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Conflict Management and Staff Productivity in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State (2018-2023)

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Abstract

The article examined the influence of conflict management on the productivity of University of Uyo employees. The study focused on the implications of mediation, conciliation and collective bargaining as conflict management techniques. Conflict management is one of the factors that determine the productivity of staff in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The key issues which hinder the productivity of the staff at the University of Uyo are interpersonal relationship conflicts, resource allocation, and organisational policies. The theoretical framework applicable in the study was the Contingency Theory. The study model is a descriptive survey involving a total of 2,500 personnel that comprised of lecturers, administrative employees as well as support employees. Krejcie and Morgan sample size formula were the formulae used to determine the sample size of 352 respondents. Data was gathered through primary and secondary sources and analysed to find the link between conflict management strategies and employee productivity. The results showed that effective mediation led to enormous modifications in the quality of employee cooperation, as conciliation provided the opportunity to establish a peaceful working environment. They proved that collective bargaining enhanced the happiness of the workers leading to a higher productivity in the long run. The study confirmed the gaps in applying these measures like mediators training and the prolonged resolution time. Lastly, conflict management emerged as a relevant factor that dictated staff productivity at the University of Uyo. The study had suggested that the university authority should set up a powerful conflict resolution model and Centre of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to give regular training to the conflict resolution managers. It also stated that the university should make sure that the conflicts at workplace are solved promptly. Such would turn the organisation into a working organisation and a better place to work.

Introduction

Conflict arises in organizations when an individual believes that their objectives are jeopardized or obstructed by the actions of others. Human relations theorists posit that conflict is inherent and inevitable within all groups and organizations, asserting that conflict is not inherently detrimental; rather, it is the emergence of a crisis that is considered abnormal (Rahim, 2017) [31]. Conflict indicates a degree of cooperation and suggests that it should be managed rather than eliminated (De Dreu, 2021). Mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and collective bargaining are all ways to deal with conflict (Rahim, 2017) [31].

In Nigerian universities, conflicts are common because management doesn't follow the terms and conditions of employment that everyone agreed to. This has led to workers going on strike. These conflicts may arise from various factors, including competition for limited resources, unpopular administrative decisions, interpersonal differences, and ambiguity concerning job roles (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). Even though conflict is common, managing it is hard and has often hurt staff productivity and the growth of the institution. Unresolved conflicts in the University system frequently manifest as diminished employee morale, elevated staff turnover, ineffective communication, and overall job dissatisfaction (Pollack Peacebuilding Systems, 2022) [30]. These kinds of problems slow down schoolwork, making both academic and non-academic staff less productive and effective. When conflicts get worse without being resolved quickly and properly, it hurts the productivity of staff, including important tasks like teaching, research, and administration (Pollack Peacebuilding Systems, 2022) [30].

At the University of Uyo, strikes happen a lot, and there are problems between academic and non-academic staff and between

management and staff unions. These problems often have to do with not enough money, bad working conditions, late paychecks, and poor communication between management and staff. In light of the aforementioned, the existing conflict management mechanisms at the university appear insufficient to address these conflicts effectively, resulting in unresolved issues that exacerbate the situation and diminish staff productivity (Habila, Ibi, & Shamaki, 2025) [15]. The primary objective of this study was to analyze the various conflict management strategies implemented at the University of Uyo and their effects on staff productivity.

Objectives of the Study
The main purpose of this study is to determine the effect of conflict management on staff productivity in the University of Uyo. To fulfill this overarching goal, the following specific objectives were the focus of the study:
1. To assess the impact of mediation on the productivity of staff at University of Uyo.
2. To analyze the effect of conciliation on staff productivity in University of Uyo.
3. To examine the effect of collective bargaining on the productivity of staff in the University of Uyo.

Research Questions
To guide the research the following questions were formulated:
1. How does mediation affect staff productivity at the University of Uyo
2. How does conciliation impact on staff productivity in the University of Uyo
3. What is the effect of collective bargaining on the productivity of staff in the University of Uyo

Research Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were examined in the study:
1. There is a significant relationship between mediation and staff productivity in the University of Uyo.
2. There is a significant relationship between conciliation and staff productivity in University of Uyo.
3. There is a significant relationship between collective bargaining and the productivity of staff in the University of Uyo.

Review of Conceptual Literature
Conflict Management
In order to preserve a positive working environment, conflict management is the process of handling disagreements within the organization in a constructive way to prevent them from getting out of hand. It contains methods for handling, lessening, or resolving disputes while promoting harmony and cooperation among people or groups. Good conflict management reduces the negative consequences of disputes, encourages healthy rivalry and creativity, and boosts output (De Dreu 2021). Competition for resources, divergent objectives and values, a breakdown in communication, interpersonal tensions, and hierarchies are some of the causes of organizational conflicts, including those that occur in educational institutions like universities. Destructive conflicts result in lower morale and productivity as well as higher turnover rates, whereas constructive conflicts can help increase creativity and decision-making (Rahim, 2017) [31]. Promoting constructive conflict and minimizing negative effects are the goals of conflict management.

Conflict management is especially crucial in universities due to their intricate structures and wide range of users, including administrators, students, and academic and non-academic staff. According to Omisore and Abiodun (2014) [29], problems like work overload, limited promotion, a lack of resources, and poor communication frequently lead to conflicts. Conflicts of this nature can disrupt academic and administrative efficacy if they are not resolved. Conciliation, mediation, and negotiation are a few crucial conflict resolution techniques (Barki & Hartwick, 2020) [6]. Other strategies, like accommodation and avoidance, may reduce tension temporarily, but they are less effective for long-term fixes (Thomas, 2017) [33]. Five conflict management styles are listed in Rahim's (2002) dual concern model: avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, and collaborating. Aseroids are typified by: - Competing, which can be useful in making quick decisions but leaves one feeling bitter; - Collaborating, which demonstrates a high concern for oneself and others; and - Seeking win-win solutions. Collaboration fosters respect, communication, and collaborative decision-making, which boosts employee morale and productivity in academic institutions where teamwork and creativity are crucial (Ogunyemi and Fadekemi, 2021) [26]. In this cooperative, low-conflict culture, strong leadership and emotional intelligence are also essential. The secret to preventing and resolving conflict is communication. Research indicates that openness, frequent communication, and clarity build trust and minimize misunderstandings (Poon *et al*., 2021). A major cause of conflict, particularly in environments with limited resources, is poor communication (Mohammed & Obid, 2022). Although conflict is sometimes seen as harmful, when managed constructively, it can improve decision-making, creativity, and organizational effectiveness (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014; Dineva *et al* 2020 [9]).

The accommodating strategy, which is centered on putting others' needs first, maintaining peace, and expressing grievances openly, is one of the conflict management techniques used in Nigerian universities. However, if it is overused, it may not produce high-quality decisions (Wobodo, 2019 [34]; Hussein *et al* 2017). In order to reach a consensus, parties use the compromising strategy, which looks for the middle ground. Although helpful in offering a speedy resolution, excessive use may lead to discontent (Momanyi & Juma, 2016; Yusuf-Habeeb & Kazeem, 2017 [35]). Through the process of collective bargaining, which frequently takes place through unions, employees can collectively make demands regarding the terms of their employment. Although it is an alternative to strike or lockout and covers wage, promotion, work hours, and policy issues, it is also challenging to implement in Nigeria due to inadequate enforcement and political meddling (Fajana, 2000) [11]. The process of bringing in an outsider to guide the conversation without pressuring a resolution in order to improve staff communication and lessen stress is known as mediation (Ojo, 2020) [27]. However, the use is underutilized in Nigeria due to the cost issue and enforcement challenges (Fashoyin, 1992). More than this, conciliation actively offers solutions to conflicts, particularly when there are power disparities or communication barriers. Rebuilding relationships and trust is its main goal, and it frequently follows up on unsuccessful collective bargaining (Nwogbede & Akintola, 2021). According to Akinboade *et*

al. (2016) [4], negotiation is a straightforward and collaborative process in which the parties aim to reach mutually agreeable agreements to improve departmental satisfaction and relationships.

Usually used for employment or contract disputes, arbitration is a formal procedure in which an arbiter renders a legally binding ruling. In order to address systemic issues like curriculum reforms or funding, collaborative problem-solving emphasizes teamwork and shared decision-making. It also fosters greater inclusivity and stronger relationships. Avoidance can be used to delay or prevent minor disputes, but it can also increase tensions over time. Similarities: Compromise is practical and neither side is typically completely satisfied; it is compared to giving something to the other. In the handling of disputes at universities, these strategies—the formal method of arbitration and the informal method of negotiation and mediation—complement each other. When they are used effectively, they promote innovation, communication, and harmony within the organization. Universities are better positioned to improve productivity, foster positive work environments, and ensure stability in academic and administrative procedures when they adopt inclusive and collaborative conflict management approaches.

Staff Productivity: The effectiveness and efficiency with which employees perform their duties and responsibilities within an organization is referred to as staff productivity. The output or results that the employees attain in relation to the time, effort, and resources invested are usually used to quantify it. In academic institutions like universities, staff productivity refers to the ability of both academic and non-academic staff to contribute to the achievement of the institution's objectives, including teaching, research, administrative tasks, and service delivery (Olaoye *et al.*, 2022). The work environment, leadership, organizational culture, employee motivation, and resource availability are some of the elements that impact workplace productivity. According to Hashim *et al.* (2020) [16], employee productivity is the most important component of an organization's success and directly affects the volume of services provided, the organization's reputation, and the caliber of its performance. The ability of university academic staff to teach courses, publish research papers, attend academic conferences, and contribute to the establishment of the institution are all common indicators of their productivity. The ability of non-academic staff to manage resources, provide administrative and supporting services, and guarantee the smooth operation of an institution is the basis for evaluating their productive quality (Osakwe, 2021). Elements that encourage employee productivity;

A key component of staff productivity, especially in a university setting, is efficient time management. as well as employees' capacity to set priorities, adhere to deadlines, and manage both personal and professional obligations. Teaching, research, and administrative duties must frequently be balanced by academic staff, and ineffective time management can result in work overload, stress, and burnout, all of which can lower productivity. In order to improve staff performance, motivation is also essential. Motivated workers are more involved, creative, and dedicated to the objectives of the company, claims Armstrong (2021) [5]. Job security, recognition, opportunities for professional growth, and pay can all have

an impact on motivation in higher education. According to Maduabuchi and Igbojekwe (2018) [20], employees who feel appreciated and supported are more likely to perform at their best than those who are demotivated as a result of subpar leadership, a lack of resources, or lack of recognition. This can lead to low productivity, absenteeism, and high turnover. Employee productivity is significantly impacted by the workplace. Well-equipped physical facilities, psychological support, job satisfaction, and positive interpersonal relationships all contribute to a positive work environment. Productivity can be decreased in toxic environments that are marked by conflict and poor communication (Ugwulor & Ezeonwu, 2019). Productivity is also influenced by leadership; effective leaders set clear goals, supply the necessary tools, and foster a culture of cooperation and trust. Employee morale increases under transformational leadership when participation and contributions are acknowledged (Okolie *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, performance management systems that include professional development, feedback, and appraisals guarantee that employees are in line with the institution's objectives, which maximizes productivity even more (Adeyemi & Adu, 2020).

Workplace conflict and Productivity in the Workplace of higher learning institutions in Nigeria Workplace conflict, especially in academic institutions, like universities can have some practical and valuable impact on the productivity of the staff. They may directly or indirectly influence the amount and quality of work output, organisational culture and work environment. The knowledge of these effects is important since it enables the use of the effective conflict management methods that subsequently lead to the creation of the beneficial and healthy working environment. Among the most evident consequences of the conflict is the consequences of low productivity and efficiency. Employees have to lose much time and energy on conflict resolution at the expense of their main tasks. The consequences of this diversion of resources might be reduced output, missed deadlines, low quality work, and increased number of mistakes and oversights. A study conducted by Okonkwo and Eze at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, found that a department with high internal conflict level registered a 30-percent reduction in research publications in the span of two years (Okonkwo and Eze 2023). Equally, the University of Uyo academic workforce has been reported to have been involved in industrial conflict over workload allocation which has in turn led to delays in delivery of the curriculum and research output. Employees in conflicts can also have a higher incidence of errors and omissions since they are divided between their jobs and conflicts with their colleagues (Ojo *et al.*, 2022). Such inefficiencies can affect both departmental development and institutional objectives besides individual performance.

Another significant consequence of conflict in Nigerian universities is the disruption of professional relationships. Conflicts can cause problems between coworkers, departments, or between employees and management. This decline often leads to less cooperation and teamwork, communication problems, less sharing of information, and a stronger feeling of being alone for people or groups. A comprehensive study conducted by Akpan and Ibanga (2023) on five South-South Nigerian universities, including the University of Uyo, indicates that the prevalence of inter-departmental conflicts has led to a 40% reduction in the

number of collaborative research projects. Eka (2022) says that the academic staff union and the university administration at the University of Uyo don't always agree with each other. This has caused a major breakdown in communication, which has made it harder to put important academic policies and new ideas into action. Ongoing conflict at work is another major cause of stress and a reason why employees are getting burned out. This could look like more employees missing work, more health problems, feeling emotionally drained, and less motivation and job satisfaction. A longitudinal study by Olatunji *et al.* (2023) [28] in federal universities in Nigeria revealed a 25% increase in staff absenteeism over three years at institutions frequently experiencing conflict. Essien and Udoh (2022) [10] conducted a survey at the University of Uyo, revealing that 60% of academic staff exhibited symptoms of burnout, primarily attributed to persistent disputes regarding workload and compensation, which were the principal stressors. The National Universities Commission's outside evaluators say that this burnout has led to a big drop in the quality of teaching and research (NUC, 2023).

If conflicts aren't resolved, they can have a big impact on staff retention rates because good employees might look for work elsewhere. This turnover, especially in Nigerian universities, can make things very hard for the institutions. When employees or faculty leave an organization because they don't agree with each other, the organization has two problems: losing qualified workers in the short term and the long-term effects of their leaving. This turnover means that institutional knowledge and skills that can take years to build up are lost. For example, experienced faculty members who have unique research projects, mentor students, and work with other faculty members on projects leave a gap that new hires can't fill right away.

Also, high turnover costs a lot of money for training and hiring new employees. Maduabuchi and Igbojekwe (2018) [20] assert that unresolved conflicts with administration frequently contribute to the elevated faculty turnover in Nigerian universities. Because of this, the institution's stability and productivity are hurt because hired and trained staff keep leaving. Integrating new hires could take up the time and resources needed to improve academic programs, do research, or improve student support services. So, high turnover rates not only get in the way of ongoing projects and research, but they can also lower the morale of the employees who are still there, which leads to more conflict and disengagement.

When people in a company argue all the time, it can make the workplace toxic, which makes employees less happy and less motivated. Disagreements that aren't settled can make people feel angry, annoyed, and distrustful. For instance, faculty and staff at the University of Uyo often complain about how little support and recognition the administration gives them. This has led to a culture of unhappiness that has hurt productivity (Olaoye *et al.*, 2022). This bad company culture may also make it harder to keep top talent and hurt recruitment efforts. It may also make employees less committed and loyal to the company. In such an environment, workers may feel undervalued and disillusioned, which would hurt their creativity and productivity. Toxic cultures can also make people less likely to apply for jobs at the university, which makes staffing problems worse. It might also be hard to work with outside partners, like funding agencies and research institutions,

because of the bad reputation that comes from conflicts within the organization. The challenges in cultivating a positive workplace culture underscore the importance of swiftly and amicably resolving conflicts to create an environment that promotes collaboration and support among employees.

To try to settle long-standing disputes, universities have to move important resources around, which could lead to higher administrative costs and less money for basic academic operations. Conflict resolution programs take time and money away from important schoolwork and other productive activities. For example, the University of Uyo often takes money that could have been used for staff training, research funding, or improvements to the infrastructure to settle internal disputes. If the university doesn't use its resources well, it may have a harder time achieving its goals. Instead of funding creative research projects or improving educational facilities, time and money could be spent on mediating conflicts or holding conflict-resolution training sessions. Because of this, students might not get the best instruction, and the school as a whole might not move forward as quickly. Also, if employees think that important resources are being taken away from their needs to deal with personal conflicts in a bad work environment, they may lose faith in the company.

A conflict-ridden environment can make it hard for an organization to be creative and come up with new ideas. To make schools and other educational settings more creative, staff and faculty members often need to be able to talk about their ideas and take risks. But this openness is greatly reduced when there are a lot of conflicts in the air. Faculty may be dissuaded from experimentation due to apprehensions regarding retaliation or adverse consequences stemming from the introduction of innovative solutions or the challenge of established norms (Adeyemi & Adu, 2020). This lack of new ideas could keep the school from adapting and thriving in a rapidly changing academic world. For example, staff working together and sharing ideas are important for coming up with new ways to teach, do research, and use technology. It is hard for faculty members to work together well or take part in projects that cross disciplines if they can't talk to each other because they disagree. The university may, therefore, fall behind in terms of the number and quality of research projects, as well as in terms of funding and reputation over time.

The cumulative effects of conflict on staff productivity can result in diminished research output and quality, ineffective instruction, and increased difficulty in securing grants and funding. A bad workplace also has a negative impact on students' experiences and enrollment. The University of Uyo is a typical school that needs its employees to be engaged and productive in order to keep its academic standing and attract students. Continual disagreements can create barriers to effective teaching, potentially diminishing student satisfaction and retention rates (Ogunyemi & Fadekemi, 2021) [26]. Also, not having enough money for research may limit the chances for faculty development and institutional growth. If the university doesn't promise to settle disputes and create a cooperative work environment, it could lose its reputation as a top academic institution. To improve productivity and show that the university is a good place to work and do well, it is clear that conflict management techniques are needed. By proactively resolving disputes and creating an inclusive environment, universities can

lessen the bad effects of conflict and make things better for both students and staff.

The effect of conflict on university staff productivity, especially at the University of Uyo, shows how important it is to use effective conflict resolution methods. By addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as insufficient funding, poor working conditions, and late paychecks, institutions can reduce these negative effects and create a more unified and productive workplace. These conflict-related problems have had a big effect on the overall reputation and productivity of Nigerian universities. For example, the University of Ibadan's international ranking is steadily dropping because of internal conflicts that affect research output and international collaborations. The university used to be one of the best 500 in the world. The University of Uyo has also been affected by these problems. Udo and Akpan (2023) say that the number of successful grant applications has gone down by 15% in the last five years. They say this is because of the unstable work environment caused by the ongoing conflicts.

It is very important to deal with these conflict-related issues in order to boost staff productivity and the performance of Nigerian universities. Programs like the University of Lagos' Conflict Resolution and Management Workshop series (Adebayo *et al.*, 2022) have shown good results. The departments that took part have seen a 15% drop in grievance filings and a 20% rise in collaborative work projects. The University of Uyo has recently adopted a similar strategy. In 2023, it formed a Conflict Resolution Committee to try to deal with problems that cause conflicts, such as not enough money, bad working conditions, and unpaid salaries (University of Uyo Annual Report, 2023). Nigerian universities are still having problems, so it's clear that good ways to resolve conflicts are needed to make the learning environment peaceful and successful. By focusing on the root causes of conflicts and giving staff tools for proactive conflict resolution, schools like the University of Uyo can boost staff productivity, strengthen working relationships, and raise their profile in the academic community.

Empirical Studies

Ibrahim and Adeyemi (2019) [18] employed a correlational survey research design to investigate the relationship between administrative effectiveness and conflict management strategies in tertiary institutions located in Sokoto. The data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis, which revealed a significant correlation between administrative effectiveness and communication, competition, dialogue, and prevention. Agusioma (2019) [1] examined the impact of staff conflict resolution on the performance of employees within Kenya's Public Service Commission. The study utilized a mixed-methods research approach and a descriptive survey research design. The study's findings, derived from path regression analysis, indicated that conflict resolution had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The study also found that staff participation had a partial mediating effect on the link between employee performance and other factors.

Nuel-Okoli *et al.* (2018) [24] conducted a related study employing descriptive statistics and the Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation to examine the influence of conflict management on organizational performance in

private universities within Anambra state, namely Madonna University Okija, Tansian University Oba, and Paul University Awka. The study established a correlation between conflict management strategies and their impact on organizational performance, revealing that such techniques substantially enhance performance.

Melissa, Anna, and Katie Melitsky (2018) [22] look at the problems that K–12 teachers have with managing conflict in the classroom. The study says that good communication and thorough training in how to handle conflicts are very important for the system at all levels. Further findings reveal that proficient communication and conflict resolution training are essential for managing disputes in the classroom. Irene and Athanasios (2018) executed an additional study on conflict management within a leadership context. A questionnaire was used to interview 180 employees of the Greek public administration for the study. The research indicates that transactional leadership exhibits a negative correlation with non-constructive conflict management strategies, whereas transformational leadership demonstrates a positive correlation with them. The statistical findings indicated that transformational leadership exerted a more significant relative influence. Consequently, the study's findings underscored the significance of leadership in conflict resolution, which is highly relevant to the objectives of the investigation.

Structure of Ideas. Numerous theoretical perspectives offer significant insights into the relationship between staff productivity and conflict resolution strategies concerning university productivity. This study utilized contingency theory. Fred Fiedler came up with the idea of contingency theory in 1964. It says that there is no one right way to run an organization; instead, different organizations may use different methods. The theory focuses on how different situational factors influence the effectiveness of a management or leadership style (Moniz Jr, 2010) [23]. According to contingency theory, management can only be effective if it balances a number of factors, such as task orientation, interpersonal relationships, motivation level, and specific contextual circumstances. Conflicts that can happen at a university include disagreements between faculty members, disagreements with the administration, and disagreements with students. In each of these cases, different strategies are needed to end the fight. In some cases, a more direct approach may be needed, while in others, a strategy for open and cooperative communication may be best.

This viewpoint says that university leaders need to change their plans for resolving conflicts to fit the specific problems they face. This flexibility is important because it lets leaders think about a lot of different things before making a decision. For example, when mediating disputes between faculty, a mediator might focus more on relationships and understanding. But when mediating disputes about the distribution of resources, they might focus more on getting the job done. Contingency theory consists of two dependent constructs—efficiency and organizational performance—and six independent constructs: strategy, task, technology, organizational size, structure, and culture. In this study, staff productivity is the dependent variable, representing organizational performance, while conflict management techniques serve as the independent variable. The study employed this framework to evaluate the impact of various conflict resolution techniques on the productivity of

University of Uyo staff.

The idea that there isn't one way to solve conflicts in organizations shows how useful contingency theory is for this study. Rahim (2011) says that the right conflict management strategy depends on how well they can handle certain conflict situations. So, managers need to be able to look at their situation critically and choose conflict resolution strategies that work for their company.

Research Design

According to Kothari (2004), the study employed a descriptive survey research design, which includes the provision of a concept framework for the methodical investigation of problems and the creation of solutions. Data on the impact of conflict management on organizational productivity at the University of Uyo was gathered using structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions on a four-point Likert scale. Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses and analyze demographic data using frequency and percentage counts. This allowed for a robust evaluation of the relationships between the variables under investigation.

The study's population consisted of all 2,500 employees of the University of Uyo, encompassing both academic and non-academic staff, as indicated by the University of Uyo Nominal Roll (2023). This varied group of teachers, administrators, and support staff gave us a lot of information to work with when looking at how conflict resolution affects employee productivity. Krejcie and Morgan's formula said that the sample size was 352. A multi-stage sampling method that used both stratified and simple random sampling was used to make sure that everyone was fairly represented. In the first step, staff members were grouped by department and faculty to make sure that everyone at the university was fairly represented. The ballot selection method was used to randomly choose departments from these groups. Some of the departments that were chosen were English and Literary Studies, Radiography, Sociology, Banking and Finance, Marketing, Accounting, Botany, and Chemistry. This method ensured balance and diversity, which helped the study be valid and generalizable. It also gave researchers a full picture of how conflict resolution techniques affect productivity at the University of Uyo.

Method of Data Analysis

In order to extract quantitative meaning from data in any study, it is crucial to choose the right analytical method. As a result, frequency and percentage were used to analyze the data gathered from the demographic survey. Additionally, the study's hypotheses were tested using Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation. This statistic was analyzed using the following formula:

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

This formula enabled the researcher to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the studied variables.

Data Presentation

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency and percentage counts. Additionally, Karl Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation was utilized to test the hypotheses.

Table 4.1: Gender distribution of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Male	221	62.8	62.8	62.8
Female	131	37.2	37.2	100.0
Valid total	**352**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: Field Work, 2024

Table 4.2: Marital status of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Single	94	26.7	26.7	26.7
Married	226	64.2	64.2	90.9
Divorced	22	6.2	6.2	97.1
Valid others	10	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	352	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 4.3: Age distribution of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
25-34	12	3.4	3.4	3.4
35-44	68	19.3	19.3	22.7
45-54	193	54.8	54.8	77.5
55 and above	79	22.4	22.4	100.0
Valid Total	352	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2024

	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
B. Sc/B. A	34	9.6	9.6	9.6
M.Sc	102	28.9	28.9	38.5
PhD	216	61.4	61.4	100.0
Valid Total	352	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2024

Of the 352 respondents, 62.8% were men and 37.2% were women, according to the demographic analysis of the sample. This indicates that the sample is dominated by men. The majority (64.2%) were married, followed by singles (26.7%), divorced people (6.2%), and people in other categories (2.8%). The population was middle-aged and older, as evidenced by the age distribution, which showed that the majority of respondents were in the following age groups: 45–54 years old (54.8%), 55 and over (22.4%), 35–44 years old (19.3%), and 25–34 years old (3.4%). In terms of educational background, the sample population was highly educated, with 61.4% holding a PhD, 28.9% holding a Master's degree, and 9.6% holding a Bachelor's degree. These demographic trends provide an excellent foundation for examining the University of Uyo's organizational productivity and conflict resolution practices. Examining the First Hypothesis According to the null hypothesis, there is a substantial correlation between productivity at the University of Uyo and mediation. Staff productivity and mediation were the variables that were discovered. Mediation is the independent variable and staff productivity is the dependent variable.

Table 4.9: The responses of the respondents to questions 1-4 on mediation in a likert scale

SA	A	D	SD
21	32	191	108
19	28	95	210
21	14	194	123
187	132	10	23

Source: Extracted from Table 4.5

The study's hypotheses were tested using Karl Pearson correlation analysis to examine the connections between staff productivity and conflict management techniques like collective bargaining, mediation, and conciliation. The direction and strength of linear relationships between variables are measured by this statistical technique. With a significance level of.05, there is a 5% chance of stating that a relationship exists when in fact it does not. When testing a hypothesis, the following criteria were used: (i) if the calculated p-value was greater than the critical value, indicating a significant relationship between the variables, the null hypothesis was rejected; and (ii) if the p-value was less than or equal to the critical value, indicating no significant relationship, the null hypothesis was accepted. For instance, the null hypothesis would be accepted if there is a negligible relationship between conciliation and productivity, and rejected if there is a strong correlation between collective bargaining and productivity. This methodical approach guaranteed validity, reliability, and rigor to offer a deeper understanding of successful conflict resolution techniques at the University of Uyo.

Table 4.10: Test of significance of Pearson's correlation between mediation and staff productivity

X	Y	Xy	X²	Y²
346	299	103454	119716	89401
345	305	105225	119025	93025
351	317	111,267	123201	100489
349	33	11517	121801	1089
∑= 1391	954	331463	483743	284004

Using Pearson's formula which states thus:

$$r = \frac{\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)^2/n}{\sqrt{\sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{n} \quad (\sum y^2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{n})}}$$

Where n = sample size and r = correlation coefficient n = 4

$$\therefore \ r = 331463 - \frac{1391 \ X \ 954}{4}$$

$$\sqrt{483743 - \frac{(1391)^2}{4} \ (284004 - \frac{(954)^2}{4})}$$

$$r = \frac{331463 - 331753.5}{\sqrt{483743 - 483\ 720.25 \ X \ 284004 - 227529}}$$

$$r = \frac{-290.5}{\sqrt{1284806.25}}$$

$$r = \frac{-290.5}{1133.50}$$

$$r = -0.26$$

Test of significance of p is given as

$$t = r \ \frac{\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1 - r \ 2}}$$

$$\therefore t = -0.26 \ \frac{\sqrt{4-2}}{\sqrt{1 - (-0.26)^2}}$$

$$t = \frac{-0.26 \ X \ 1.41}{\sqrt{1 - 0.0676}}$$

$$t = \frac{-0.3666}{\sqrt{0.9324}}$$

$$t = \frac{-0.3666}{0.9656}$$

$$t = -0.38$$

According to the aforementioned result, there is no significant correlation between mediation and organizational productivity, as indicated by the correlation coefficient of -0.26 and the p value of -0.38 between the two variables. This supports the null hypothesis, which states that there is no meaningful connection between mediation and productivity at the University of Uyo. This is because our tabulated value, 2.132, is greater than our p value, -0.38. The findings indicate that mediation and productivity at the University of Uyo do not significantly correlate.

Testing of Second Hypothesis
The null hypothesis form is used to express the second hypothesis. It claims that at the University of Uyo, there is no meaningful correlation between conciliation and productivity. Conciliation and organizational productivity were the variables found; conciliation is the independent variable, and organizational productivity is the dependent variable.

Table 4.11: The responses of the respondents to questions 5-8 on conciliation in a likert scale

SA	A	D	SD
13	27	152	160
17	31	177	127
22	15	149	166
178	132	25	17

Source: Extracted from Table 4.6

The hypotheses of this study were manually tested using Karl Pearson correlation analysis, a particular and methodical approach to examining the relationship between variables. The researcher used a significance level of 0.05, which is commonly used in social science research and ensures accurate interpretations by limiting the possibility of error to 5%. There are two guidelines for decision-guided hypothesis testing:
1. If p represents the computed p-value and the tabulated or critical value, reject the null hypothesis. The alternative hypothesis is accepted as a result of this result, which shows a statistically significant relationship between the variables.
2. If the computed p-value is less than or equal to the tabulated value, accept the null hypothesis. In this

instance, the evidence supports the null hypothesis by showing no significant correlation between the variables. This systematic approach increased the study's validity and enabled the drawing of reliable, fact-based conclusions by enabling the execution of thorough tests of the connections between collective bargaining, mediation, conciliation, and organizational productivity.

Table 4.12: Test of significance between conciliation and staff productivity

X	Y	Xy	X²	Y²
346	312	107,952	119716	97344
345	304	104, 880	119025	92416
351	315	110,565	123201	99225
349	42	14,658	121801	1764
∑= 1391	973	338055	483743	290749

Using Pearson's formula which states thus:

$$r = \frac{\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)^2/n}{\sqrt{\sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{n}} \quad (\sum y^2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{n})}$$

$$\therefore r = 338055 - \frac{1391 \, X \, 973}{4}$$

$$\sqrt{483743 - \frac{(1391)^2}{4}} \, (290749 - \frac{(973)^2}{4})$$

$$r = \frac{338055 - 338360.75}{\sqrt{483743.25 - 483720.25 \, X \, (290749 - 236682.65)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-305.75}{\sqrt{1243526.05}}$$

$$r = \frac{-305.75}{1115.13}$$

$$r = -0.27$$

Test of significance of p is given as

$$t = r \frac{\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-(r)^2}}$$

$$\therefore t = -0.27 \frac{\sqrt{4-2}}{\sqrt{1-(-0.27)^2}}$$

$$t = \frac{-0.27 \, X \, 1.41}{\sqrt{1 - 0.0729}}$$

$$t = \frac{-0.3807}{\sqrt{0.9271}}$$

$$t = \frac{-0.3807}{0.9629}$$

$$t = -0.40$$

The result above indicates a negative relationship between conciliation and organizational productivity, as the calculated t-test value (-0.40) is less than the tabulated value of 2.132. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between conciliation and productivity at the University of Uyo, is upheld.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three is formulated in the null form, stating that there is no significant relationship between collective bargaining and productivity at the University of Uyo. The identified variables include collective bargaining as the independent variable and staff productivity as the dependent variable.

Table 4.13: The Responses of the Respondents to Questions 9-12 on Collective Bargaining in Likert Scale

SA	A	D	SD
159	158	20	15
195	130	16	11
12	19	133	188
166	125	25	36

Source: Extracted from Table 4.7

To test this hypothesis and demonstrate the degree and direction of a linear relationship between variables, this study used Karl Pearson's correlation analysis. This statistical method was helpful in measuring the degree of correlation between the dependent variable, staff productivity, and the independent variables, such as collective bargaining, mediation, and conciliation. The significance level was set at the 0.05 level, which is generally regarded as the cutoff point in social science research, in order to produce trustworthy results. At this level, anything with a p-value less than 0.05 is considered statistically significant because there is only a 5% chance that you will conclude that there is a relationship when in fact there isn't. Two key principles served as the foundation for the decision-making process: first, if the computed p-value is greater than the critical value, indicating a significant relationship between the tested variables and thus supporting the alternative hypothesis, reject the null hypothesis. For instance, if a statistical analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between productivity and collective bargaining, the null hypothesis would be disproved. Second, if the p-value is less than or equal to the critical value, you should accept the null hypothesis, which says that there is no significant relationship. By adhering to these guidelines, the researcher ensured a systematic and dependable analysis, yielding clear insights into the effects of various conflict resolution techniques on organizational productivity.

Table 4.14: Test of significance of Pearson correlation between collective bargaining and staff productivity

X	Y	Xy	X²	Y²
346	35	12,110	119716	1225
345	27	9,315	119025	729
351	321	112,671	123201	103041
349	61	21289	121801	3721
∑= 1391	444	155385	483743	108716

Using Pearson's formula which states thus:

$$r = \frac{\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)^2/n}{\sqrt{\sum x^2 - \frac{(\sum x)^2}{n}} \quad (\sum y^2 - \frac{(\sum y)^2}{n})}$$

$$\therefore r = 155385 - \frac{1391 \, X \, 444}{4}$$

$$\sqrt{483743 - \frac{(1391)^2}{4}\left(108716 - \frac{(444)^2}{4}\right)}$$

$$r = \frac{155385 - 154{,}401}{\sqrt{483743 - 483720.25 \; X \; 10716 - 492848}}$$

$$r = \frac{984}{\sqrt{22.75 \; X \; 59432}}$$

$$r = \frac{984}{\sqrt{1352078}}$$

$$\frac{984}{1162.79}$$

$$r = 0.85$$

Test of significance of p is given as

$$t = r \frac{\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-(r)^2}}$$

$$\therefore t = 0.85 \frac{\sqrt{4-2}}{\sqrt{1-(-0.85)^2}}$$

$$t = \frac{0.85 \; X \; 1.41}{\sqrt{1 - 0.07225}}$$

$$t = \frac{1.1985}{\sqrt{0.2775}}$$

$$t = \frac{1.1985}{0.5268}$$

$$t = 2.28$$

The results show that there exists a positive relationship between the collective bargaining and the organisational productivity. This is indicated by the calculated t-test value of 2.28 that is higher than the tabulated value of 2.132. Therefore, this null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between collective bargaining and productivity is rejected. This implies that the other hypothesis which states that collective bargaining has a strong relationship with productivity at the University of Uyo is valid.

Discussion of Findings
The findings of this research will provide a strong empirical support that proper management of conflicts is an important variable that can immensely augur organisational productivity. Specifically, the findings point to integrative approaches such as collaboration and problem-solving as important contributors to the level of productivity. The results align with previous studies that found by Kazimoto (2013) [19], Obasan (2011) [25], and Henry (2009) [17] that well managed conflict leads to better relationships, increased creativity, and better organisational performance. As Kazimoto (2013) [19] pointed out, conflicts when managed correctly can bring about new solutions. On the other hand Obasan (2011) [25] and Henry (2009) [17] observed that mutual benefit strategies are more effective in leading to an engaged and productive workforce.

When hypothesis one was analysed, it was found that there is no significant effect of mediation on productivity at the University of Uyo, mainly because it is not used very often. It is consistent with the belief of Fashoyin (2012) [13] that mediation is not very popular in the Nigerian public sector but more commonly used in the private organisations to address interpersonal and procedural disputes. It is this restricted application in an academic setting that makes it have a low impact on productivity at the university. Similarly, hypothesis two evidence showed that the relationship between conciliation and organisational productivity is not statistically significant, which allowed accepting the null hypothesis. Such a small use of conciliation in universities could be due to the more formalised ways of negotiation and legal processes. Fajana (2006) [12] also noted that conciliation is not used extensively in the public institutions because there is difficulty in reconciling conflicting interests. The third hypothesis, however, proved that collective bargaining can thus affect negatively productivity in the University of Uyo to a great extent. This supports the claims of Mba (2013) [21] and Henry (2009) [17] who argued that collective bargaining is a well-known conflict resolution mechanism that reduces disruption and creates a culture of cooperation. Mba (2013) [21] affirmed that collective bargaining through settling of employee grievances not only resolves conflicts but also brings about harmony in the organisation and is instrumental in promoting long-term productivity.

Conclusion
This paper has looked into the connexion between conflict management techniques, i.e. mediation, conciliation and collective bargaining and organisational productivity at the University of Uyo. The results revealed that mediation and conciliation have been largely ineffective in conflict resolution in the institution and these factors have no substantial impact on productivity. This can be explained by the fact that they can only be applied to a limited extent or they may not be effective in dealing with some deep rooted conflicts which may be affected by complex institutional factors. These results support earlier studies that have suggested that, though theoretically valid, mediation and conciliation programmes do not necessarily produce results in settings with deep-seated structural and interpersonal conflicts. On the contrary, collective bargaining has become the most efficient approach because it shows the significant positive effect on productivity. Collective bargaining establishes a participatory atmosphere in which cooperation, mutual respect, and stability are stimulated by compelling formal negotiations between administrative and personnel representatives. The practise is consistent with the existing body of literature that describes the importance of employee involvement in the decision-making process as a means of enhancing morale and performance of an organisation and its employees. The research finds that conflict management is critical to achievement of institutional goals and preservation of productivity. Placing such aspects as collective bargaining and alternatives to mediate and negotiate, which can also be called conciliation, at the top of a list can help make an organisation more efficient. Finally, integrative conflict resolution techniques can be useful in promoting a cordial working environment, improving goal achievement, and long-term development in the University of Uyo.

Recommendations

This study's results suggest the following ways to improve conflict management and staff productivity at the University of Uyo:

1. The University of Uyo's administration should utilize the mediation strategy effectively to resolve conflicts within the institution. This will help a lot with deep-seated conflicts that are made worse by complicated institutional dynamics.
2. The management of the University of Uyo should use conciliation Strategy effectively to settle disputes at the school. This will help stop long-standing problems that happen in universities.
3. The management at the University of Uyo ought to establish a properly structured Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Centre that has trained personnel on conflict resolution and staff and management representatives on the conciliation and arbitration committees. These committees can also serve as neutral groups in order to resolve a dispute amicably. The university management should also conduct frequent workshops and training to staff and management on how to be a mediator. This will assist in developing a positive conflict solving culture.

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