IMPERATIVES OF EFFECTIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA ORGANIZATIONS (A SURVEY OF SELECTED MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA)

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Abstract
Conflict is a part of everyday life of an individual or organization. it is an inevitable part of organization’s life because the goals different stakeholders such as managers and workers are often incompatible. One of the major challenges facing managers of industrial organizations is how to ensure organizational productivity through prevention and resolution of industrial conflict and grievances in the nations organizations both public and private using non-violent approaches or strategies. For management to be efficient, it must devote some part of its time to the management of conflicts since it is unavoidable. Conflict has considerable influence on employee behaviour, performance and satisfaction. It also affect on organization’s effectiveness. It is on this premises that this research was developed to carry out an empirical study on Imperative of Effective Conflict Management and Resolution in Nigerian Organizations – A Survey of Selected Manufacturing Companies in Delta State with a view to identifying major causes of conflicts, various strategies organizations have adopted to manage conflict situations; determine the effectiveness of the conflict resolution strategies adopted by the organizations, investigate the role played by conflict in influencing organizational performance, ascertain the significance of conflict in stimulating interest and creativity in organizations, identify the role played by conflict in enhancing morale and cohesion in organizations. A set of structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection and administered on 60 management staff randomly selected from the companies under studying using Yaro Yamane formula. Applying this formula, the sample size from a population of 70 is 60 respondents at 95% confidence level. Data analysis was made using simple percentage tables and hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistic. The results showed that positive and significant relationship exists between conflict and organizational performance, stimulating interest and creativity, and enhancing morale and cohesion in the organizations studied. Based on the results obtained, it was recommended that adequate information and communication should be provided in organizations, expansion of resources, equitable allocation of values/rewards, effective style of leadership, good union-management relationship, goal setting, employees’ right of appeal and a host of other strategies for effective conflict resolutions and management in organizations.

Keywords: Imperative; Conflict; Management; Resolutions; Organizations
Introduction

Background of the Study

The concept of conflict, an outcome of behaviour, is an integral part of human life. Wherever there is interaction, there is conflict. Sherlekar (2005:199) notes that conflict occurs when two parties come into direct disagreement as to ideas or interests. Because people differ in their attitudes, values and goals conflict among them becomes unavoidable.

Accordingly, the management is concerned not so much with eliminating conflict which would be impossible but to contain it and manage it for organizational and individual benefit.

Since the advent of the 11th century, industrial revolution, that originate in England and later spread all over the whole of Europe by the fall of that century, the industrial organization which emerged as an aftermath of the revolution has ever since been be-deviled by various forms of conflict, arising principally, from the mode of bureaucratization. There was rapid rise in industrialization in the late 18th and 19th and throughout the 20th centuries. During these periods also, social scientist had tried to explain and hypothesize on the best way of coping with management tasks that are involved in the administration of labour in the context of an organization with a bureaucratic set up. These efforts by social scientists were geared towards obtaining answers for a maximum level of harmony between the workers and the management and to also have the desired level of productivity and profit.

Nigeria as a nation is also becoming industrialized, and in this respect, she is having her own problems associated with the industrialization process in both the public and private sectors of the economy. It is also an evident truth that conflict is endemic in human society as it is in the human organizations. It is therefore a dynamic and human process which occurs within an industrialist, between two people, between an individual and the organization or system, between two groups and between a group (union) and the management.

Barbash (2002:136) notes that the role of trade disputes in industrial relations is to maintain the system in equilibrium despite the contending consideration of the product market, efficiency, employee security and the public interest. In other words, disputes are sustained or prolonged by the refusal to seek a settlement when the cost of disputes seems to be borne excessively by the society at large, at least by groups outside, the effective bargaining relationship, the state steps in to create a new equilibrium forces.

Iwuyi (1999:220) explained that disputes are for the most part normal and necessary. It has some advantages and disadvantage for the enterprise and for the society as a whole. For the enterprise, demands by workers, force management to search for improved efficiency or for new markets in order to meet the new demands. On the other hand, demands which impair the efficiency of the enterprise or result in unacceptably higher cost, to the customers, threatens the enterprise future. For the society as a whole, workers demand has been an engine of social process, bringing safety in working conditions, shorter working hours and many other improvements over the years. But the welfare of the society also may be adversely affected, by loss of trade, where the prices are forced up or efficiency excessively lowered and by the inflationary effect of increase in labour cost not covered by increased productivity.
This research attempts to examine the causes of conflict in organizations, effect of conflict and recommend strategies aimed at resolving and managing conflicts in organizations and for organizations to remain successful after an inevitable conflict.

**Statement of Problem**

One of the major challenges facing managers of industrial organizations is how to ensure organizational productivity through prevention and resolution of industrial conflict and grievances in the nations organizations – public and private (Oyibo, 2006:150), using non-violent approaches or strategies. The ability to deal with conflict effectively is seen as a necessary skill efficient managers should possess, and this therefore constitutes an important aspect of organizational theory and organizational behaviour. Admittedly, no organization can be free from industrial conflict all the time. This is because conflict is a necessity of life. It is an ever-present process in human relations (Loomis and Loomis, 2005:180); it is an unavoidable aspect of organizational life.

According to Isard (2004:212), conflict is an important part of human existence. It is a natural part of our daily lives. For management to be efficient, it must devote some part of its time to the management of conflict. Ordinarily, managers spend up to 30% of their time dealing with conflicts (Siegel, 2007:120). This is because conflict has been recognized as part of the expectations in any social organization. among all the programmes in organizational management, such as leadership, crisis management, decision making, planning, control, budgeting, communication skills, human resources management, etc the one that occupies an important position is the management of conflict (Thomas and Schmadt, 2000:133). This is because conflict may be inevitable and functional.

Every organization whether industrial, service oriented or voluntary in nature is a social system made up of interacting entities who have lots of personal wants/needs/desires to achieve through the organization. Similarly, the organization has its own needs which are to achieve its established goals maximally and efficiently. Unfortunately, such a delightful fit between individual and organizational needs are very rare, hence the occurrence of conflicts in organizations. At times, these conflict situations get out of hand and lead to strikes by the workers or lockouts by the management. It may also lead to frustration by workers, de-motivation, low productivity, poor profits and returns by such organizations.

It is on this premises that this research was developed to carry out an empirical study on Imperatives of Effective Conflict Management and Resolution in Nigerian Organizations – A Survey of Selected Manufacturing Companies in Delta State, Nigeria, with a view to identifying possible causes of conflict in organizations and the strategies often applied to manage it.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this are as follows:

1. To identify the major causes of conflicts in organizations;
2. To identify various strategies organizations have adopted to manage conflict situations;
3. To determine the effectiveness of the conflict resolution strategies adopted by the organizations;
4. To investigate the role played by conflict in influencing organizational performance;
v. To ascertain the significance of conflict in stimulating interest and creativity in organizations; and
vi. To identify the role played by conflict in enhancing morale and cohesion in organizations.

Research Questions
This study has provided answers to the following questions:
1. What are the major causes of conflict in organization?
2. Has conflict any impact in motivating workers in an organization?
3. Has conflict any significant role to play in enhancing staff morale and cohesion in an organization?
4. Has conflict any influence in organizational performance?
5. What strategies would you recommend for effective management of conflict in organization?

Statement of Hypotheses
In order to undertake this study scientifically, the following hypotheses were formulated for the study;
1. There is no positive and significant relationship between conflict and organizational performance.
2. There is no positive and significant relationship between conflict and stimulating interest and creativity.
3. There is no positive and significant relationship between conflict and enhancing morale and cohesion.

Literature Review
Concept of Conflict
The term conflict cannot be given a straight jacket definition since it encapsulates many facets. Although the term conflict tends to bring to mind pictures of war, fighting, misunderstanding, arguments, anarchy and so on, the concept can be viewed from both the prisms of positivism and negativism. Conflict can also be examined from the perspectives of personal conflict, interpersonal conflict and group conflict. The World Book Dictionary defines conflict as follows:
1. A fight or struggle especially a prolonged one; battle.
2. Disagreement, dispute or quarrel.
3. A mental or spiritual battle.

The first definition above views conflict from the perspective of violent conflict. The second considers conflict from the realm of ideas or ideological contestation. This could manifest as interpersonal or group conflict. The third definition shows that conflict could be within the individual.

There are many other definition of conflict, Jones (2003:115) defined organizational conflict as the discord that arises when the goals, interests or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those individuals or group block or thwart each other’s attempt to achieve their objectives.
Rudolph (2008:201) sees conflict as an active human process whereby individuals are striving to accommodate or resolve their opposing interest(s). Sharma (2007:21) recapitulates organizational conflict as a disagreement between two or more members or groups of the organization. The conflict may arise due to (a) sharing of scarce resources or work activities, (b) different status, goals, values, or perceptions, (c) disagreement over facts, methods, social, economical and psychological reasons.

To Thomas (2006:178) conflict is the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated or is about to frustrate some concern of his. This definition by Thomas implies that conflict in organizations involves situations in which the expectations or actual goal directed behaviour of a person or group is blocked by another person or group. In such a situation, the person whose goal is blocked or about to be blocked experiences frustration which further leads to conflict.

Dahi (2007:165) also posits that conflict is the creation of a situation in which one individual wishes to follow a line of action that would make it difficult or impossible for someone else to pursue his own desire.

Boulding (2005:312) commenting on Dehi’s definition submits that conflicts is a situation of competition in which parties are ware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other. It is pertinent to mention that Dehi’s and Boulding’s assertions best explain interpersonal and intra-group conflicts.

Iheriohanma (2002:171) perceives conflict situation where there is a perceived (real or imagined) incompatible differences which result in crisis, blocking, disagreement, frustration, interference, intolerance and opposition. Conflict manifests itself in overt acts such as riots, strikes, demonstrations, terrorism, looting, wards, etc and such other forms of frustration, withdrawal, etc.

Conflict is the tension or stress involved when the satisfaction of needs is thwarted by equally attractive alternatives (Munn et al, 2002:677). Conflict arises when what an individual or group is experiencing is different from what is expected. It also arises when there are severe desirable and undesirable aspects of several possibilities for action. Both individuals and organizations experience conflict. Conflict can also arise within formal and informal groups in the organization. Such conflicts can have adverse effects on the morale of workers. If conflicts are not properly managed, it can affect productivity and job satisfaction. This is the reason why we should be interested in conflict management.

**Types of Organizational Conflict**
Organizational conflict is classified into the following types (Jones, 2003:120).

**Interpersonal Conflict**
Interpersonal conflict is a conflict between individual members of an organization, occurring because of differences in their goals or values. Two managers may experience interpersonal conflict when their values concerning protection of the environment differ. One manager may
argue that the organization should do only what is required by law. The other manager may counter that the organization should invest in equipment to reduce emissions even though the organization’s current level of emission is below the legal limit.

**Intra-group Conflict**
Intra-group conflict is conflict that arises within a group, team or department. When members of the marketing department in a clothing company disagree about how they should spend budgeted advertising funds for a new line of men’s designers’ jeans, they are experiencing intra-group conflict. Some of the members want to spend all the money on advertisement in magazines. Others want to devote half of the money to bill boards.

**Inter-group Conflict**
Inter-group conflict is conflict between groups, teams, or departments. Research and development department for example sometimes experience inter-group conflict with production department. Members of the research and development department may develop a new product and they think production can make inexpensively by using existing manufacturing capabilities. Members of the production, however, may disagree and believe that the cost of making the product will be much higher.

**Inter-organizational Conflict**
Inter-organizational conflict arises when managers in one organization feel that another organization is not behaving ethically and is threatening the well-being of certain shareholders or groups.

**Views of Conflicts**
Various views on conflict have been expressed. According to Aswathappa (2004:230), the views expressed are:

**The Classical Perspective**
This perspective views conflict as harmful, destructive, violent, irrational, something that is bad and management in organizations must do everything to avoid it. This is because it has malfunctioning effects. This represents the traditional views.

**The Human Relations Perspective**
This perspective sees conflict as natural, inevitable, healthy and a human phenomenon. It is never evil except if mal-handled. It is then that it becomes a threat and source of tension otherwise, it should be accepted. It has some positive outcome when properly managed.

**The Interactionist Perspective**
This perspective encourages conflict in organizations. For an organization to perform efficiently there is need for conflict. It creates room for innovation and change and removes the tendency for organizations to be static and unresponsive to the needs of organization members and changes in the environment.
According to this perspective, conflict is desired because its existence makes managers to be innovative and creative. There must be a tolerable level of conflict to knit the various units together, make them viable, creative, reflective, broad-minded and accommodating.

**Causes of Organizational Conflict**

According to Iheriohanma (2002:180), Eze (2004:217), the lists of factors which necessitate conflicts in organizations are inexhaustible. These factors at the organizational level include; incompatibility of goals between workers and management, scarce resources in the organization, incompatible resources allocation by management, status incongruities in the work setting, personality differences among workers, organizational dynamic, absence of standardized rules in the organization, structural problems in the organization, communication problems and denial of participative management.

In the views of Eze (2004:218) some of the specific causes of organizational or industrial conflict are; disagreement between management and union goals, irrelevant leadership, corrupt management, insensitivity to workers needs and welfare, non-conducive organizational climate, inadequate reward and incentive system, inequitable reward, unsatisfactory fringe benefits, inhuman working conditions, subjective personnel selection, poor communication channels, not treating workers as human being, absence of job security, growth ladder and guaranteed future, general instability, insecurity and uncertainties, poverty, scarcities and economic hardships, chronic failure to keep to terms of agreement, widespread corruption and embezzlement and negative multinational management practices.

Similarly, Miles (2006:185) in his own contention, posited that in organizations generally, status inconsistencies, jurisdiction ambiguities, dependence on common resources pools, and difference in performance criteria and reward system are the major conflict contributing factors. He also observes that in industrial organizations, most industrial conflict have economic orientation – where strike actions are embarked upon to press hard for high wages and salaries, or other measures to reduce high cost of living.

For Okogwu (2002:155) there are overt and underlying causes of organizational conflicts. Overt causes are the factors openly perceived which influences unrest like wage differential, fringe benefits differentials, inhuman relationships, faulty communications, redundancy, retrenchment, breach of contract and collective agreements, long hours of work, poor conditions of work, long procedures and official delays in the proceedings of dispute settlement. One the other hand, the underlying causes of industrial conflicts are the factors which we cannot openly see; they are latent implicit and inferred for example bad social conditions including; poor feeding, poor housing accommodation and moral indignation, fatigue and frustration at work place, feeling of inferiority of the workers, position and feeling of powerlessness.

**Impact of Organizational Conflict**

Lawal (2004:200) highlights the following impact of organizational conflict. Conflict motivates organizational members to consider problems. They are energized and psychologically focused on the problems and motivated to put plans into action. Conflict promotes change. Persons are more aware of injustice, inefficiencies and frustrations and see the need to correct them.
Prolonged group conflict causes the following changes between groups, each group sees the other as an enemy, who interferes with its good oriented behaviour, develops positive perceptions about own group and negative perception towards the other, communication ceases to exist.

Bloomsbury (2002:420) in his contribution listed the following as the impact of organizational conflict.

- More positive image of the organization or staff.
- Improved team work.
- Better motivated staff, staff energies are directed to work rather than emotions.
- Better personal development of individuals.
- The escalation and spread of conflict to others.
- The dissipation of staff energy.
- The misdirection of staff energy, contributing to fall in productivity.
- The misperception that inaction is the easiest option, the problem will ultimately be harder to solve.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1995:121), a research design is the blue print that addresses the problems of scientific inquiry. A research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation concerned so as to obtain answers to research problems and questions. It tries to ensure that the required data are collected economically and accurately. The research is a survey research design which would allow for the collection of data that will help to confirm the authenticity of the hypotheses in that the respondents can answer or respond to the questions at their desired time a two section questionnaire firstly, bio-data and secondly questions on the topic under investigation respectively will be carefully designed.

**Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. The main instruments used in the collection of the primary data were the questionnaire administered to the respondents. The secondary data were obtained from the works of other researchers on this and related topics.

**Population of Study**

Research population is the aggregate number of persons, objective or phenomenon from which relevant data of the study were collected. It refers to all conceivable elements subject or observation relating to the research work (Banji, 2007:211).

The population of this study is 70 senior and management staff of the three manufacturing companies selected in Delta State for this study and they are Delta Steel Complex Limited, Ovwian Aladja, Eternit Nigeria Ltd, Sapele and Delta Textile Mill Limited, Asaba. The three companies chosen and the respondents was through simple random sampling technique.
Determination of Sample Size
The sample size was determined using Yaro Yamane formula given as:

\[ n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \]

Where,
\[ n = \text{Sample size sought} \]
\[ e = \text{Level of significance} = 0.05 \text{ or } 5\% \]
\[ N = \text{Population size} = 70 \]

\[ n = \frac{1 + 70(0.05)^2}{70} \]
\[ = \frac{1 + 0.25}{1 + 0.25} \]
\[ = 60 \text{ respondents} \]

Applying this formula, the sample size from a population of 70 is 60 respondents at 95% confidence level.

Validity of the Instrument
Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what is supposed to be measured. To ensure face validity of this instrument, copies of the instrument were given to experts and other colleagues for vetting before it was administered to the respondents. Contributions from these people were duly incorporated into the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument
To get the reliability of the instrument, ten copies of the questionnaire were administered to staff of the companies under study, who completed same and returned to the researcher. After one week interval, the same staff were presented with the same questionnaire for completion. The aim was to ascertain the consistency and trustworthiness of staff in completing the questionnaire. When the two sets of responses were compared, it was evidenced that their responses were similar as the respondents, maintained similar stand points in both cases.

Data Analysis Techniques
Chi-square statistic was used to analyze data in this study. This statistical test is used to test how observed frequencies fit into the expected frequencies. It enables us to ascertain if there is a relationship between variables under investigation by assessing their marginal values depending on their level of dependence or independence. The formula for chi-square is given as:

\[ X^2 = \frac{\sum (fo - fe)^2}{fe} \]

Where, \( X^2 = \text{Chi-square} \)
\[ fo = \text{Observed frequency} \]
\[ fe = \text{Expected frequency} \]

Testing the Hypotheses
In testing the hypotheses, the following steps were adopted.
i. Statement of the hypothesis in the null and alternative.
ii. Identification of the test statistic.
iii. Formulation of the decision rule.
iv. Computation of the test statistic.
v. Interpretation of the test result.

Hypothesis One

\( H_0: \) There is no significant relationship between conflict and organizational performance.

\( H_1: \) There is significant relationship between conflict and organizational performance.

Table 1  Computation of chi-square \((X^2)\) of response frequencies between conflict and organizational performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Observed Frequency</th>
<th>Expected Frequency</th>
<th>(fo - fe)</th>
<th>(\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>10.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>67.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Computed \(\sum X^2 = 67.82\)

Source: Research Data, 2015

Also, to determine the decision rule, the degree of freedom \((df)\) is applied.

\[ df = (r - 1)(c - 1) \]

Where; \(df\) = degree of freedom

\( r = \) number of rows
\( c = \) number of columns

Degree of freedom = \((r - 1)(c - 1)\)

\[ = (2 - 1)(5 - 1) = 1 \times 4 \]

\[ df = 4 \]

Significance level = 5%

Critical value of \(X^2\) at \(df = 4\) = 9.49

Computed \(X^2 = 67.82\)

Decision Rule

Since the computed value of \(X^2 = 67.82\) is greater than the critical value of 9.49, the null hypothesis \((H_0)\) is rejected and the alternative accepted. Thus, there is significant relationship between conflict and organizational performance in the companies under study.

Hypothesis Two

\( H_0: \) There is no significant relationship between conflict and stimulating interest and creativity among organization members.

\( H_1: \) There is significant relationship between conflict and stimulating interest and creativity among organization members.
Table 2  
Computation of chi-square ($X^2$) of response frequencies between conflict and stimulating interest and creativity in organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Observed Frequency (fo)</th>
<th>Expected Frequency (fe)</th>
<th>fo – fe</th>
<th>$(fo – fe)^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>43.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Computed $\sum X^2 = 43.32$

**Source:** Research Data, 2015

Also, to determine the decision rule, the degree of freedom (df) is applied.

$$df = (r - 1) (c - 1)$$

Where; $df =$ degree of freedom  
$r =$ number of rows  
$c =$ number of columns

Degree of freedom $= (r - 1) (c - 1) = (2 - 1) (5 - 1) = 1 x 4$

$df = 4$

Significance level = 5%

Critical value of $X^2$ at $df 4 = 9.49$

Computed $X^2 = 43.32$

**Decision Rule**
Since the computed value of $X^2 = 43.32$ is greater than the critical value of 9.49, the null hypothesis ($H_0$) is rejected and the alternative accepted. Thus, there is significant relationship between conflict and stimulating interest and creativity among the organizations under study.

**Hypothesis Three**

$H_0$: There is no significant relationship between conflict in enhancing staff morale and cohesion in organizations.

$H_1$: There is significant relationship between conflict in enhancing staff morale and cohesion in organizations.

Table 3  
Computation of chi-square ($X^2$) of response frequencies between conflict in enhancing staff morale and cohesion in organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Observed Frequency (fo)</th>
<th>Expected Frequency (fe)</th>
<th>fo – fe</th>
<th>$(fo – fe)^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>10.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>70.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Computed $\sum X^2 = 70.15$

**Source:** Research Data, 2015

Also, to determine the decision rule, the degree of freedom (df) is applied.
df = (r – 1) (c – 1)
Where; df = degree of freedom
r = number of rows
c = number of columns
Degree of freedom = (r – 1) (c – 1)
= (2 – 1) (5 – 1) = 1 x 4
df = 4

Significance level = 5%
Critical value of $X^2$ at df 4 = 9.49
Computed $X^2 = 70.15$

**Decision Rule**
Since the computed value of $X^2 = 70.15$ is greater than the critical value of 9.49, the null hypothesis ($H_0$) is rejected and the alternative accepted. Thus, there is significant relationship between conflict in enhancing staff morale and cohesion in the organizations under study.

**Discussion of Findings**
The test of the first hypothesis on conflict and organizational performance offers a gainful insight on the significance of conflict on organization performance.

The statistical test on the relationship between conflict and organizational performance proved positive and significant relationship. Organizational performance is low when conflict is extremely high. The organization is in a state of chaos because of disruption and interference to critical activities. Individuals spend more time defending themselves or attacking others than accomplishing productive work. This finding is in agreement with the view expressed by Sharma (2003:641) which stated that conflict would improve organizational performance and effectiveness.

Findings of this study reveal that conflict has significant relationship in stimulating interest and creativity in the organization under study. Being in conflict often sparks curiosity and stimulates viewing problems from several perspectives and combining the best of these positions to form a creative solution. Conflict is exciting as people learn about what makes them and others angry, frustrated and willing to fight. This finding is in support of the view of Fubua (2000:120).

The findings of this study revealed that there is positive and significant relationship between conflict in enhancing morale and cohesion in the organizations under investigation. Organizational members deal with and clear up their frustrations and resentments. They conclude that their relationships are strong enough to withstand stress and to handle difficulties. They also learn about each others needs, style and values through conflict. This point was further buttressed by Bloomsbury (2002:442) when he posits “conflict when effectively managed, will lead to better motivated staff, staff energies are directed to work rather than emotions, improved team work and better personal development of individual.
Conclusion
This work has examined the imperative of effective management and resolution of conflict in Nigerian organizations – A survey of selected manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made:

1. Conflict exerts great influence on the performance of the organizations under study. When conflict is extremely high, it will affect the smooth performance of an organization because organizational activities would be disrupted. A well managed conflict will improve organizational performance.
2. Conflict stimulates interest and creativity. Conflict is exciting as organizational staff learn about what makes them and others to be unhappy and frustrated.
3. Conflict enhances morale and cohesion in the organizations. Relationships are stronger to withstand stress and to handle difficulties. Each others needs and values are learnt through conflict.
4. Conflict contributes to staff energies directed to work in order to achieve organizational goals.
5. Finally, conflict has contributed significantly to better personal development of individuals in the organizations under study.

Recommendations
The following strategies are proposed based on the findings and conclusions of this study for effective resolution and management of organizational conflict.

1. Management should provide adequate information so that employees should not be kept in mental darkness as to what management is doing. One of the major causes of conflict in most organizations is insufficient information. Conflict arising from this can be managed by clarifying goals and actions of management to subordinates.
2. Expansion of resources. Management should think of appropriate methods of ensuring that there is sufficient quantity of resources for organizational use.
3. Equitable allocation of values. One of the duties of management is the authoritative allocation of values. Such values in an organization include available resources, monetary and non-monetary rewards. If employees perceive that management is authoritatively allocating such values inequitably it might results in conflict. This can be managed by ensuring those deserving employees are given what they have worked for.
4. Problem solving techniques should be devoid of bias on the part of management of the organizations. Conflict is a daily reality in organizations. It is the duty of management to manage such conflicts. If employees perceive a reasonable element of bias in management decision it can generate further conflict. The best problem solving techniques is one based on the rule of natural justice and due process. It simply states that anyone who has anything to decide should listen to all parties involved and a man should not be a judge in his own cause. This implies that all parties to a dispute or an erring employee should be given a formal hearing before a decision can be reached by management in solving problems. Management should follow the legal concept of due process. Due process refers to systematic orderly procedures, including individual’s right to controvert and to be heard concerning action pending against him.
5. Appropriate style of leadership should be adopted by management in the organizations. The style of leadership in an organization can help to prevent conflicts or generate conflicts. If the leadership style is not pari-passu with what the goals of the organization
deem and the outcome will be conflict. On the other hand, a leadership style that meets the demands of a particular organization can help in preventing conflict.

6. A good union – management relations in the organizations. Various unions protect the interests of their members. A good relationship between the unions and management can help achieve the goals of an organization. One of the ways of ensuring good union – management relations is collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is defined as negotiations about working conditions and terms of employment between employers or group of employees or one or more employer’s organizations on the one hand and one or more representative of the worker’s organization on the other hand, with a view to reaching agreement.

7. Goals should be clearly defined and the role and contribution of each unit towards the organizational goals must be clearly identified. All units and the individuals in these units must be aware of the importance of their roles and such importance must be clearly recognized.

8. Finally, the right of appeal should be guaranteed in the organizations. If an employee feels unjustly treated by the decisions of management, he should be allowed to litigate.

References


