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Effect of Conflict prevention initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of conflict prevention initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. In other to achieve this purpose, the study was guided by three specific purposes, three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated. The population comprised of all full time staff of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. Purposive sampling was utilized to select management, senior and supervisory staff of selected commercial banks. The study adopted the survey research design and a structured questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents. Data were analyzed using ordinary least square regression. Compromising, integrating and obliging served as proxies for conflict prevention initiatives. The study found that compromising initiative and integrating initiative have positive effect on organizational harmony while obliging initiative had negative effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks. The study concludes that compromising and integrating conflict prevention initiatives are vital to organizational harmony while obliging initiative has negative effect on organizational harmony. It was therefore, recommended that managers should embrace compromising and integrating conflict prevention initiatives and avoid using obliging conflict prevention initiative in order to enhance organizational harmony.

Keywords: Compromising, Integrating, Obliging, Commercial Banks, South East, Organisational Harmony

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Introduction

Over the years, there have been issues of conflicts in organizations giving rise to certain initiatives to prevent it and enhance organizational harmony. Conflicts are considered to be the most unpredictable issues that are faced in organizations among people working as a group. It is imperative for the managers to spend their working time for dealing with the conflicts and fallouts among the people. The term conflict is defined as a form of disagreement, argument, and discord among the individuals within group which is either unacceptable or resisted. Conflict is mainly associated with the opposing of ideas and actions which results in causing a hostile state (McKibben, 2017; Caputo, Marzi, Pellegrini, & Rialti, 2018).

Moreover, conflict has both positive and negative effects on team performance and outcomes. On the positive side, conflict can stimulate creativity and innovation, challenge assumptions, and improve decision-making. Aghaei, Haghani & Limunga, (2022) argued that conflict plays a crucial role in promoting idea-sharing, brainstorming, and effective decision-making among workers, irrespective of their seniority. It is important to adopt appropriate initiatives to prevent, mitigate and maintain a certain level of conflict to foster employee performance and organizational harmony. When team members are encouraged to express diverse opinions and perspectives, they can draw on their unique experiences and knowledge to generate new ideas and solutions. Also, when conflicts are prevented effectively, team members can learn from each other, build stronger relationships, and improve communication skills. Conversely, conflicts, regardless of their nature, have the potential to induce mental overload and impair the quality of decision-making, thereby diminishing employees' capacity to make effective choices (Khosravi, Rezvani & Ashkanasy, 2020).

Conflict prevention initiative is a systematic approach to preventing, resolve and managing conflicts to maximum extent by all means. It involves developing expertise in conflict resolution, awareness about conflict modes and sources, communication skills, and establishing a structure for conflict management. It requires managers to develop and implement plans, strategies, strategies, and policies to ensure effective resolution of conflicts. Every business that employs people regardless of size and industry experiences interpersonal and organizational conflict. This conflict is caused by multiple inter-related variables and circumstances. For example, some of these causes include constant changes in the competitive environment, increasing diversity among employees, and limited resources.

As a result of these changing variables conflict prevention initiatives are important in many ways. Generally the goal of conflict prevention initiatives is to create a situation in which differences and confrontations can be addressed in a non-violent and constructive manner. Moreso, it is important because unprevented conflict can have expensive legal consequences as people seek litigation as a way to resolve disputes. In addition, it is important because high level of negative conflict can cause employee lethargy, dissatisfaction and expensive turnover as well as decreased productivity.

Commercial banks play a vital role in the social economic development and national economy of the country. They provide services that span across savings, current and fixed deposit account. Moreover they rely heavily on deposits to fund their activities. However, they are being affected by competitive forces, consolidation, regulation, and changing financial and business technology. Indeed, in the past two decades a lot of changes have taken place in the sector. For example mergers, acquisitions, consolidation, e banking, among others. These are capable of bring about conflict in the form of intergroup and intra group conflicts.

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The South East is the one of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria representing both a geographic and political region of the country's inland southeast. It comprises five states – Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The largest city is Aba. Major cities are Enugu, Onitsha, Umuahia, Owerri, Nnewi, Awka, Abakaliki. The zone has 85 local government areas with a total population of over twenty million people. The zone has about ten large commercial cities. Apart from agriculture which is the major economic activity, the zone is also known as for commercial and trading activities with small and medium indigenous industries that are manufacturing goods and services. And there are many commercial banks in the region. This justifies the use of the area for the study.

Hence the need to carry out this study on effect of Conflict prevention initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria, Nigeria

Problem statement

In business organizations there are various resources generally grouped into human and material resources but the most important resource/asset to any organization is the human resources. people are the most common element in every organization and they can be used to further an organization‘s competitive advantage. Conflict emerges in an organization when the individual perceives that his goals are threatened or hindered by the activities of another person, especially, when the individual goals are at variance with organizational goals. Conflict that is prevented effectively by managers can lead to personal and organizational growth. On the other hand, it can hinder an employee‘s ability to perform and because of this, managers need to be aware of the ways in which conflict can be prevented and be prepared to act accordingly, since it is usually said that prevention is better than cure. Negative consequencesof conflict include diversion of energy from work, breed’s discontent, reduces communication, and group cohesiveness, threat to psychological well-being, wastage of resources, create a negative climate, increased hostility and aggressive behaviour. All these have effect on organizational harmony. Hence, it is imperative for the organisation to develop conflict prevention initiatives for avoiding conflicts or quickly dealing with conflicts. Thomas and Schmidt in Akhtar, e tal (2020) note that usually managers spend an estimated 1/4th of their time in conflict issues either as preventing initiatives and management which is equally important to strategic scheduling, budgeting, or decision making. Perquisite skill and expertise is needed to prevent conflicts otherwise it may cause an undesirable consequence and disharmony to the organization. The exercisingaccurate and appropriate conflict prevention initiatives for adverse situation result into successful and effective conflict management. Conflict prevention initiatives and skills are critically required in the organizations as the internal fighting and misunderstanding between the members of the organisations results in causing disruptions on the normal activities and create customer dissatisfaction. Commercial banks in Nigeria have witnessed an era of continual and dramatic change triggered primarily by global competitive pressures, enhancements in technology and a demanding customer-driven market. In this changing environment, the banks have to constantly adapt their activities and internal configurations to reflect the new external realities and this may bring about conflict between employees and between managers and employees. It is an era of competition in commercial banking sector, all banks are in competition/pursuit to improve their services and products by according due importance to the customers. Invariably, commercial banks are faced with the challenge of conflict prevention. Moreover, there is changing government policies, labour pressure, inflation, globalization which has impact on the operating system of commercial banks. Early studies investigated conflict management as it affected other sectors and did not address conflict prevention initiatives with respect to commercial banks. Thus, no recent research works have been undertaken, to

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the best of our knowledge to find out the effect of conflict prevention initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. This current study therefore seeks to fill this gap in knowledge.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of conflict prevention initiatives on organizational harmony of selected commercial banks in South East, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the effect of compromising initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks.
2. ascertain the effect of obliging initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks.
3. evaluate the effect of integrating initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of compromising initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks?
2. How does obliging initiatives affect organizational harmony of commercial banks?
3. To what extent does integrating initiatives affect organizational harmony of commercial banks?

Hypotheses of the study

The following null hypotheses are framed to be tested:

Ho1: Compromising initiative has no effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks.
Ho2: Obliging initiative has no effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks.
Ho3: Integrating initiative has no effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks.

Conceptual Review

Conflict Prevention Initiatives

Conflict prevention initiatives encompass cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses in the workplace. Conflict prevention initiatives presupposes the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way before they occur or assume a destructive dimension. Conflict prevention initiatives implemented within a business environment usually involves effective communication, problem resolving abilities and good negotiating skills to restore the focus to the company's overall goals. Such initiatives include compromise, integration, obliging, avoiding and dominating (Ozyildirim & Kayikci, 2017; Iyiola & Rjoub, 2020). Conflict prevention initiative is a systematic approach to preventing, resolve and managing conflicts to maximum extent by all means. It involves developing expertise in conflict resolution, awareness about conflict modes and sources, communication skills, and establishing a structure for conflict management. Conflict management may include interventions designed to reduce a conflict or in some cases, to increase insufficient conflict. It requires managers to develop and implement plans, strategies, and policies to ensure effective prevention and resolution of conflicts for organizational harmony. These initiatives include Compromising initiative, Integrating initiative and Obliging initiative.

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

1. **Compromising Initiative**

This initiative intermediates between concern for self and others. It involves "give and take" situation where both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. Compromising style also refers to splitting the difference, exchanging concessions or seeking a quick middle-ground position (Thomas &Kilmann in Kassim& Ibrahim, 2014). A compromising conflict prevention initiative involves trying to find a "common ground" that partly satisfies both parties. When individuals use this type of conflict prevention initiative, they possess a sense of fairness and realism. Even though this type of conflict prevention initiative may seem like the "best" style, it can often lead to problems. As a result of this management prevention initiative, there isn't a winning or losing part. Both sides gain some advantages but not all of them and they have to give up something. Compromising initiative is partially assertive and partially cooperative. It's looking for an acceptable settlement that only partially satisfies both one's own and the other person's concerns. The compromising strategy typically calls for both sides of a conflict to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable, if not agreeable, solution. This strategy prevails most often in conflicts where the parties hold approximately equivalent power.

2. **Integrating Initiative**

This initiative refers to the ability of manager to work with his or her employee to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. In integrating style each party learns and explore the conflict from his as well as other's insight. The conflict resolution via this style will meet both parties" objective. A way of developing a combined method by both parties to solve the relevant problem by correctly grasping the gut issue within the organization; integrative style, indicates of interest, self and other, also called way to solve problems, as it includes cooperation between parties in terms of clarity and exchange of information and check differences to reach an acceptable solution satisfies both conflicting sides. Integrating occurs when both parties seek a solution to a conflict by considering the interests of all parties (Caputo, Marzi, Pellegrini, & Rialti, 2018).

According to Rahim in Obichere and Eze (2025), this is useful for dealing effectively with complicated situations, particularly when one side alone cannot solve the problem. The object is to find a creative solution acceptable to everyone. It is collaborative and involves people surfacing their differences (get them out in the open) and then work on the problems until they have attained mutually satisfactory solutions. This approach assumes that people will be motivated to expend the time and energy for such problem-solving activity.

3. **Obliging Initiative**

Obliging initiative is linked with low concern for self and high concern for others and associates while attempting to play down the differences and emphasizing the commonalities to satisfy the concern of the party. An obliging person neglects his or her own concern to satisfy the concern of the other party. In this style, managers might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's needs and prefer to yield another's point of view (Kassim & Ibrahim, 2014). In this conflict prevention initiative, opposing topics are neglected and common points are emphasized. One part gives up its own desires to meet needs of other part. This strategy is appropriate when one part hasn't enough information about the topic and the relationship, between both parts, is to be maintained (Rahim, 2002).

This conflict prevention initiative is regarded as the acceptance that the preservation of pleasant interpersonal affairs is more significant than forming disagreements among colleagues. Individuals adopting an obliging/accommodating initiative have a high want for recognition and support from others. The Obliging individual is more apt to take a "middle of

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

the road" attitude when an inescapable conflict emerges. These individuals tend to use apology or humour, or express their desires in an indirect way rather than coming straight to the problem. Obliging occurs when both parties direct their efforts to highlight agreements rather than disagreements.

Organizational Harmony

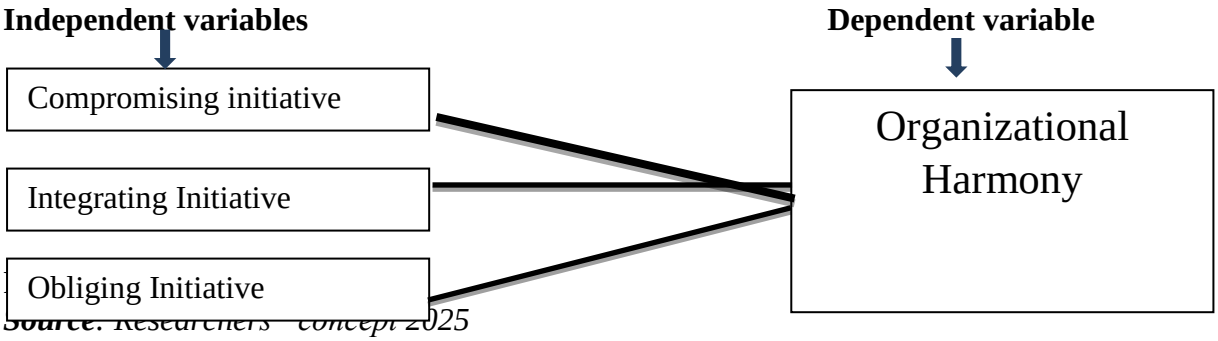
Organizational Harmony is a state of balance and positive interaction between employees in a workplace on one hand and management on the other hand that promotes team work, efficiency, productivity, stress reduction, and employee satisfaction.Organizational harmony refers to a friendly and cooperative agreement on working relationship between employers and employees for their mutual benefit (Otobo; Osad and Osas, in Tambari, 2020). In effect, it is a situation where employees and management cooperate willingly in pursuit of the organization's aims and objectives. Organisational harmony refers to the existence of cordial work relationships and productive interactions in which employees, their unions, and management recognize and accept one another as partners in development, and where a cooperative attitude is mutually advantageous in terms of production, efficiency, and rewards (Ladan, 2016). Organisational harmony does not preclude the existence of disputes; rather, it assumes that there are effective and proactive/preventive collective agreements and grievance procedures in place to keep disagreements from disrupting the functioning and operations of the organisation. Accordingly, organizational harmony is concerned with the relationship between management and employees with respect to the terms and conditions of employment and the work place (Puttapalli and Vuram, 2020). This is a state of relative peace in an organisation, which involves; absence of strikes, and distrust among work groups or unions, peaceful relationship between unions and management of the organization, as well as between employees in different and same units (Ladan, 2016).

Organizational harmony is that situation that promotes the collaboration and the "you win I win" strategy where one cooperates with the other party to find a resolution with mutually satisfying outcomes (Echaaobari, Adim and Ihundu, 2018). Organisational harmony is evidenced in the organization through collaboration, teamwork, and goal attainment. The key elements therefore are respect for diversity, effective communication, conflict prevention initiatives and team collaboration.

A harmonious relationship in the workplace is characterized by mutual respect, open communication, and collaboration. It is about fostering an environment where differences are valued and conflicts are prevented and managed effectively. By this, employees are motivated, engaged, and feel part of a purposeful team. Moreover it is possible to aggregate some key indicators that promote organizational harmony in organizations. These are employment policy underpinning terms and conditions of work, collective bargaining, communication and industrial democracy. Organizational harmony is crucial in any profession, but particularly so in the banking sector and the management. It underlines the effectiveness of teamwork and the efficiency of financial and non- financial services rendered to customers.

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

Conceptual Framework



***Source**: Researchers' concept 2025*

Theoretical Framework

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Theory (TKCM)

This theory was propounded by Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann in 1974. The theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals handle conflicts based on two dimensions: assertiveness (the degree to which a person attempts to satisfy their concerns) and cooperativeness (the extent to which they seek to satisfy the concerns of others). These dimensions are shown as the theory as five conflict prevention/resolution strategies, namely:

1. Competing – A highly assertive but uncooperative approach where one party seeks towin at the expense of the other. "Win - Loss" scenario.

2. Collaborating/Integrating – A win-win approach where both parties work together to find amutually beneficial solution."Win - Win" scenerio.

3. Compromising – A middle-ground strategy where both parties make concessions toresolve the conflict. "Win and Loos"

4. Avoiding – A low-assertiveness, low-cooperativeness strategy where one partywithdraws or sidesteps the conflict."Loss – Loss" scenario.

5. Accommodating/Obliging – A highly cooperative but unassertive strategy where one partyprioritizes the concerns of the other over their own."Loss – Win" scenario.

This TKC model Theory is relevant to this study on Conflict prevention initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria.

Where conflicts are handled using the competing initiative, employees may feel unheard, leading to dissatisfaction and disharmony. Avoidance, if excessively used, can escalate workplace tensions. However, integrating and compromising initiatives can enhance job satisfaction and organisational harmony. Therefore, applying the Thomas-Kilmann framework can help commercial banks implement effective conflict prevention initiatives that promote workplace harmony.

Human Relation Management Theory

The human relation theory was postulated by Mayo (1933), it analyses how social relations, employee motivation and satisfaction affect productivity in the factory. Mayo stressed on the natural groups' power, where social aspects take priority over functional firm structures. It emphasizes the requirement for reciprocal communication, where communication is two-way, from bottom to top as well, and the setting up of high quality leadership so as to

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

communicate goals and objectives and to make sure of decision making that is coherent and effective. Organizations require that their employees be in a position to communicate and convey information successfully, to be in a position to interpret colleagues' emotions, to be open to colleagues' feelings, and to be in a position to prevent conflicts and arrive at early resolutions. The theory is relevant to this study since the issue of conflict prevention initiative is more of a social/human relation activity in the workplace because conflicts are either between individuals or groups or between those guiding the implementation of organizational goals and objective and employees. By having the skills, the management level employees and the clients can maintain better and more compatible relationships. Some of the initiatives for conflict prevention are connected to this theory, whereby integrating initiative aims at solving conflicts through two-way communication and it shows concern for both self and other employees, also conflict prevention is seen as not a win all affair but involves compromise. This theory also links to the third objective which is obliging conflict prevention initiative as well.

Empirical Review

Obichere and Eze (2025) studied the effect of conflict management on employee retention ofCentral Bank of Nigeria, Enugu State. The objectives were to: determine the effect ofcollaboration, compromise strategy and avoidance strategy on employee retention in Central Bank ofNigeria, Enugu State. The research utilized survey research design. The population of the studywas 112. The collected data for the study was analysed through mean score. The Z-score statistical analysis was applied in testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed that: Collaboration, Compromise and Avoidance strategies had positive significant effect on employeeretention in Central Bank of Nigeria, Enugu State. The study concluded that conflict management had a positive significant effect on employee retention in Central Bank of Nigeria,Enugu State. The study recommended among others that the Central Bank of Nigeria, EnuguOffice should continue to prioritize and strengthen the collaboration strategy in conflict resolution.

Awolola and Anyakie (2025) investigated the impact of conflict management practices on theperformance of commercial banks in Nigeria's South-South area. The study employs a surveyresearch approach informed by Resource-Based Theory and Unitary Theory, gathering datathrough structured questionnaires sent to staff members of selected banks. Results show thatcollaboration tactics significantly improve organizational performance by cultivating mutualrespect, innovation, and enhanced team dynamics. Avoidance methods have inconsistent resultsand may be detrimental if excessively used, as they may conceal problems that re-emerge.Compromising techniques, while successful, sometimes provide only partial pleasure and have adiminished impact relative to teamwork. The research suggests that proficient conflictmanagement positively impacts staff productivity, satisfaction, and customer service deliverywithin the banking industry. To improve dispute resolution skills, it suggests making conflictmanagement rules part of the organization, providing training, encouraging a healthy workplaceculture, and setting up employee aid programs.

Shehu-Usman, Uzochukwu, Gambo and Abubakar (2024). This study centered on evaluatinghow conflict management strategies influence organizational performance, using the FederalRoads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) as a case study. The objectives of this study are to determine the relationship between conflict management strategies—specifically, avoidancestrategy, collaboration strategy, compromising strategy, and accommodation strategy - andorganizational performance. The study reviewed relevant theoretical and empirical literature,drawing its theoretical framework from contingency theory. The research

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

design employed asurvey research technique, with a close-ended questionnaire serving as the principal instrumentfor data collection. Utilizing Taro Yamane's formula, the established sample size for this studyincluded 235 staff members of FERMA. Hypotheses were tested using regression analysis as theselected statistical method. The study found a significant positive relationship between organizational performance and all the examined conflict management strategies, namely avoidance strategy, collaboration strategy, accommodation strategy, and compromising strategy.In light of the study's results, it is recommended that managers consider employing the identifiedconflict management techniques due to their demonstrated effectiveness in effectively handlingconflicts within organizational settings.

Chukuwuemeka, Irem and Edeh (2022) examined the effect of conflict resolution strategies on workers' retention in the Public Sector. The sample frame for this study comprises of two hundred and eleven workers drawn from five government parastatals in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Linear regression was used to analyse the research hypotheses. Result of the study revealed that conflict resolution strategies have significant effect on workers' retention. The study concluded that conflict resolution strategies such as compromising and avoidance strategies improve the retention of workers in the public sector. One of the implications of the research is that managers, administrators and supervisors should do everything possible to avoid conflict in the workplace to encourage the retention of workers in the organisation

Ewuru, Abang, Shehu and Abua (2024). The study determined the relationship that exists between conflict management and employees' productivity among business educators inColleges of Education in Cross River State. In other to achieve this purpose, the study was guided by three specific purposes, three research questions and three null hypotheses wereformulated. Correlational research design was adopted. The population of study comprised 38respondents made up of 30 business educators from FCE Obudu and 8 from COE Akamkpa respectively. The entire population was studied hence no sampling for the study. The instrumentused for data collection was a researcher made questionnaire titled: Conflict Management andEmployees' Productivity Questionnaire (CMEPQ) and was validated by three experts, from theDepartment of Vocational Education University of Calabar. Data collected was analyzed usingPearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test null hypotheses at .05 levels ofsignificance. Findings of the study showed collaboration, competition and compromise style ofconflict management significantly relate to employees' productivity among business educators inColleges of Education in Cross River State. It is recommended among others that employees' and authorities should learn to work together for the good of the establishment rather than insisting on personal goals.

Okoro, Iyke-Ofoedu and Nkwonta (2025) examined conflict management strategies and employee performance of commercial banks in Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey design. The selected commercial banks were Zenith Bank, First Bank, Union Bank and Fidelity Bank. The sample size of 249 respondents was drawn from population of 802 permanent staff of deposit money in Nigeria. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The hypotheses stated were tested using single regression techniques The empirical results show that collaboration has significant effect on employee effectiveness of commercial banks in Nigeria (t – statistics (8.887) >p – value (0.000) and avoidance have significant influence on employee attitude of commercial banks in Nigeria (t – statistics (8.111) >p – value (0.000). The study recommended that management of commercial banks in Nigeriashould embark on training and retraining of its employees in area of conflict management so as to create a conductive working environment for the employees and that there should be efficient and effective communication between and

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

among all categories of the employees the organization. This will reduce conflicting situations in the organization.

Babarinde and Alade (2024) explored the conflict management practices and employee's performance in selected manufacturing firms in Lagos State. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze data collected from the respondents. The study used Spearman correlation analysis as methodology tool. Findings indicated that there is a significantly positive relationship between conflict management strategies (collective bargaining, compromise, and accommodation) and organizational goal attainment. Non-integrative conflict management strategies (competition, domination and avoidance) had a negative statistically determinate effect on organizational goal attainment. The result also indicated that there is a significant relationship between conflict management (collective bargaining, accommodation,confrontation, and avoidance) and employees' performance among selected manufacturing companies in Lagos State.

Tamunobere and Tamunomiebi (2023) investigated the relationship between dispute resolution and industrial harmony in multinational oil and gas companies in Rivers State. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through a structured questionnaire. The population of this study was the five (5) 38 multinational Oil and Gas producing companies in Nigeria and operating in Rivers State. Due to the fact that the number of the population was small and can easily be covered, a census method is used and as such accordingly represents the sample for the study. However, for the purpose of data collection, in distributing the questionnaire as an instrument, the researcher distributed fifty (50) copies of questionnaire which will be distributed to managers The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 2 0.05 level of significance. Thestudy findings revealed that there is significant relationship between dispute resolution and industrial harmony multinational oil and gas companies in Rivers State. The study recommends that employees of multinational oil and gas companies are encouraged to join trade union. Through, employees will be able to gain more benefits such as; trade union negotiate for better pay and workplace protection, employment terms and condition, clear job description and workplace protections.

Ele, Ekpenyong, Okongo, Eneh and Arikpo (2024), this study evaluated the effects of conflict management strategies on employees' performance in the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, Calabar. The study employed survey research design in order to utilize a structured questionnaire in the collection of data for analysis. The population for the study was five hundred and fifty (550). The sample size for the study was two hundred and twenty six (226) using Krejcie and Morgan table of 1970. The hypothesis was tested and analysed using a simple linear regression analysis model applying a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23. The study found that there are positive effects of conflict avoidance strategy on employees' performance of the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, Calabar. There is a significant effect of conflict collaboration strategy on employees' commitment to goals achievement. There is a significant relationship between conflict accommodation strategy and employees' motivation. There is also a significant conflict mediation strategy on employees' involvement in the University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, Calabar. Based on the findings, the study recommended that management of organizations or institutions should monitor and intervene on issues that can lead to conflicts in order to enhance employees' performance by adopting avoidance strategies. Management should employ a collaboration

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

strategy or approach of win-win method of conflict resolution in order to enhance employees' commitment. Management should also attend to conflicting situations as urgently as possible in order to avoid those factors that can hinder employees' motivation and commitment to goal achievement. Management should also use a mediator in resolving conflicts on a continuous basis.

Mmbwanga, Maore & Were (2021) focused on Conflict management strategies and organizational performance: A survey of microfinance institutions in Nairobi. The purpose of the study was to assess how conflict management strategies influence performance of micro-finance institutions in Nairobi. The research study looked at contingency theory, stakeholder theory and human relations management theory. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 90 managers of MFIs operating within the city of Nairobi. A census method was adopted by the study. Questionnaires were used as the research instrument. The questionnaires were administered using the method of drop and pick later. The gathered data information was coded and then analyzed by use of SPSS. In summary, the regression model showed: a significant inverse relationship between accommodating strategy and performance of MFIs in Nairobi; A significant positive relationship between dominating strategy and performance of MFIs in Nairobi; A significant negative relationship between compromise strategy and performance of MFIs in Nairobi, and; a significant direct relationship between collaborating strategy and performance of MFIs in Nairobi. The gap include that the study was carried out in Kenya and among Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) whereas the current study is focused on selected commercial banks in Nigeria.

Wonah, Oluo, Ake and Benjamin (2020) conducted a study on conflict management strategies and organizational performance of River State civil service. The survey design was adopted in the study. The population of the study was three hundred and eighty (380) respondents (RSCS, 2018). A sample of 200 respondents was drawn out of the population of Rivers State Civil Service. The data used for this study was obtained from primarily sourced, and secondary data was also used and it was drawn from literature. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data in the study. The study showed that mediation is a predictor of organizational performance. The regression equation for predicted organizational performance, and negotiation is also a predictor of organizational performance. The study recommended that organizations should focus on increasing the utilization of conflict management strategies like negotiation and third party intervention to increase organizational performance, and that management should be sensitive to conflicts and set up effective communication channels to facilitate an improvement in conflict management. A gap exists here in that the above study is based on Civil service while the present study is in selected commercial banks in Nigeria.

Iyiola & Rjoub (2020), in their work assessed how to improve the quality of relationship-between the owners and contractors by using the Conflict management strategies. They used such strategies as compromise, integrating, dominating, Avoiding, and obliging. Researchers obtained a sample of 426 contractors and owners. Here the result was Conflict management climate significantly predicting the trust and relationship quality. The gap is that the study dealt with owners and contractors while this study is focused on selected commercial banks in Nigeria.

Kuzmin, Stanasiuk & Maiti (2020) did a study on Relationship between conflict management strategies and economic growth of organization. They aim to evaluate the relationship between the conflict management strategies and economic growth of the organisation. The

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

research design that is selected for the following study is triangulation method where the researcher attempts to explain the association between the conflicting management strategies and economic growth through interview, questionnaire survey and literature. As per the questionnaire survey, 85 professionals has completely provided with the data. In this manner, the correlation technique is performed in which it was identified that the conflict management and economic growth has significant and positive association. Moreover, the types of strategies that are associated with the economic growth comprises of accommodation, collective bargaining, compromising and confrontation whereas avoidance is found to have insignificant association with economic growth. Moreover, the factors responsible for the conflicts are poor communication and information gap. The adverse effect of not resolving conflict is that it leads to demotivation of employees and lower productivity. The above study was carried out in Ukraine while the present study is based on selected commercial banks in NigeriaAlso the study addressed economic growth while this study looked at organizational harmony.

Ofobruku (2022) investigated the effect of conflict management on organizational performance of some selected deposit money banks in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design and used a sample size of 112 staff. The staff were drawn from a population of 155 fulltime staff. Questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents. Data were analyzed using ordinary least square regression. Collaboration, collective bargaining and compromising served as proxies for conflict management. The study found that collaboration and collective bargaining had significant effect on organizational performance while compromising had no significant effect on organizational performance. The study concludes that collaboration and collective bargaining are vital to organizational performance while compromising is detrimental, and, therefore, recommends that managers should embrace collaboration and collective bargaining and avoid compromising. The gaps is that the study looked at conflict management and organizational performance while this study examined conflict prevention initiative and organizational harmony in selected commercial banks in South East, Nigeria.

Aoun, Mubarak and Hasnan (2020) studied the influence of CM on employee performance in several industrial businesses in Lebanon. First, a conceptual model was created grounded on a thorough literature study in which CMSs and employee performance were thoroughly explored in the context of definitions and prior research. Second, an online survey of 93 employees from three distinct industrial companies specializing in building materials, plastics, and wood and metal furniture in Lebanon was used to take a quantitative approach. The findings showed that, on average, CM had a favorable and considerable impact on employee performance, however only to a limited level. Only collaborative, compromise, and accommodating approaches exhibited a marginally favorable relationship with employee performance. The gap exist in that the study made use of industrial companies while this study made use of selected commercial banks in South east, Nigeria.

The influence of Conflict Management styles on team performance were analyzed by Alhamali (2019). There were five types of styles: avoiding, integrating, dominating, obliging, and compromise. On the other side, team performance was measured in cohesiveness, communication, inventiveness, and quality. Five hypotheses were proposed about the influence of each CM factor on team performance. Results revealed that three conflict management approaches (integrating, obliging, and compromise) were shown to have substantial beneficial benefits on team performance, whereas two types (avoiding and dominating) were found to have significant adverse effects. The study looked at influence of

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CM factor team performance while this study examined effect of conflict prevention initiative on organisational harmony in selected commercial banks in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study utilized the survey research design method. The research aimed to determine the effect of Conflict prevention initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. The study was conducted in Anambra and Abia States.

The study population consisted of all full time staff of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw sample from the population. Consequently, thirty (30) staff was selected from each of the selected banks made up of management, senior and supervisory cadre. The selected banks for the study include United Bank for Africa (UBA), Zenith bank, Access bank, First Bank, Guarantee Trust Bank, First City Monument Bank (FCMB), Keystone Bank, Fidelity and Union bank. These banks were chosen because they have been operating in the region for over fifteen years and have established branch networks in the region.

The study utilized primary data. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The researchers confirmed research tool validity by giving the document to three experts in management science/ research. In order to ensure reliability of the research instrument, a pre-test was done using same category of staff of ten commercial and microfinance banks who were not involved in the actual study.

The construct validity was ascertained by defining clearly the variables to be measured. The results from reliability indicated that all the variables had Cronbach alpha coefficient values greater than 0.7. Thus, the study instruments met the required reliability threshold and thus were considered reliable for data collection.

The copies of the questionnaire were administered by dropping them and collecting the duly filled ones later. Contact persons were used to make sure that as many copies of questionnaire were filled as completely as possible and that as many copies of questionnaire as possible were collected for analysis. 270 questionnaires were distributed and 256 were collected and used for data analysis. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section a sought demographic of the respondents and that of the bank while section b addressed aspects of conflict prevention initiatives. The questionnaire was administered on a drop and pick up later basis. The questionnaire was designed following the 5-point likert scale format where respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

The data collected were analysed using the Ordinary Least Square Regression method with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The model specified for the research is stated as follows:

$ORGHARM - b_0 + b_1 cmp + b_2 int + b_3 obl + e1$

where:

orgharm - organizational harmony
cmp - compromising
int – integrating
obl – obliging
$b_1 - b_3$ - coefficients of compromising, integrating and obliging respectively.
b_o -- intercept

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

e - error term

The Ordinary least square regression method was used for the analysis because it allows the researcher to estimate the strength of the effect of the independent variables and dependent variable and also has the ability to show the extent to which changes in the independent variables affect the dependent variable.

Data Analysis, Result and Discussions

Respondents' profile

Table I: Demographic

The demographic profiles of the participants in table 1 indicated that 137 respondents representing 54% are females while 49 respondents representing 46% are males. Age of the respondents revealed that 42 participants representing 16% fall within 18-33 years; 137 participants representing 54% fall within 34-43 years and, 77 respondents representing 30% fall within 44 years and above. Educational level of the participants shows that 83 respondents representing 32% have diploma certificate; 105 participants representing 41% have Bachelor's; 56 respondents representing 22% have Masters and; 12 participants representing 5% have M Phil/Ph.D. Work experience of the respondents revealed that 65 participants representing 25% have worked between 1-10 years; 125 respondents representing 49% have worked between 11 - 20 years; 40 respondents representing 16% (21 – 30) and 26 respondents representing 10% (above 30 years)

Demographics	**Categories**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	119	46.0
	Female	137	54.0
Age	18 – 33	42	16.0
	33 -43 137	41.0	
	44 and above	77	30.0
Education	Diploma	83	32.0
	Bachelor's Degree	105	41.0
	Master's Degree	56	22.0
	M Phil/PhD	12	5.0
Experience	Below 10 Years	65	25.0
	11-20 Years	125	49.0
	21-30 Years	40	16.0
	Above 30 Years	26	10.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Regression Analysis:

The study made use of multiple regression analysis to assess the effect of predictor factors (compromise, integrating and obliging initiatives) variables on the outcome factor (organizational harmony).

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested. the study adopted 95% confidence interval that is 5 % level of significance and conclusions were drawn based on the probability values (p-values).we reject the null hypotheses if p-value is less than 0.05., and where the p-value is greater than 5%, we accept the null hypotheses.

Table II: Regression Model Result
Dependent Variable: Organizational Harmony
Method: Ordinary Least Squares

Variable	**Coefficient**	**T-Value**	**Prob.(P)**
C	7.34251	3.64236	0.01423
Compromising	0.73424	2.13246	0.02432
Integrating	0.87564	2.43257	0.03756
Obliging	0.51232	2.32453	0.35342
Summary Statistics			
R-Squared	0.7132	F-Statistic	5.6435
Adjusted R-Squared	0.6845	Prob(F-Statistic)	0.0312
Durbin Watson	1.9546		

Research Computation Using SPSS -23

The model's goodness of fit indicators

The overall fit and significance of the organizational harmony model showed that the model has a good fit, as shown by the value of the f-statistic of 5.6435 which is significant at the 5.0 per cent level as the F-statistic p-value of 0.0312 is less than 0.05 probability levels. the coefficient of determination as measured by the R square 0.7132 shows that compromising, integrating and obliging initiatives explain 71.32% of total variation in organizational harmony while the disturbance or error term (ε) covers 28.68%.

Test of Hypothesis One

The regression result in Table 11 shows that the calculated t-value for the effect of compromising initiative on organizational harmony is 2.13246 and the p-value is 0.02432 at 5% level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis ($H_0$1) and conclude that compromising initiative has a significant effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks in

Test of Hypothesis Two

From Table 11, it can also be seen from the regression result that the calculated t-value for the effect of integrating initiative on organizational harmony is 2.43257 and the p-value of 0.03756 at 5% level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the study rejects the null hypothesis (h02) and concludes that integrating initiative has a significant effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks in

Test of Hypothesis Three

Finally, the regression result in Table 11 shows that the t-value obtained for the effect of obliging initiative on organizational harmony is 2.32453 with p-value of 0.35342 at 5% level of significance. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the study accepts

https://www.doi.org/10.46654/day05g21

the third null hypothesis ($h0_3$) and concludes that obliging initiative has no significant effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks in

Discussion of findings

The findings from this study show that compromising initiative has a significant effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. This means that where there is compromise between managers and staff of the banks, conflict is prevented and this enhances organizational harmony. This finding is contrary to the findings of M'mbwanga, Maore & Were (2021) who found that there is negative correlation between compromising initiative and performance of MFIs in Nairobi but agrees with Kuzmin et al (2020) and Obichere & Eze (2025) who found in their separate studies that there is association between compromising, economic growth of organizations and employee retention. This is aligned with Human Resource Management theory that emphasize social relations, reciprocal communication and openness which enhances organisational harmony.

It was further found that integrating initiatives has a significant effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria By implication this highlights the fact that when staff are involved in integrating initiatives with managers, the chances of conflict is minimized thereby enhancing organizational harmony. The result is in agreement with the study of Ofobruku (2022) who found that integrating initiative has significant effect on organizational performance. Also Echaaobari et al (2018) discovered that integrating has significant positive relationship with employee performance. The finding is connected to HRM theory, in so far as integrating initiative aims at solving conflicts through two-way communication and shows concern for both self and other employees thereby enhancing harmony.

This study finally found that obliging initiative has no significant effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. This shows that obliging can engender conflict prevention in an organization thereby affecting organizational harmony adversely. This is in line with the findings of Aoun et al (2020) who found marginally favourable relationship between obliging initiative and organizational performance but contrary to findings of Samrah et al (2022) who disclosed that there is significant relationship between obliging and employee performance. In addition, Alhamali (2019) found that obliging has substantial beneficial benefit on team performance vis-a-viz organisational harmony.

Conclusion of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of conflict prevention initiatives on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. The following conclusions are hereby made according to the study objectives. The results portrayed a positive effect of compromising conflict prevention initiative on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. It is also concluded that a notable and positive association exists between integrating conflict prevention initiative and organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. However, obliging conflict prevention initiative has no effect on organizational harmony of commercial banks in South East, Nigeria. This was shown by coefficient of 0.512 and significance value of 0.353.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings derived from the study and the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are hereby made:

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1. Compromising conflict prevention initiative should be used by managers, supervisors and management staff of commercial banks. This is because there exists significant direct association between compromising conflict prevention initiative and harmony of commercial banks.
2. Also integrating conflict prevention initiative should be adopted to facilitate prevention/resolving of conflicts in the organization as well as enhance harmony and productivity of commercial banks.
3. However, management of commercial banks should avoid using obliging conflict prevention initiative unless it is the only strategy that can fit the situation. This is because the findings revealed a neutral effect of obliging initiative on organizational harmony.

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