

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ORGANISATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS IN POLYTECHNICS IN OSUN STATE**

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OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God the Author and Finisher of my faith and my beloved parents, Rev. and Mrs. E. O. Olaniyi.

OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The study identified various types of conflicts in public and private polytechnics in Osun State; investigated the conflict management strategies available to management of the polytechnics, and compared the causes of conflict and the management strategies adopted by the managers of the Polytechnics. Furthermore, it investigated the overall effectiveness of the strategies adopted by the management of the institutions in the study area. These were with a view to providing information on effective strategies for managing public and private polytechnics in Osun State.

The research design used for the study was descriptive survey. The population for the study comprised 1,020 teaching staff, non-teaching staff and management of Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke, and Interlink Polytechnic, Ijebu-Ijesa. The sample consisted of 82 Teaching Staff, 119 Non-Teaching Staff and three Management staff of the polytechnics selected using multistage sampling technique. Teaching and non-teaching staff were selected using simple random sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique was used to select management. Four instruments were used, namely: Incidence of Conflict Management Strategy for Teaching staff (ICMST), Incidence of Conflict Management Strategy for Non-Teaching staff (ICMSNT), Incidence of Conflict Management Strategy for Principal officers (ICMSP); and Incidence of Conflict Management Strategy for Executive Union Members (ICMSEUM). Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage scores and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistical method of data analysis.

The results showed that inter-group conflicts (90.7%) were very rampant in public polytechnics but did not exist in private polytechnics and interpersonal and intra-personal conflicts occurred both in public and private polytechnics in Osun State. The results also showed that force strategy (57.6%) and avoidance strategy (63.4%) were management strategies found in public and private polytechnics in Osun State. The results further showed that the causes of conflicts in polytechnics were communication gap with 91.9% in public 90.6% in private polytechnics and mis-appropriation of funds with 87.8% in public and 75% in private polytechnics. The most adopted management strategy in the two polytechnic types was collective bargaining with 93.6% in public and 90.6% in private and followed by participatory decision making with 86% in public and dialogue 84.4% in private. Finally, the results showed that collective bargaining (93.6%) was more effective in both public and private polytechnics

The study concluded that collective bargaining could be an effective conflict management strategy in public and private polytechnics in Osun State.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

An organisation's effectiveness depends on the ability of the stakeholders to reduce conflicts to the barest minimum. Some organizations collapse nowadays as a result of high incidence of conflicts. Tertiary institutions in Osun State are not exempted whenever the issue of conflict is mentioned with a particular reference to Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke and Interlink Polytechnic, Ijebu-Ijesa.

Conflicts have become part and parcel of human organisations, whether small or large. This indeed is a paradox because of the amount of energy and resources expended in organisations to prevent and resolve conflicts. Okotoni (2002) emphasized the necessity and importance of conflict resolution by asserting that certain level of conflict in an organisation is not only inevitable but also determines the success and failure of such an organisation. Conflict is largely attached to confrontations. Persistent arguments on certain issues between two individuals for a long time can escalate to a conflict and may be reflected by open confrontation.

There are instances when members of staff refuse to co-operate with each other in carrying out their duties. For instance, the conflict that arose between the teaching staff and the management of Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke over the non-payment of the lecturing and marking claims in the 2010/2011 academic session led to industrial action that lasted for three months. The academic calendar of the institution was disrupted to the extent that

the final year Higher National Diploma (HND) students could not proceed on their National Youth Service Corps programme. The inability of the management to conduct first semester examinations of the 2010/2011 academic also hindered the three months SIWES exercise of the National Diploma (ND) students too.

Another conflict occurred in 2012 between the non-teaching staff and the management of the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, over the non-inclusion of the non-teaching staff in weekend part-time examination invigilation. The non-teaching staff alleged that teaching staff alone took charge of full time and part-time. The disagreement started when some non-teaching staff could not find their names on part-time invigilation list. This crisis degenerated to conflict between the teaching and non-teaching staff. The conflict took the Governing Council members and the key officers two months before it could be resolved. In November 2013, there was another conflict between the teaching staff and the Management of Osun State College of Technology, Esa-Oke, over the appointment of Higher Instructors as Head of Departments which the lecturer cadre vehemently opposed. This crisis led to withholding of examination results of the previous semester and boycott of lectures in the faculties of engineering and environmental studies.

However, Conflict is part and parcel of human existence. The existence of interaction between two individual or group of individuals make conflict to be inevitable. Also, differences in ideology and clash of interests do result in conflicts. Conflict is not always bad but serves as a catalyst for better understanding of differences between or among individuals or groups of individuals. Conflicts have not been well-managed as expected in polytechnics in Osun State and this has made conflict escalate beyond control instead of reducing it to the barest minimum. Luthans, (1996) says “conflict, if not well managed, can jeopardize the job career of organization managers. When managers in the organisations handle conflict with levity and

thereby escalate to an uncontrollable level. On the other hand, conflict management strategies adopted by the managers have been unproductive due to the persistent occurrence of conflicts. The study is of the view that if appropriate strategies have been used to resolve organizational conflict whenever it arises, organizations must have witnessed a tremendous development. Organizational effectiveness could only be best achieved where effective strategy is adopted. The presence of conflict, whether high or low in its level of prevalence, is inimical to the existence and development of an organization. The effectiveness of an organization is better enhanced by efficiency but where efficiency is hidden, there cannot be good human relations between and among employees. An organization's efficiency is determined by the productivity, profitability, ability to manage the available resources without a waste. It has been observed that organization managers have not risen up to their responsibilities in preventing conflict occurrences within an organization. Public and private polytechnics in Osun State have not experienced any meaningful development as expected due to high prevalence of conflicts and managers' failure to adopt an effective strategy.

It is against this background that this study sought to examine conflict and its associated problems, as well as managements' adopted strategies in resolving the conflicts in public and private polytechnics in Osun State. This study was considered relevant and necessary so as to manage conflicts effectively in public and private polytechnics in Osun State.

Osun State is one of the states in Nigeria created in 1991 under the military regime of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (Former Head of State). It is located in the South-West Geo- political zone of Nigeria with about three million people in population. The state is made up of Yoruba speaking people with few other tribes. There are presently thirty (30) local governments and one Area office with its headquarters at Modakeke-Ife. The state has its

headquarters in Osogbo with three senatorial districts and nine (9) federal constituencies. Since the creation of the state, a lot of developments had been recorded which could be best viewed in the number of educational institutions in the State both federal, state and private tertiary institutions. The institutions are spread all over the senatorial districts and federal constituencies.

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