". The findings of the research by Meyer et al (1993) showed that those employees with a strong affective commitment will remain with an organization because they want to, those with a strong continuance commitment remain because they have to, and those with a normative commitment remain because they feel that they have to. Meyer & Allen (1997) defined a committed employee as being one who "stays with an organization, attends work regularly, puts in a full day and more, protects corporate assets, and believes in the organizational goals". This employee positively contributes to the organization because of its commitment to the organization. Generally, workers commitment reflects the degree to which workers of an organization identifies with an organization and is committed to its goals.

Thomas (2000) stated that the study of organization conflict is not new. Economists, psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists have been carrying out different studies on the topic for many decades. In recent times, however, management scholars have started to pay more attention to the study of conflict from management perspective. Conflicts no doubts are normal and natural consequences of human interaction in organizational settings, but they are also complex.

Ubeku (1993) states that conflict may occur for multiple reasons, for example: internal stress coming from a person and overlapping into the workplace, incompatible expectation among workers and work groups, differences over task procedures, values, orientations and desired outcomes, increasing interdependencies, work load, external pressures and crises. In addition to factors which are liable for conflicts within an organization are scarcity of resources, disagreement over resources, different attitudes, values, or perception, and many others.

Otite and Albery (1999) have argued that conflict is a fact of life and could bring positive changes or negative consequences in an organization. Every organization is bound to experience one form of conflict or the other. What makes an organization an ideal polity is the extent to which divergent

views are accommodated. The Chinese see conflict as an opportunity to bring about change. Change is the only permanent thing in life. Conflict management is what we are doing when we identify and deal with conflict in a reasonable manner. Therefore conflict management can be defined as the application of strategies to resolve incompatible objectives in a possible manner. Traditionally, conflict was seen as negative, however, as observed by Borisoff and Victor (1989), the benefits of dealing with conflicts has been recognised and acknowledged. Conflict management is a process of planning to avoid conflicts where possible and organizing to resolve where it does happen, as rapidly and as smoothly as possible.

Conflict can be managed through various strategies; some of the strategies are investigated in the course of this study. The Dutch test for conflict handling (Dutch) designed by Van De Vliert (1997) looks at five strategies which can be used to manage conflict in organizations effectively and efficiently. These are problem solving, forcing, yielding, avoiding, and compromising. This would be discussed appropriately in this paper.

Statement of the problem

Organizational commitment persists as a primary variable of interest in the study of employment, organizations, and allied fields. Organizational commitment remains a perennial topic for management scholars.

Workplace conflict is varied, pervasive, and costly to the organization in many ways, and organizational conflict management is a relatively new concept outside the scope of company exposure to legal liability and litigation. Organizations adopt strategies to tackle organizational conflicts, some of the strategies adopted by the organizations are greatly dissatisfying to the members of staff, and this in turn lead to low organizational commitment of the workers which inevitably result in high labor turnover, low productivity, low employee morale, increase in the cost of running the organization, greater job dissatisfaction, and so many other factors causing significant financial loss.

Research Hypotheses

- ❖ Problem-solving strategy will more likely predict organizational commitment than yielding strategy.
- ❖ All the strategies will jointly and independently predict organizational commitment.
- ❖ There will be a significant difference between gender and organizational commitment.

Theoretical framework and literature review

Theoretical Framework

Industrial relations scholars have described three major theoretical perspectives or frameworks, which contrast in their understanding and analyses of workplace relations. The three views are generally known as unitarism, pluralist and radical. Each offers a particular perception of workplace relations.

Unitary Theory

In unitarism, the organization is perceived as an integrated and harmonious whole with the idea of "one happy family", where management and other members of the staff all share a common purpose, emphasizing mutual cooperation. Furthermore, unitarism has a paternalistic approach where it demands loyalty of all employees. Consequently, trade unions are deemed as unnecessary since the loyalty between employees and organizations are considered mutually exclusive, where there can't be two sides of industry. Conflict is perceived as

disruptive and the pathological result of agitators, interpersonal friction and communication breakdown.

From employee point of view, unitary approach means that:

- Working practices should be flexible. Individuals should be business process improvement oriented, multi-skilled and ready to tackle with efficiency whatever tasks are required.
- If a union is recognized, its role is that of a further means of communication between groups of staff and the company.
- The emphasis is on good relationships and sound terms and conditions of employment.
- Employee participation in workplace decisions is enabled. This helps in empowering individuals in their roles and emphasizes team work, innovation, creativity, discretion in problem-solving, quality and improvement groups etc.
- Employees should feel that the skills and expertise of managers supports their endeavors.

From employer point of view, unitary approach means that:

- Staffing policies should try to unify effort, inspire and motivate employees.
- The organization's wider objectives should be properly communicated and discussed with staff.
- Reward systems should be so designed as to foster loyalty and commitment.
- Line managers should take ownership of their team/staffing responsibilities.
- Staff-management conflicts – from the perspective of the unitary framework – are seen as arising from lack of information, inadequate presentation of management's policies.
- The personal objectives of every individual employed in the business should be discussed with them and integrated with the organization's needs.

Pluralist Theory

In pluralism, the organization is perceived as being made up of powerful and divergent sub-groups, each with its own legitimate loyalties and with their own set of objectives and leaders. In particular, the two predominant sub-groups in the pluralistic perspective are the management and trade unions.

Consequently, the role of management would lean less towards enforcing and controlling and more toward persuasion and co-ordination. Trade unions are deemed as legitimate representatives of employees; conflict is handled by collective bargaining and is viewed not necessarily as a bad thing and, if managed, could in fact be channeled towards evolution and positive change.

Pluralism is a major theory in labour-management relations. The focus is on the resolution of conflict rather than its generation, or, in the words of the pluralist, on 'the institutions of job regulation.' Kerr is one of the important exponents of pluralism. According to him, the social environment is an important factor in industrial conflicts. The isolated masses of workers are more strike-prone as compared to dispersed groups. When industrial jobs become more pleasant and employees' get more integrated into the wider society, strikes will become less frequent. The theories on pluralism were evolved in the mid-sixties and early seventies when England witnessed a dramatic resurgence of industrial conflicts. The theories emanate from British scholars, and in particular from Flanders and Fox. According to Flanders, conflict is inherent in the industrial system. He highlighted the need for a formal system of collective bargaining as a method of conflict resolution. Fox distinguishes between two distinct aspects of relationship between workers and management. The first is the market

relationship, which concerns the terms and conditions on which labour is hired. This relationship is essentially economic in character and based on contracts executed between the parties. The second aspect relates to the management's dealing with labour, the nature of their interaction, negotiations between the union and management, distribution of power in the organization, and participation of the union in joint decision-making.

Marxist/Radical Theory

This view of industrial relations looks at the nature of the capitalist society, where there is a fundamental division of interest between capital and labor, and sees workplace relations against this background. This perspective sees inequalities of power and economic wealth as having their roots in the nature of the capitalist economic system. Conflict is therefore seen as inevitable and trade unions are a natural response of workers to their exploitation by capital. Whilst there may be periods of acquiescence, the Marxist view would be that institutions of joint regulation would enhance rather than limit management's position as they presume the continuation of capitalism rather than challenge it.

The class conflict analysis of industrial relations derives its impetus from Marxist social thinking and interpretation. Marxism is essentially a method of social enquiry into the power relationships of society and a way of interpreting social reality. The Marxist approach is primarily oriented towards the historical development of the power relationship between capital and labour. It is also characterized by the struggle of these classes to consolidate and strengthen their respective positions with a view to exerting greater influence on each other. In this approach, industrial relations is equated with a power-struggle. The price payable for labour is determined by a confrontation between conflicting interests. The capitalist ownership of the enterprise endeavours to purchase labour at the lowest possible price in order to maximize their profits. The lower the price paid by the owner of the means of production for the labour he employs, the greater is his profit.

Models of Conflict Management

Early Conflict Management Models

Blake and Mouton (1964) were among the first to present a conceptual scheme for classifying modes (styles) for handling conflicts into five types: forcing, withdrawing, smoothing, compromising, and problem-solving.

Kozan's Group Conflict Management Models

In the 1900's and 2000's, research began to focus more on models that would explain how conflict is managed within groups and organizations. Kozan (1997) established three models of group conflict management.

Confrontational model- In this model, conflicts are made of multiple sub-issues which are broken down and confronted by both parties. Both sides of the conflicts are openly acknowledged, and a sense of reasonable compromise is important to the success of the resolution of the sub-issues involved.

Harmony model- In this model, conflict is managed mostly through avoiding it. This is accomplished through the observation of societal and organizational norms. Conflict is not seen as an opportunity to find solutions to problems, but as a harmful state of affairs. When conflict does occur it is often handled through mediation by third parties.

Regulative model- In this model, conflict is handled by strict rules and regulations. Bureaucratic means are used

extensively to minimize conflict or to aid conflict avoidance. When conflict occurs, they are defined in terms of general principles and resolved in a pre determined fashion.

Khun and Poole's Model

Khun and Poole (2000) established a similar system of group conflict management. In their systems, they split Kozan's confrontational model into two sub-models: distributive and integrative.

Distributive- Here, conflict is approached as a distribution of fixed amount of positive outcomes or resources, where one side would end up winning and the other losing, even if they do win some concessions.

Integrative- Here, groups utilizing the integrative model see conflict as a chance to integrate the needs and concern of both groups and make the best outcome possible. This model has a heavier emphasis on compromise than the distributive model.

Literature Review

Types of Conflict

Thomas (2002) states that there are different types of conflict in organizations, some of them are interpersonal, intra-group, inter-group, vertical and horizontal. A thorough understanding of how conflicts differ could help managers to deal with the situation when it arises in the organization.

Interpersonal Conflict

This is a type of conflict that occurs between two members of an organization because of their different goals or values. Two may experience interpersonal conflict when they have different values. Within conflict literature, a classic distinction is made considering conflict issues that divide between task-related issues (e.g. scarce resources, policies, procedures and roles) and socio-emotional issues (e.g. norms, values, one's personal or group identity)

Intra-group Conflict

Intra-group conflict is that which arises within a group, or department. Conflicts between people in work groups, committees, task forces, and other organizational forms of face-to-face groups are inevitable. Conflicts arise within groups because of scarcity of freedom, position/power, rewards/recognition. In western culture, winning is more acceptable than losing, and competition is more prevalent than cooperation, all of which tends to intensify intra-group conflict.

Inter-group Conflict

Inter-group conflict is that which occurs between groups, teams or departments. Managers of different department usually play a key role in managing inter-group conflicts. Inter-group relations between two or more groups and their respective members are often necessary to complete the work required to operate a business. Many times, groups inter-relate to accomplish the organization's goals and objectives, and conflict can occur. Some conflict, called functional conflict, is considered positive, because it enhances performance and identifies weaknesses. Dysfunctional conflict, however, is confrontation or interaction between groups that harms the organization or hinders attainment of goals or objectives.

Prominent reasons for intergroup conflict includes the nature of the group, work interdependence, goal variances, differences in perceptions, increased demand for specialists and limited resources and reward structures.

Vertical and Horizontal Conflict

Vertical conflict occurs in groups of different hierarchical levels, such as supervisors and salesmen, whereas horizontal conflict occurs between individuals of the same level, such as

managers in the same organization. In the 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. When vertical conflict takes place between operational workers and administration, their sources refer to: (i) psychological distance: workers don't feel involved in the organization and feel that their needs are not met; (ii) power and status: workers feel powerless and alienated; (iii) differences in value and ideology: this difference represents underlying beliefs on objectives and goals of an organization and; (iv) scarce resources: disagreements regarding benefits, salary and work conditions.

Conflict management at work: dual concern theory

Conflict management is what people who experience conflicts intend to do as well as what they actually do (Van de Vliert, 1997). Although, an infinite number of conflict management had been conceived of, conflict research and theory tends to converge on dual concern theory (Pruitt and Rubin, 1986). Dual concern theory is related to earlier work by Blake and Mouton (1946) and to Deutsch's theory of cooperation and competition (Deutsch, 1973). It argues that conflict management is a function of high or low concern for self, combined with high or low concern for others.

1. Problem Solving (high concern for self and others): This strategy is associated with problem solving, i.e., the diagnosis of and intervention in the right problems. The use of this strategy involves openness, exchanging information, looking for alternatives, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties. This is useful for effectively dealing with complex problems, when one party alone cannot solve the problem i.e., when synthesis of ideas is needed to come up with better solution to a problem. It is also useful in utilizing the skills, information, and other resources possessed by different parties to define or redefine a problem and to formulate effective alternative solutions for it, and/or commitment is needed from parties for effective implementation of a solution. This can be done provided that there is enough time for problem solving. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) found this mode (strategy) to be more effective than others in attaining integration of the activities of different subsystems in an organization. Pruitt and Carnevale (1993) provided some evidence from laboratory studies that problem solving style is the best in managing social conflict. This strategy is appropriate for dealing with the strategic issues pertaining to an organization's objectives and policies, long-range planning, etc.

2. Yielding (low concern for self and high concern for others): This strategy is associated with attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party. An obliging person neglects his or her own concern to satisfy the concern of the other party. This strategy is useful when a party is not familiar with the issues involved in a conflict or the other party is right and the issue is much more important to the other party. This may be used as a strategy when a party is willing to give up something with the hope of getting some benefit from the other party when needed. This strategy may be appropriate when a party is dealing from a position of weakness or believes that preserving relationship is important. This strategy is inappropriate if the issue involved in a conflict is important to the party and the party believes that he or she is right. It is also inappropriate when a party believes that the other party is wrong or unethical.

3. Forcing (high concern for self and low concern for others): This style has been identified with win-lose orientation or with forcing behavior to win one's position. A dominating or competing person goes all out to win his or her objective and, as a result, often ignores the needs and expectations of the other party. This strategy is appropriate when the issues involved in a conflict are important to the party or an unfavorable decision by the other party may be harmful. A supervisor may use this style if the issues involve routine matters or speedy decision is required. A supervisor may have to use it to deal with subordinates who are very assertive or they do not have expertise to make technical decisions. This is also effective in dealing with the implementation of unpopular courses of action. This strategy is inappropriate when the issues involved in conflict are complex and there is enough time to make a good decision. When both parties are equally powerful, using this style by one or both parties may lead to stalemate. Unless they change their strategies, they may not be able to break the deadlock. This strategy is inappropriate when the issues are not important to the party. Subordinates, who possess high degree of competence, may not like a supervisor who uses this authoritarian strategy.

4. Avoiding (low concern for self and others): This strategy has been associated with withdrawal, buck-passing, or sidestepping situations. An avoiding person fails to satisfy his or her own concern as well as the concern of the other party. This strategy may be used when the potential dysfunctional effect of confronting the other party outweighs the benefits of the resolution of conflict. This may be used to deal with some trivial or minor issues or a cooling off period is needed before a complex problem can be effectively dealt with. This strategy is inappropriate when the issues are important to a party. This strategy is also inappropriate when it is the responsibility of the party to make decisions, when the parties are unwilling to wait, or when prompt action is required.

5. Compromising (intermediate in concern for self and others): This strategy involves give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. This strategy is useful when the goals of the conflicting parties are mutually exclusive or when both parties, e.g., labor and management, are equally powerful and have reached an impasse in their negotiation process. This can be used when consensus cannot be reached, the parties need a temporary solution to a complex problem, or other strategy have been used and found to be ineffective in dealing with the issues effectively. This strategy seems most useful for avoiding protracted conflict. This strategy is inappropriate for dealing with complex problems needing problem-solving approach. Unfortunately, very often, management practitioners use this strategy to deal with complex problems, and, as a result, fail to identify real problems and formulate effective solutions to these problems. This strategy may be inappropriate if a party is more powerful than another and believes that his or her position is right.

Dimensions of organizational commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) and Dunham et al (1994) identified three types of commitment namely affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with his/her organizational goals (Mowday et al, 1997, Meyer and Allen, 1993; O'Reily & Chatman, 1993). Porter et al (1974) further characterize affective commitment by three factors (1)

“belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values, (2) a willingness to focus effort on helping the organization achieve its goals, and (3) a desire to maintain organizational membership”. Mowday et al (1979) further state that affective communication is “when the employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals in order to maintain membership to facilitate the goal”. Meyer and Allen (1997) opined that employees retain membership out of choice and this is their commitment to the organization.

Continuance commitment is the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with “nontransferable” investments. Nontransferable investments include things such as retirement, relationships with other employees, years of employment or benefits that the employee may receive that are unique to the organization (Reichers, 1985). Meyer and Allen (1997) further explained that employees who share continuance commitment with their employer often find it very difficult to leave the organization. Normative commitment is the commitment that a person believes that they have to the organization or their feeling of obligation to their workplace (Bolon, 1993). Meyer and Allen (1991) purported this type of commitment prior to Bolon’s definition, with their definition of normative commitment being “a feeling of obligation”. It is argued that normative commitment is only natural due to the way we are raised in the society. Normative commitment can be explained by other commitments such as marriage, family, religion, etc. Therefore when it comes to one’s commitment to their place of employment they often feel like they have a moral obligation to the organization (Wiener, 1982).

Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) say that the three types of commitment are a psychological state “that either characterizes the employee’s relationship with the organization or has the implications to affect whether the employee will continue with the organization”. Generally research showed that those employees with a strong affective commitment will remain with an organization because they want to, those with a strong continuance commitment remain because they have to, and those with a normative commitment remain because they feel that they have to (Meyer, Allen, and Smith, 1993).

Methodology

Research Design

The research study is a survey research design. The independent variables of the study are conflict management strategies, which are, problem solving, compromising, yielding, forcing, and avoiding, while the dependent variable is perceived organizational commitment.

Subjects

The study was based on a sample of 253 respondents. The participants comprised 198 (78.3%) males and 55 (21.7%) females. 158(62.5%) of the respondents were within the age range of 20-30 years, 58(22.9%) within 31-40 years, 31(12.3%) within 41-50 years while 6(2.4%) were 50 years. A total of 161 (63.6%) respondents were married and 92 (34.4%) respondents were single. The respondents consisted of those with certificates of SSCE (N=9, 3.6%), OND (N=14, 5.5%), B.sc, HND (N=165, 65.2%), M.sc (N=59, 23.3), others (N=6, 2.4%).

Research Instruments

The study made use of questionnaire for data gathering. The questionnaire was divided into three sections namely, section A, B, and C. Section A consist of demographic information; section B measures conflict management strategies. The instrument used

in this section is a conflict management scale developed by De Dreu et al (2001).The scale consist of 20 items on a five-point likert scale (1= not at all, 5= very frequent). The 20-item survey measures five styles namely; problem solving- items 1-4, compromising-items 5-8, avoiding-items 9-12, forcing-item 13-16, yielding items-17-20. The scale was validated and the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is 0.84. Section C measured organisational commitment. The instrument used in this section is organizational commitment scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) which was adopted for this section. The scale consists of 24 items with response format ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). This scale has three-dimensional constructs namely; affective commitment – items 1-8, continuance commitment – items 9-16, and normative commitment – items 17-24. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is 0.80.

Statistical Analyses

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were analyzed with multiple regression and hypotheses 3 was analysed with independent t-test. The data collected were also analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: Problem solving strategy will more likely predict organizational commitment than yielding strategy.

Table 1a: Summary of multiple regressions showing the relationship between the joint effect of yielding and problem solving on organizational commitment.

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2238.213	2	1119.107	7.857	.000
Residual	35607.558	250	142.430		
Total	37845.771	252			

R = .243; R² = .059; Adj R² = .052

Table 1a showed that the joint effect of yielding and problem-solving on organizational commitment was significant (F(2,250) = 7.857; R = .243, R² = .059, Adj. R² = 0.052; P < .05). About 6% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables while the remaining 94% was due to chance. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Table 1b: Summary of table showing the relative effect of independent variables (yielding and problem-solving) on Organizational commitment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	74.814	3.525		21.223	.000
Yielding	-.312	.232	-.091	-1.346	.180
Problem solving	.897	.227	.268	3.945	.000

Table 1b shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the dependent: yielding (β = -.091, P >.05), problem-solving (β = .268, P <.05). Hence, problem-solving was found significant while yielding was not.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a joint effect of problem-solving, compromising, avoiding, forcing and yielding on organizational commitment.

Table 2a: Summary of multiple regressions showing the joint effect of problem-solving, compromising, avoiding, Forcing and yielding on organizational commitment.

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4996.673	5	999.335	7.514	.000
Residual	32849.098	247	132.992		
Total	37845.771	252			

R = .363; R² = .132; Adj R² = .114

Table 2a showed that the joint effect of problem-solving, compromising, avoiding, forcing and yielding was significant

(F(5,247) =7.514; R = .363, R² = .132, Adj. R² = 0.114; P < .05). About 13% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables while the remaining 87% was not due to chance. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Table 2b: Summary of table showing that there will be a relative effect of independent variables (problem-solving, compromising, avoiding, forcing and yielding) on organizational commitment.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	64.320	4.219		15.244	.000
Problem solving	.583	.249	.174	2.336	.020
Compromising	.892	.246	.242	3.631	.000
Avoiding	.481	.247	.138	1.946	.053
Forcing	.196	.249	.058	.787	.432
Yielding	-.767	.253	-.225	-3.030	.003

Table 2a shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable: Problem solving (β = .174, P <.05), Compromising (β = .242, P <.05), Avoiding (β = .138, P <.05), Forcing (β = .058, P >.05), and Yielding (β = -.225, P <.05), respectively. Hence, problem-solving, avoiding, compromising and yielding were found significant while and forcing was not.

Hypothesis 3: The third hypothesis states that there will be a significant difference between the organizational commitment of male and female respondents.

Table 3: Summary of t-test table showing the significant difference between organizational commitment of male and female respondents

Organizational commitment	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	Df	P
Male	198	83.7121	12.6548	1.96	1.521	251	.130
Female	55	86.5455	10.4984				

The above table showed that there was no significant difference in the organizational commitment of male and female respondents (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 1.521, df = 251, p > .05). The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Conclusion

This study looked at the various strategies for managing conflicts in organizations, such as problem-solving, compromising, forcing, avoiding, and yielding. For conflicts to be managed functionally, one strategy may be more appropriate than another depending upon the situation.

The findings of the study revealed that there exists a relationship between conflict management strategies and organizational commitment. As revealed in this analysis, conflict management strategies variables were found to have a positive effect on organizational commitment, especially with respect to problem-solving, avoiding, compromise, and yielding strategies. Thus, this evidence suggests that effective implementation of the various conflict management strategies should be able to bring high level of organizational commitment in an organization.

It is also concluded that there is no significant difference in the organization commitment of various sexes.

In sum, organizational conflict must not necessarily be reduced, suppressed, or eliminated, but managed to enhance organizational commitment. The management of conflict at the individual, group, and intergroup levels involves reduction of affective conflict, attainment and maintenance of a moderate amount of substantive conflict for non routine tasks at each level, and enabling the organizational participants to learn the

various strategies of managing conflict for dealing with different conflict situations effectively.

Recommendations

1. Effective conflict management strategies must be ethical and should satisfy the needs and expectations of the relevant stakeholders.

2. Managers should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before escalating to unmanageable level. Hence, organizations should take time to analyze the source, type and amount of conflict before making a decision on which strategy to adopt for the effective management of the conflict.

3. Efforts should be made by the management to organize seminars/workshops on organizational conflict management from time to time for employees. This will enable employees learn about conflict and how it can be effectively managed for individual and organizational effectiveness.

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