



Common Internal Conflicts in Nigerian Organizations: Theoretical and Empirical Evidences from Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

Internal conflicts are part and parcel of any organization including university with more complex structures that specifically handled different functions in achieving its set goals and objectives. This paper use theoretical method by analyzing the common internal conflicts and factors responsible for the internal conflicts. It begin by outlining the theoretical perspectives to internal conflicts including pluralist, critical, Lewis Coser social functions of conflicts and Ralf Dahrendorf class and class conflicts in industrial society. Each perspective provided an insight into what causes internal conflicts and the common internal conflicts experienced in organisations such as universities. The common internal conflicts experienced in Nigerian Universities are conflicts between academic staff and the university authorities, conflicts between academic staff and non-academic staff, conflicts between non-academic staff and university authorities, conflicts between workers' unions and interpersonal conflicts among staff. Similarly, the common causes of internal conflicts includes non-payment of salaries as and when due, sudden change in university policies, imposition of decisions on employees without their consultations, inadequate social amenities such as electricity and water, denial of rights and privileges, communication gap between the authorities and workers, high-handedness on the part of the managements, refusal of managements to honour agreements reached with workers unions, strong allegations of corruption against managements and the discriminatory application of university rules and regulations. Therefore, the paper recommends that internal conflict management strategies such as dialogue, consultation, and established internal conflict management committee among others are critical in handling internal conflicts in Nigerian universities.

Keywords: Common Internal conflicts, conflict management strategies, conflict management committee and tertiary institutions

JEL Code: D70, D74, D79

Contribution to/Originality Knowledge: This study contributes to body of knowledge by exploring common internal conflicts in Nigerian universities both theoretically and empirically evidently occurred in some selected universities in Nigeria. The study hopes to provide some common internal conflict management strategies that helped in resolving internal conflicts in the universities.

1.0 Introduction

Organizations are established for the purpose of achieving desired goals. Whether these organizations are private or public, formal or informal, leadership plays a key role in steering their affairs to achieve the desired goals. Leadership is a way of influencing the activities of employees towards coordinating, managing and actualizing the organizational goals; and this requires the adoption and use of an appropriate leadership style. The absence of appropriate

leadership styles can lead to the failure of organizations in achieving their goals; as a result, can also influence internal conflict (Yusuf, Umar & Aina, 2014). Internal conflicts therefore, have been observed to be in existence in all human organisations, including universities. It could be described as all the forms of oppositions, disagreements, frictions between two or more parties and its manifestation in the forms of arguments, protests, demonstrations, aggression and other destructive behaviours. While internal conflict occurrence has been observed to be inevitable and ubiquitous in human organisations, the strategies for managing it have remained topical issues and matters of concern to individuals, groups and scholars (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). Furthermore, internal conflict management strategies refer to the internal mechanisms used by the various authorities in resolving conflict. The mechanisms include avoidance, compromise, third party intervention, cooperation, democratic process as well as confrontation. Others include divide and rule, effective communication, problem solving, adjudication, consultation, neglect or silence, dialogue, negotiation, arbitration and mediation (Adebayo, 2007).

There were many studies conducted in Nigeria to examine the internal conflict management strategies which cut across many areas of human endeavours. With respect to the academic environment, research studies were conducted to examine the internal conflict management strategies in many Nigerian universities, including the public and private by Joseph and Joseph (2007), Olalekan (2018) and Igbisola, Salau, Falola, Olokundum and Ogueyungbo et al (2019), among others. It has been observed from these studies that Nigerian Universities have for decades been faced with so many crises ranging from conflict between students and academic staff, academic staff and non-academic staff, academic staff and management of universities and non-academic staff and management of universities. There are also inter and intra conflicts between Units, Departments and Directorates and among staff. Based on the available literature, the most rampant internal conflict is between staff and the university managements over staff development, conditions of service, staff union associations and university managements over staff welfare and refusal of managements to honour agreements reached.

Similarly, internal conflict between students' unions and university managements are equally frequent which most at times results from inadequate social amenities on campuses such as electricity and water supply, among other factors (Olalekan, 2018). These internal conflicts have given rise to distrust and hostility among professional associations, academics, non-academic staff and students, thus, contributing in hampering smooth, effective and efficient administration in the universities which may lead to revolts, protests, unrest and violence, as well as incessant closure of schools for months (Victor & Stella-Maris, 2013).

Furthermore, based on the literature, there is a substantial evidence that suggest that internal conflicts in many universities arises due to the kind of leadership styles adopted by the university administrators such as autocratic, dictatorial and laize-faire in managing the institutions which, at times, affected the academic calendar thereby rendering school environments completely insecure for serious academic activities not beneficial to students, institutions and the society at large (Adoja, 2014). Other studies revealed that internal bureaucratic structure, poor communication and organizational policies are major causes of



internal conflicts in many Nigerian Universities. In this regard, studies that investigated the internal conflict management strategies in Nigerian Universities have increased tremendously across many disciplines. The main concerns of these studies are to gain more insight into examining the internal conflict management strategies (Asgari, Silong, Ahmed & Abu Samah, 2008).

It is against this background that; this paper is aimed to review the common internal conflict in Nigerian universities. To achieve this, the paper is divided into sections including section 2 deals with conceptual definitions of organization and internal conflict, section 2.1 reviewed theoretical perspectives on internal conflicts, section 2.2 examined the common and factors associated with internal conflicts in Nigerian universities.

2.0 Conceptual Definitions of Organizations and Internal Conflict

In spite of the apparent centrality of the study of organizations to Sociology, there are diverse definitions of such a concept. For instance, Mouzelis (1968), “organizations are social groupings established more or less deliberately or purposively for the attainment of a certain goal”. Also, Daft (1998) defined organizations as “social entities that are goal directed, designed as deliberately structured and coordinated activity systems and are linked to the external environment”.

Organizations have been studied at three levels of analysis. These are the macro, mezzo and micro levels. At macro level, the concern is to understand how organizations are affected by and how they in turn affect the national and international socio-political and economic environment in which they operate. The second is the mezzo level at which attention shifts to what is sometimes referred to as the “task environment level”. Finally, there is the micro level of analysis. Here attention shifts to the study of the internal workings of the organizations and its members. Issues examined include ownership and control of the organization, its size, technology, policies, position within the industry and the demographic characteristics of its employees and their work orientations, commitment, level of satisfactions e.t.c (Dejo, 2009).

The term internal conflict has been defined varyingly by different scholars in the social science disciplines and has also been observed to be in existence in all human organisations. First, internal conflict appears in a social situation as any disagreement over issues of substance and or emotional antagonisms that create friction between individuals or groups within a given organization. It could also be described as all forms of opposition, disagreement, friction between two or more parties and its manifests in the forms of arguments, protest, demonstration, aggression and other destructive behaviours. While internal conflicts occurrence has been observed to be inevitable in human organizations, it can therefore be described as a life fact (Oyebade, 1994). Internal conflict is therefore said to be a reality in any social system. Amason (1996) described internal conflict as a form of socialization by stressing that people in organisations have both personal and role preferences about organization’s actions and policies. However, internal conflict occurs whenever it is impossible for others to carry out their desired actions.

Furthermore, Bens (1997) argued that internal conflict is a tension that is experienced when a group of people feels that, their needs or desires are likely to be denied. This argument was in line with that of Owens (1995) who argued that internal conflict occurs whenever incompatible activities occur within organisations. This could be strife, controversy, discord of action and antagonism. Thus, Adeyemi (2010) argued that internal conflict is the art of coming into collision, clash or be in opposition with one another within an organization. In this respect, internal conflicts being an inevitable in human organisations have made many scholars to identified different internal conflict management strategies being used in organisations. For example, Ladipo (1997) identified internal conflict management strategies of forcing structural changes, avoidance, compromise and smoothing. In a related study, Hodge and Anthony (1991) have identified internal conflict management strategies to include suppression, smoothing, avoiding, compromise, third-party intervention, cooperation, democratic processes, job rotation as well as confrontation. But many scholars have agreed and identified different internal conflict management strategies that can be used in the universities or organizations such as dialogue, arbitration, negotiation, mediation, problem solving, effective communication, neglect or silence, avoidance, consultation, adjudication and boxing the problem (Ihuarulam, 2015).

However, the foregoing situations implied that internal conflicts have become part and parcel of organisations including universities and all other levels of educational institutions. It also implies that much of these internal conflicts continued to manifest and researchers have continued to conduct researches in different dimensions with a view to exploring the best strategies for managing internal conflicts effectively in the work place.

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

Internal conflict as a subject matter, has been subjected under varied theoretical expositions. It should be noted that various theories have attempted to explain organizational internal conflict as a subject matter. However, for a clear understanding of the causes, dynamics and complexities of organizational internal conflict, it is therefore imperative that a review of some of the contending theories on organizational internal conflict be undertaken.

2.1.1 Pluralist perspective

The pluralist perspective is a more realistic theory which state that internal conflicts exist in all levels of organizations in a society. Pluralist view that the work place (organizations) consist of workers and managements bargaining in imperfect labour markets in the presence of pluralist conflict-that is, in an employment relationship consisting of multiple, sometimes conflicting interests in which employers might want lower labour costs, flexibility and an intense pace of work while employees might want high wages, employment securities and a safer working environment as well as shared interests such as products, productive workers and profitable organizations (Clegg, 1975). The pluralist view of internal conflict in work place is intimately related to a belief that labour markets are not perfectly competitive. For example, Sidney, Beatrice, John, Commons and other early institutionists attributed the exploitative Anglo-American employment conditions of the early twentieth century to the superior power of large corporations over individual employees (Kaufman, 1997). This power advantage was



believed to be rooted in market imperfections such as isolated company towns, mobility, cost of lack of family savings or other resources, segmented markets and excess labour supply. Moreover, a core pluralist value is the rejection that labour is simply a commodity (Kaufman, 2005).

Therefore, labour is entitled to equity and voice in the employment relations (Budd, 2004). As such, the role of the state is to promote equitable outcomes. This is because, inequitable outcomes are seen as stemming from imperfect labour markets and unequal bargaining power, unions and mandated labour standards are viewed as mechanisms for levelling the playing field between employers and employees thereby promoting the optimal operation of organisations. Also because of the belief that there are at least some internal conflicts in organisations, the pluralist industrial relations school of thought rejects the unitarist reliance on corporate self-interest and goodwill to protect workers. Rather, labour unions are seen as productive counterweight to corporate power, social insurance and mandated minimum standard also help protect all workers against the vagaries of organizational cycle and corporate power.

In summary, pluralist theory sees organization as being made up of powerful and conflicting sub-groups; management and trade unions. Pluralist theory believes that the place of work is composed of diverse sets of beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours. In capitalist societies for instance, this divergence of interest has led to the formation of trade unions in workplace organizations since internal conflicts are inevitable because of inherent competing interest. Internal conflict can be resolved by collective bargaining and if well managed, could be channelled towards positive change. Trade unions for the pluralist theory are legitimate representative of employees, and they are viewed positively because they help employees emphasize their decision-making power (Leat, 2001).

The sociological reaction to pluralist industrial/organizational conflict was based upon the recognition of various crucial limitations. The pluralist analysis was criticized for failing to recognize the extent and persistence of inequalities of condition and opportunity in organization. This means that, there is a playing down of the extent to which settlements ultimately rest on the power of some group to impose outcomes on others in an organization lacked principled basis for the distribution of income and wealth.

2.1.2 Critical Perspective

The critical approach is rooted in the power and control interests' employers and employees and therefore sees the organizational relationship as a struggle for power and control (Hyman, 2006). The school of thought subscribing to this frame of reference can be grouped together under the umbrella of critical industrial relations and encompasses Marxist, feminist and other sociological theories based on division and control in management of organizational affairs. While sharing the views that, labour is more than just a commodity, unlike the pluralist view in which employer-employee internal conflicts are confined to the employment relationship, the critical perspective is that work relationship internal conflict is part of a broader societal clash between competing groups (Kelly, 1998).

A Marxist perspective assumes that employer and employee internal conflicts are one element of unequal power relations between the capitalists and working classes throughout society. A feminist perspective focuses on unequal power relations between men and women; a critical race perspective emphasizes segregation and control along racial lines (Gottfried, 2006). The critical perspective recognizes the contending or contradictory interests in work place organisations and thus, dwells on the emerging inequalities and power differentials that are symptomatic of industrial capitalist society. It looks at the structure of power or more appropriately the distribution of authority position as being the explanatory variable in the occurrence of trade and industrial disputes in organisations. The critical theory revolves around the broader conflict theory or more precisely, the political economy approach which states that societal resources are distributed not on the rightfulness of position or needs, but according to power (Nkemdili, 2012).

In the critical work place or organizational relationship, the labour market is not seen as a neutral forum for matching self-interested workers with self-interested firms, rather it is seen as a socially-based instrument of power and control (Hyman, 1975). The workplace relationship is therefore not a voluntary exchange but rather a contested exchange (Bowles and Gintis, 1990). Because of the socially-rooted ongoing internal conflict between labour and capital in organizations, human resource management practices are not seen as methods for aligning worker and employer interests, but rather as disguised rhetoric that quietly undermines labour power and perpetuate the dominance of capital (Legge, 1995). For instance, strong workers' unions are seen as important advocates of workers interests in the workplace and in the political arena. But ultimately, relying on collective bargaining to advocate workers' interests is inadequate because of the structural inequalities that pervade the workplace and the greater socio-political context. That internal conflict between competing groups is not limited to the workplace relationship, also means that the state is largely concerned with perpetuating the dominance of the powerful group; whether be it capitalists, men or a dominant ethnic group.

As with the other theories, the key to understanding the critical workplace relationship is through an analysis of the interests of the organizational relations actors paired interact and the extent to which the various interests are compatible. The critical theory analysed this by looking at its three major components. First, that internal conflict is a common and ongoing feature of human social organizations. Second, those organizations are made up of various social groups who have conflicting values and interests. Thirdly, that all internal conflicts in organizations occur between dominant and subordinates' social groups who are in competition over resources. For this the critical theory is relevant to the study in the sense that, as society is an arena of conflict and struggle over resources, the organization such as a university as a social system is made up of groups with divergent interests. These groups are bound to struggle over scarce resources and privileges in the university. They group over who will dominate the other; which this creates unequal relationship and access to the resources of the university. This could lead to tension and subsequently causes disharmony and internal conflict within the university organization.



The critical theory has suffered some criticisms. First, while the theory has been frequently defined as Marxist intellectuals, their tendency to denounce some Marxist concepts and to combine Marxian analyses with other sociological and philosophical traditions have resulted in accusations of revisionism by classical, orthodox and analytical Marxists and Marxist-Leninist philosophers. Second, critical theory has been criticized for not offering any clear road map to organizational analyses following critique, often explicitly repudiating any solution which promoted abstaining from engaging in active organization change and in managing internal conflicts. Third, critical theory is anti-scientific both for its lack of the use of the scientific method and for its overt criticism of science as a tool used for oppression of marginalized group of people or class in organizations.

2.1.3 Lewis Coser's Conflict Theory

Many scholars have often regarded Lewis Coser's functions of social conflict as a version of conflict theory, but it is more a functionalist analysis of the role of conflict in social life than the use of conflict propositions to explain various social phenomena. Coser therefore, in his functionalist-conflict approach presents a static model of a society divided into groups, which in turn constitute the whole social system. The functionalist perspective of Coser's model emphasizes the fact that conflict plays a vital role in maintaining the social system. Societies dispose of mechanisms to channel discontent and hostility while keeping intact the relationship within which antagonism arises (Coser, 1956). For Coser, such mechanisms frequently operate through safety-valve institutions, providing substitute objects upon which to displace hostile sentiments. Coser also argued that, on the other hand, conflict suppression sets the stage for social explosion, as tension will build until it finally erupts. By allowing smaller releases of tension with more minor, manageable conflicts, major social catastrophes can be avoided. Coser also maintains that, the intensity of the conflict depends on whether the division of power is considered legitimate.

Coser analyses the ways in which the conflict impacts the social system in two spheres of social interaction: in intra and intergroup relations. He highlights the role of conflict in strengthening social ties at an intra-group level, as the conflict reinforces the group's awareness of 'us' versus 'them' and strengthens people's sense of distinctiveness. At intra-group level, conflict can be regarded as a form of social interaction. Coser observes also that, regular hostility maintains social divisions and social stratification, preventing other forms of social relations (Morgan, Smyth, Robinson & Fraser, 1996). For Morgan et al also, another element that affects the conflict is the proximity of antagonistic groups, whose members experience both strong and negative feelings. It is also argued that, this ambivalence of feeling may be the primary source of anxiety and conflict. When parties in conflict are in close proximity, the intensity of the conflict is increased.

Coser further believes that, in contrast to intra-group relations and conflicts, conflict between social groups may serve as a stimulus to create new rules, norms and institutions; it can also initiate new types of interactions between the parties involved in the conflict. For instance, the parties to a conflict may form associations and alliances to strengthen their position. Coser also

argued that a realistic conflict may come to an end when the social actors find another, more satisfactory way of reaching their goals (Ewa, 2015).

2.1.4 Ralf Dahrendorf Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society

Dahrendorf's most outstanding contribution to the study of conflict was through his work on class and class conflict in industrial society (1957-1976). Much of his work was concerned with factory organization, and the place and status of workers in such an organization (Joseph, 2010). He thus made significant contribution to industrial sociology and industrial democracy which intrinsically involve owners of industries and trade unions/workers. Industrial democracy introduced conflict regulation and management into the workplace so that, the suddenness of conflict and its intensity could be reduced or checked. Conflict regulation, he argued, constitutes machinery for forcing dominant groups in industrial setting to recognize the interests of subjected groups and incorporates these interests in organizational and industrial policy (Dahrendorf, 1957).

For Dahrendorf, authority and power are too scarce resources competed for by individuals in an organization. Internal conflict arises because of the struggle for positions of authority and power and not even control of means of production. Therefore, in any organization, there are two classes called the "Ruled and the Ruler or those without authority/power and those with authority/power respectively". Those with authority have interest in maintaining the status quo while the organizational members want authority to be fairly shared and distributed. This urge for a redistribution of authority through roles brings internal conflict; until it is done, the organization will continue to dialogue to ensure stability (Joseph, 2010).

The approach to a theory of social conflict taken here can be tellingly illustrated in the example of an organizational enterprise. An organizational enterprise is, among other things an imperatively coordinated group. It contains positions which are associated with an expectation and right of exercising authority and other positions whose occupants are subjected to authority. There are managers of many departments and there are workers. The authority of managers is institutionalized and legitimate. It is guaranteed by legalistic and quasi-legalistic sanctions (disciplinary, fines, demotion & dismissal among others).

An internal conflict between managers and workers is thus structurally unavoidable. Therefore, the assumption, from these quasi-groups; interest groups emerge as soon as the conditions of organization (communication within the quasi-groups, regulated recruiting into the quasi groups, freedom of coalition, leaders and ideologies, technical means are on hand). The emerging interest groups are employers' associations and trade unions. The internal conflict between these interest groups varies in its intensity in direct relation to the conditions of conflict, especially to the degree of mobility from one group to another and to the presence of effective mechanisms for regulating internal conflicts (channels for collective bargaining, arbitration, institution e.t.c). This internal conflict leads-either through negotiations or through strikes-finally to changes in the structure of industrial organisations and in the position of the groups involved.



From the analysis of Dahrendorf class and class conflict in industrial society, it is evident that, organizational internal conflict exists regardless of whether the managers are owners of the entrepreneurs or whether they are agents elected by bodies of stakeholders, or whether they are government officials; that is, relationships of ownership in principles do not affect either the existence or the intensity of organizational internal conflicts. Furthermore, it follows that, internal conflict is present even if the complete system of its regulation has been realized. Regulations influences the intensity of the internal conflict, but no mechanism is imaginable which abolishes internal conflict altogether.

2.2 Common Internal Conflicts in Nigerian Universities

Internal conflict is inevitable within Nigerian universities due to the diversity of the background, orientation, values and expectations of many individuals and groups comprising the university. These diversities are apparent in functional, policy, administrative and social groups. For instance, Ajayi (1983) argued that, universities are disorganized communities and their disorganization manifest in the absence of common values, tension at points of interdependence rather than each functional component re-enforcing the functioning of others and communicative disintegration, i.e. channels of communication don't re-enforce shared values nor enhance functional integration. For example, the current university context in Nigeria is clearly more challenging than in the past which makes the range of internal conflicts and the forums available for their management much more far-reaching than ever before.

It is therefore observed that internal conflicts are becoming more rampant in the tertiary institutions and the resultant consequence has been to the detriment of the teaching and learning atmosphere (Adeyemi, Ekundayo & Alonge, 2010). The university based conflicts is therefore varying from one given institution to another and this reflect the university's size, location, student population, mission, specialization, governance and unionization. What can trigger internal conflicts, perhaps even large-scale on the one institution may be inconceivable on another. However, university based internal conflicts also share enough in common to be universally understood especially related to the feature of the academic workplace.

The Nigerian universities are confronting with countless push and pull from internal and external sources which influence the kind and quantity of internal conflicts which contributed to a highly adversarial academic environment. Disputes over university reorganization, faculty performance, multimillion dollar grants, intellectual property, affirmative action, freedom of information among others contribute to a complex internal conflict in the universities (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011). Some internal conflicts are in fact unique to the university setting such as those involving academic freedom, research and the micro-managing of personal matters by peers. When these internal conflicts occur over these issues and other related matters, there are many similarities in the disputes culture across the universities (Volpe & Chandler, 2010). Furthermore, internal conflicts have made management of educational institutions in Nigeria to be spotlight throughout the country. The incidence and severity of institutional internal conflicts has continued to destroy the basic environmental conditions required to provide good environment for developing human resources for Nigeria. This chaotic situation has undermined many programmes aimed at enhancing the impartation of knowledge and skills in

the future of human resources for the country. As in many developing countries, Nigerian universities witness series of internal organizational conflicts. Many of these lead to anarchy, some disorganize timing of school activities and in most cases render the institutions completely insecure for serious academic activities. In addition to these, many known internal conflicts have resulted in protracted disharmony in staff interpersonal relationship, increased indiscipline among students, disarmed school authorities, clogged channel of progressive communication and rendered institutions of learning ungovernable (Agbonna, 2009). Most internal conflicts in Nigerian universities have been traced to contested bases of citizenship rights, greed, predatory rule, autocracy and unresolved grievances (Oloyede, 1999).

In a research studies conducted on the conflict management strategies in South Western universities in Nigeria by Adeyemi and Ademilua (2012) on the sampled of 3,820 derived from the population of 25,421. The research used conflict management strategies and administrative effectiveness questionnaire to collect data. The findings of the research revealed the frequencies of occurrence and common internal conflicts in the universities. For them, the frequencies of occurrence of internal conflicts in the selected universities includes: conflicts between academic staff and the university authorities, conflicts between academic staff and non-academic staff, conflicts between non-academic staff and university authorities, conflicts between workers' unions and interpersonal conflicts among staff. Similarly, the common causes of internal conflicts includes non-payment of salaries as and when due, sudden change in university policies, imposition of decisions on employees without their consultations, inadequate social amenities such as electricity and water, denial of rights and privileges, communication gap between the authorities and workers, high-handedness on part of the managements, refusal of managements to honour agreements reached with workers unions, strong allegations of corruption against managements and the discriminatory application of university rules and regulations. In another research conducted by Osakede, Ijimakinwa, Adesanya and Ojo (2018) on conflict management in tertiary institutions: A study selected universities in south western Nigeria using Lagos State University and Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba. The study sample 500 respondents from the selected university and was carried out using questionnaire. The findings of the research reveal that conflict management has engendered stakeholders' participation in decision-making and conflict resolution in the selected universities. The performance of the conflict management board has recorded significant progress in terms of managing crisis and peace building. The study concludes that conflict in spate of tertiary institutions and it hinders the development of the educational system. The study advocates for the strong effective mechanisms in conflict management that will pave the way for stakeholders' participation in decision-making of institutions.

Also, a research conducted by Angie and Evelyn (2016) on management strategies of conflict resolution in universities in the south east Nigeria including University of Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikwe University, Federal University of technology Owerri, Ebonyi State University, Enugu State University of Science and Technology and Imo State University. The study used descriptive survey method to collect data. The sample size of the study made up of 384 respondents from the selected universities. The findings of the study revealed that, factors such as communication gap, lack of welfare among staff, competition for staff development, lack of



social amenities on campus among others causes internal conflict. For Angie and Evelyn, management strategies for resolving internal conflict were constant supply of electricity and water on campus, organization of regular workshops and seminars on dangers of conflict and on peace education, maintaining of regular welfare services for staff and effective committee for handling conflict in the universities. The study recommended that, the university managements should open to dialogue for peace to reign.

A similar research conducted by Lateef and Yahaya (2019) on conflict management strategies and administrative effectiveness among tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis. The study followed a correlational survey research design, carried out at ex-post facto with questionnaire as the major instrument of data collection. The institutions selected for the study includes Sokoto State University, Shehu Shagari College of Education, Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic and College of Nursing and Midwifery. The sample size of 168 academic staff was drawn from the institutions selected for the study. The findings of the established that, there is a significant relationship between dialogue, competition, prevention and communication on one hand and administrative effectiveness on the other hand. The study recommended that tertiary institutions institutionalize dialogue as a conflict management strategy because through dialogue, team members develop skills to think together and to accept differences, thereby avoiding crises and improving performance.

Empirical research was equally conducted by Saka (2020) on conflict management strategies on administrative effectiveness in selected federal universities in North Central Nigeria. The study utilized a mixed method approach. The quantitative data were collected from 290 academic and non-academic staff of the selected universities while 6 participants were equally selected for interview using semi-structured questions. The statistical results show a positive relationship between conflict management strategies (negotiation, compromise and collective bargaining) and job accomplishment. The result also revealed a positive and significant relationship between conflict management strategies and administrative behaviour construct except between avoidance and administrative behaviour which suggest that, there is a need for mediation. The qualitative findings support the result of the quantitative for both job accomplishment and administrative behaviour. It was recommended that the authorities of Nigerian Universities should adopt blend of management strategies in managing their conflicts in enhancing administrative effectiveness.

Furthermore, a research conducted by Peter, Joan and Rachel (2021) seeks to examine the influence of unions-universities conflict resolution strategies and universities administration in Benue State. The study adopted a survey design with a sample size of 381 respondents selected through multi-sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Unions-University Conflict Resolution Strategies and Administration of Universities Questionnaire (UUCRSAUQ). The findings of the study reveals that negotiation and compromise as strategies of resolving conflict have significant influence on administration of universities in Benue State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that academic staff, students and non-academic staff of universities should continue among others to demonstrate

the spirit of tolerance so as to ensure the smooth administration of the university ensuring the proper use of negotiation during conflict.

Furthermore, Victor and Stella-Maris (2013) have further examined the common causes of internal conflicts in Nigerian universities. For them, continues competition for scarce resources like research fund, teaching and students amenities, staff pay and other welfare services all have their claims on the limited resources at the disposal of the university managements. Hence, there is a deprivation (relative or absolute) of the need of all the groups within the system. The consequences of the inadequate provision of finance to the university system are the decay of structures and the decline in services and functions. The gross mismanagement of available resources could also result in internal conflicts which take the form of demonstrations, boycott of lectures and even strike. Similarly, other causes of internal conflicts in Nigerian Universities are underfunding which is a factor responsible for trade unions disputes. Various stakeholders in the education sector have pointed accusing fingers on the government at the gross inadequacy of funds in the university system. Awuzie (2010) argued that the crisis of funding in the universities had worsened where administrators could barely pay allowances and staff development training. This has been responsible for declining library, social and laboratory facilities in the universities which made the governance of the university system a herculean task. Ekundayo (2012) further argued that, the equipment for teaching, research and learning are either lacking or very inadequate and in a bad shape to permit the universities the freedom to carry out the basic functions of academics.

Coupled with the issue of underfunding is the financial improprieties levelled against some university administrators. Awuzie (2010) further argued that some university administrators and governing councils diverted huge sums into their private pockets. The financial improprieties do not go down well with the unions in the university system which always tends to generate internal conflicts between staff associations and the university authorities. Similarly, funding of various university projects, awards of contract, payment of outstanding allowances, purchase of facilities, library and laboratory equipment among others have sometimes caused disharmony between staff associations and university managements. Sometimes, even when government allocates fund to the universities, cases arise when the university authorities allocate money to things that have no bearing on teaching and learning. The inability of some Vice-Chancellors to effectively manage the resources available to the universities is due to the fact that, they have acquired unlimited power to manipulate university resources according to their whims and caprices (Olalekan, 2015).

3.0 Conclusion

It has been observed that, internal conflicts are inevitable in human life and so are they in higher institutions including universities in Nigeria. Based on this, the common internal conflicts especially between staff, staff unions and university managements and between staff unions in tertiary institutions can lead to competition, disagreement and misunderstanding which may lead to demonstrations, strikes and incessant closure of schools. Hence, it is impossible to attain a conducive environment in the higher institutions characterized by internal conflicts. Therefore, internal conflict management strategies such as dialogue,



consultation, and established internal conflict management committee among others are critical in handling internal conflicts in Nigerian universities.

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