CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION FOR ORGANIZATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The contemporary Nigeria society is engulfed by terrible act of conflict management in all the organizations in the country. Inability of the management team to manage this problem timely, effectively and logically have seriously caused untold hardships to the Nigeria workers. The discourse of the argument put forward in this paper is that contemporary conflicts in Nigeria is a product prolonged failure of the directors of the organizations in Nigeria to show characteristics or fulfill the promises accepted as normal or beneficial to the totality of the work force, it examines various types of conflict in Nigeria, sources of conflicts consequences of the conflicts. Assumptions of traditional school of thought and conflicts perspective school of thought on crisis management were employed.
Keywords*: Conflicts, Contemporary, Team work, Reputation, Dysfunction, Collective Bargaining and Medication.

INTRODUCTION
We all differ in our values, self-interest, and priorities and many other ways. The greater the differences, the heavier the burden on our ability to manage these differences. The less effectively we manage differences, the more we experience conflict. Conflict refers to a struggle in which rival parties attempting to reach a commonly desired goals strive to eliminate the others i.e. disagreements arising principally from the need to share scarce resources or engage in inter-dependent works or from the differences in value or goals of the organization. In a conflict, there is anger, loud, polite or silent. Conflict may rear its head in different ways e.g. irritation, unfairness, lack of cooperation or downright insubordination, hence, the atmosphere is generally tense.

Conflict is a situation in which people or groups of individuals are involved in serious disagreements or arguments. It is a situation fuelled by opposing ideas, opinions, feelings or wishes. In every relationship, the differences that make us as unique individuals are also sources of potential conflict between us.

TYPES OF CONFLICTS
1. Intra-personal conflict
2. Inter-personal conflict
3. Individuals versus groups
4. Inter-group conflicts
5. Inter-organizational conflict

Intra-Personal conflict: It connotes a situation of dilemma arising from somebody's work activities, which may clash with other engagements leading to intra personal conflict. Inter-personal conflict: This is a conflict between two individuals in the organization arising from difference in values or behaviour.

Individuals versus groups conflict: The groups could be formal or informal usually when individual violates the norms of the groups, conflict will now arise between the individuals and the group.

Inter-group conflict: This amounts to conflict between two different groups in an organization such as inter-departmental conflict, which arises as a result of inter-dependent tasks.

Inter-organizational conflict: This is a conflict between two distinct organizations and it may arise as a result of competition for struggle to dominate the market.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION
Organizational structure: This is a couple of arrangements on the basis of which there exist un equal powers and privileges which may lead to conflicts.
   ➤ **Faulty Communication:** Communication is a source of conflict in an organization. If an effective communication is not well disseminated and properly passed to the workers

conflict may arise. e.g. information on downsizing among the workers may lead to conflict if it is not properly managed, others include profit sharing and fringe benefits

➢ **Different values:** The workforce within the organization has different value for the organization. When the value of group 'A' is quite different from the value of group 'B' conflict may arise. e.g. the goal and value of the management is to maximize profit while the goal of workers is to increase the salary and allowances.

➢ **Perceived injustice:** Where there is perceived injustice in the sharing of organization resources conflict arises. The departments that are cheated within the organization may not have equal rights and privileges as well as equal access to organizational resources hence the department this may feel offended and may decide to develop hatred for the other departments as well as organization itself.

➢ **Management induced competition:** Some departments may decide to undercut other departments by doing excellently well in their functions and responsibilities. This may also lead to a source of conflict between some performing departments and non-performing departments.

➢ **Unresolved conflict:** A conflict that is not resolved properly and satisfactorily among the departments concerned may also degenerate into conflict. e.g. ASSU and Federal Government conflict is yet to be finally resolved since 2009.

ASSUMPTIONS OF TRADITIONAL SCHOOL OF THOUGHT ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT

1. Conflict is avoidable before it happens
2. Conflict is caused by management errors
3. Conflict affects organizational processes and prevents optimal performance
4. The task of the management is to eliminate conflict at the initial stage.
5. Optimal organization performance requires the elimination of conflicts. However, in the contemporary society, conflicts are bound to arise.

THE CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT ON CRISES MANAGEMENT

The conflict perspective school of thought views the social world as riddled with tension and strife. While stability and order remain recognized facts of the social world, the conflict perspective seeks to discover the tensions that exists behind the facade of order. Some segments of human systems hold more power, money, prestige, and other valuables than do other segments, there is inevitably a conflict of interests between the "haves" and the "have-nots". Those who possess valuable resources naturally wish to retain them. Those without resources want to secure them.

In some respects conflict analysis is similar to functionalism (van de Berghe, 1963). As with functionalism also, the goal is to analyze the impact of certain processes on the overall system. Unlike the functional approach, which is typically concerned with stability and order among system parts, however, 'the conflict perspective focuses on the tensions and conflicts among system parts. In particular, conflict theorists examine the changes that ensure from tension and conflict. Rather than study the needs met by the economy of a society, for example, conflict sociologists would study how those who own and control the economy seek to deny resources, such as power and money, to those who merely work in factories and corporate bureaucracies. They would analyze how such opposed interests produce tensions, overt conflict, and eventual change in the relations between owners and workers in the economy.

❖ Like functionalists, conflict sociologists analyzed macro structures of conflicts. Conflicts sociologists emphasized the conflict processes inherent in these structures, however, examination of tensions between nation states, social classes, employers and employees, communities, ethnic and racial populations, and other aggregates of people is more typical than the study of family tension, interpersonal disputes, and similar face-to-face conflicts. Like the functionalist, the conflict sociologists is most concerned with the big events that shape entire communities, organizations, societies and

even world systems. Common to all conflict approaches are the following points of emphasis:

❖ All social relations in all social systems reveal inequalities in the distribution of valuable resources.
❖ Tension between those with and those without resources is inevitable because those with resources have an interest in keeping them and those without resources have an interest in securing more resources. Such tensions will, in the long run, erupt into conflict.
❖ With conflict will come a change in social relations and in the structure of a social system.
❖ Human organization is thus in a state of constant tension, with inequalities in social relationships creating conditions of conflict and change.
❖ All social units enter social relations with resources to offer, such as money, power, prestige, and approval.
❖ Social relations frequently involve the efforts of one unit to exchange some of its resources with other units for more-valuable resources.
❖ All exchange relations involve, to some degree, competition between units in order to extract the most profit from the exchange.
❖ Patterns of human organization are thus composed of complex networks of exchange relations among individual and collective units, all seeking a profit in the resources that they obtain.

Like the conflict perspective, the exchange analysis holds that when units receiveless than they give up, tension and conflict are likely to occur. When the exchange of resources is considered equitable some degree of stability in relations is likely.

MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS
Avoidance: Management may be playing on intelligent of workforce by refusing to take a position on some burning issues affecting the welfare of workers, management may delay actions until they are able to get the final details of the conflicts before an appropriate action is taken. This delay in the action may escalate the level of

conflict in the organization up to a magnitude level that may threaten the survival of the organization.

Smoothing strategies: It is a diplomatic attempt to solve certain organizational conflict by either suppressing the conflict or make some sentimental appeals to both parties to think of themselves as one large family workers rather than rival parties.

Compromise: This entails making sacrifices by all the parties to a conflict. These negotiated solutions to drop certain demands that had been at the root of conflict.

Problem solving: It is also known as confrontation as it is involved the entire rival parties in the conflict sitting together to find the lasting solution to the conflict.

Communication: In the workplace, it is important to maintain good interpersonal skills such as politeness, respect, friendliness, caring, impartiality and commitment. All these can be expressed by how we talk, how we do our work and our body language. Good interpersonal skill will go a long way to prevent blips and invariably clashes that can metamorphose into a conflict.

Authoritative command: This is the use of power of position by those in management to deal with the situation. It may also entails intervention of the government of the countries to use cohesive power to overruled the conflict in the interest of the public or government or for other consideration bothering on national security.

MEDIATION
Mediation provides a mechanism for early resolution of many problems. It saves time and money, create a safer and more harmonious workplace, helps to increase productivity and promote enhanced day-to-day relationship. Mediation can be done in three ways depending on the situation and the appropriateness of type of mediation. These are
- Self mediation

- Managerial mediation
- Third party mediation

Self-Mediation: Self Mediation is a tool for resolving conflict between you an individual and another person. The desire to have a conflict-free environment at work or at home prompts you (the initiator) to call on the other person (other) to talk with the aim of resolving the conflict and minimizing the consequences of continued conflict.

Managerial Mediation
Usually the mediator in this situation would be one whose status is higher than that of the conflicting parties. It is a process without a professional mediator.
A manager mediator's aim is to help employees work together in harmony and this exhibits his leadership qualities. A manager in this context would be any leader or accountable individual who is responsible for the cooperative or teamwork of others. It is important that the disputants perceive the manager to be neutral.

Third Party Mediation
Third party Mediation distinguished here form self-mediation and also from managerial mediation, is the process of assisting two or more disputing parties in resolving their disputes. The mediator is a neutral and uses special skills acquired through learning and experience to assist the parties in resolving the disputes themselves. Compared to litigation, a mediation process will be quicker to settlement, cheaper and will maintain relationships post-settlement. The process is private and confidential, less stressful for all parties involved and the procedures are simple, because of these advantages, more and more people are resorting to this approach and other alternative dispute resolution strategies. The mediator could be selected or appointed by the disputing parties or can intervene to help the parties. One of the major attributes of an effective mediator is the effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills. He is someone who is patient, tolerant and completely unbiased.

Procedures for mediation

(a) Find time to talk. Make conversation about having a conversation

(b) State the reason for the meeting and go ahead to further dwell on the advantages of talking or the disadvantages of not talking towards resolution

(c) State ground rules-what we cannot do

(d) Agree on appropriate time and place for meeting

Essentials for mediation:

- Appreciate the others decision to talk
- Express optimism of the outcome of the talk
- Remind other of ground rules
- Focus on the issue to be solved
- Listen more and talk less

FUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT IN THE ORGANIZATION

1. **Functional factor:** This will give rise to effective and dynamic leadership in an organization, is because conflict situations make demands and leadership, and if the current leadership is unable to meet the demands of the workers from the management more dynamic and progressive leadership capable of solving the problems amicably with the management will emerge.

2. **Conflict** is a symbolic of communication, in order words; it is a signal dictating that everything is not normal within the organization. A purposeful leadership ensures that conflict does not degenerate up to a level that may threaten the survival of the organization.

3. Conflict also gives rise to what will called institutionalization of conflict. This means the conflict necessitate the search for appropriate institutionalized frameworks for its resolution and with the establishment of such conflict resolution mechanism, conflict can be expected to occur. Since, an existing machinery for its resolution is in place. Collective bargaining is an example of conflict institutionalized mechanism in industrial relations.

4. Conflict promotes creativity and innovation. This is because under conflict resolution the traditional ways of doing things are inadequate. This inadequacy will task the creative instinct of the individual who may evolve in a more innovative way of meeting demands of workers.
5. On the other hand, conflict tends to promote intra-group professionalism, cohesion and solidarities among the workers.
6. Conflict tends to promote avenue for releasing emotions, e.g. when banks are on strikes people tend to use that strike period as an excuse for not doing what they supposed to do. E.g. payment of school fees and debts.

DYSFUNCTIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT IN THE ORGANIZATION

1. **Perception Distortion:** This is situation whereby one sees himself expressions as good intention and the expression of the management as negative. Although it is good to fight a good course e.g. America will tell the world the type of weapons to be used in fighting an enemy and how they will fight the enemy.
2. **Goal Displacement**: If a conflict is not properly managed it could lead to goal displacement within organization, more efforts will be focused in resolving organization conflict rather than achieving the organizational goals, hence the goals of the organization may be displaced.
3. **Threat to Organizational Survival:** Conflict is known to have generated some measures of crisis between the organizations.
4. **Job Dissatisfaction:** Crises may generate conflict, which may threaten the moral of the workers, and when this happens job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and low turnover may become the order of the day within the organization.
5. **Conflict has a High but Hidden Cost:** Cost is hidden in salary budget caused by wasted time, in recruitment budget caused by fresh recruitments due to old staff resigning and hidden in poor decision making caused by anger or stress.
6. **Conflict between two workers or between two individuals or groups is like an imaginary wall of concrete between**

two rooms. Without appropriate attention a dispute can kill a relationship or affect the whole system or organization. People, who ideally should be turning towards one another for motivation or advice, turn away. Unresolved conflict has a high cost.

7. **Decreased individual competence:** People work less effectively when they are in conflict with colleagues or clients they have dealings with. They become less tolerant and stressed out and this impacts negatively on their performance at work and generally.

8. **Team work:** conflicts lead to negative interpersonal relationship between people who work as a team or group. Individuals in conflict tend not to relate any longer with each other. They avoid each other and consequently jobs that should be done in groups cannot take off and delegation is difficult. The atmosphere is charged and a single conflict between two individuals can escalate as other take sides and new camps of conflicts are formed gossip and rumour become the order of the day.

9. **Reputation:** The image of the company becomes tarnished due to bad client relation. Shareholders trust is also affected and this will consequently take the shine off the organization's reputation.

10. **Illness:** resulting in series of off-duty applications

11. **Business attraction:** This is reduced due to bad interpersonal relationship.

12. **Financial status:** This decreases competence and productivity and invariably reduces income to the establishment. Likewise conflict that may result in litigations, which is often prosecuted at a high cost

THE WAY FORWARD

Can we really count and record the value of cost of conflict in society or the workplace?

To minimize conflict or to properly manage it, the following conditions must be put in place:

- Train employees in the act of mediation
- Enable trainees to use their skills

- Establish a panel of neutral body
- Establish a conflict management department
- Have an on-call panel of neutrals

CONCLUSION

From all indications, society is a product of conflict and without conflict there will be no resolutions. In an ideal situation, there should be conflict but management of it is the big challenge. Effective management of conflict is what is required and needed for the survival of structured and unstructured organizations in Nigeria.

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