# Labour Conflict Management and Performance of Federal Universities in South East, Nigeria

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**Abstract**: *This study examines labour conflict management and performance of federal universities in South East of Nigeria. The objectives of this study are, among others, to determine the relationship between constant upward review of wages and quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and hypotheses. Descriptive survey design was adopted with a population of 11025 staff of the institutions under study, from where a sample size of 386 was obtained using Taro Yamane formula. The data was obtained from primary sources through the administration of structured questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using simple percentage, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Z-test and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 23). The findings from the study reveal, among others, that there is a significant relationship between constant upward review of wages and quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria. To this end, the researcher recommends that government should ensure that salary increment and constant payment of earned allowances to workers is institutionalized. This will help to cushion the effects of inflation and rising cost of living on the real income of workers. Also, it was recommended that government should consider it imperative to increase – on a percentage basis – funding for the education sector from the national budget. The additional funding advocated for can be obtained if the government muster the political and administrative will to block all loophole in the management of our public finance.*

**Keywords**: industrial harmony, arbitration, tertiary institution, conflict

## 1.1    INTRODUCTION

All over the world, the university is regarded as a citadel of learning, a fountain of intellectual development and a breeding ground for leaders of tomorrow. Ike (1999) views the university as a place for the impartation of knowledge and shaping of values. In other words, a university progresses when it is able to impart knowledge and shape values; and when it is not properly managed, it then fails. This failure has negative telling effects on the larger society. According to Nwankwo (2000), this explains why merit has been the watchword in the university system – an institution in which a student must first be certified worthy in character and learning before being admitted into the Honors Degree.

The role of universities in human capital development, research and technological innovation cannot be under evaluated. Globally, investment in University education is a critical component of national development efforts. Nations today depend increasingly on knowledge, ideas and skills which are produced through research conducted in the universities. Investment in university education is borne out of the belief that it contributes to national development in three principal ways – teaching, research and community development.

It is instructive to note, however, that the nature and character of the university, as an academic institution, entails that there should be a conducive environment for the various staff groups and the management team to work together for the attainment of the missions and objectives set out in the establishment of the university. Workers in a typical Nigerian university system organizes themselves into different unions among which are the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), The Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU), The Non-Academic staff Union of Universities (NASU), Association of University Technologists of Nigeria (ASUTON), The Senior Staff Association of the University Teaching Hospital, Research institutes and Allied Institution (SSAUTHRIAI), among others. This is with the purpose of protecting and furthering the interests of their groups. It is to be noted that these Unions, though distinct, are interdependent, meaning that a breakdown in the activity of one group can affect the entire university system.

Sadly, this breakdown in activity, has been the case with the Nigerian university system such that despite the immense potential benefits of university education to nation building, the capabilities of the university system in developing countries to fulfil their manifest destinies are frequently being thwarted. The longstanding problems facing the university system have been the constant conflict between the various staff unions in the system and the university managements/administrators. Unions and management

tend to have opposite views because of the divergence between the expectations of management and labour unions, which often leads to conflicts. Industrial or labour conflict is the inability of contending parties to reach amicable agreement on issues connected with the object of industrial or labour interaction, whether or not, this conflict results into a strike, lock-out or other forms of protest.

The crisis in the Nigerian university system is historical and constitutes parts of a wider governance crisis in Nigeria – mismanagement of public utilities and funds, poor policy execution, environmental factors, authoritarian rule and the under-funding of social services as a result of pervasive and endemic culture of corruption in Nigeria. The wider crisis has affected Nigerian universities in specific ways, related to three broad areas: inadequate university funding, lack of respect for university autonomy or academic freedom, and poor conditions of service (Arikewuyo, 2014).

## 1.2.      Statement of the Problem

Industrial conflict has been a challenge to Nigeria tertiary institutions. It has been a dominant factor in the history of Nigeria labour relations. There have been so many cases of dispute or disagreement either between the employee and the employer or between the government and the civil servants (Enyinnaya, 2011). The challenges of conflict management in universities sometime

The above situation has aroused scholarly interest that has provoked a number of studies. For instance, Asiyai (2008) investigated the perceived impacts of trade union disputes on the university system in Nigeria and found that closure of universities, unstable academic calendar, loss of academic sessions due to strike actions, brain drain and poor quality of graduates are the strongest perceived impacts of industrial conflict. Also, Ige, Adeyeye and Aina (2011), whose study examined the factors that influence industrial conflicts in Nigeria during the period between 1980 – 2010 found that changes in wage rate, price expectation and union membership concentration influence industrial conflicts in Nigeria. A similar study by Asogwa (2015) investigated labour unions and conflict management in Nigeria with a focus on Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) also revealed that ASUU, in each of their activities, tried to pull down the government in order to ensure that the rights of their colleagues whom they represent are not trampled upon or denied by the government.

Again., Tinuade and Fadekemi (2015) examined the role of academic libraries in conflict resolution and found that lack of established library policy on conflict management information services is the major problems affecting library services for conflict resolution. In addition, Ajemunigbohum and Asokere (2010) carried out an empirical study on the effect of conflict on organizational performance in Nigeria. The study revealed that bargaining, collaboration and avoidance are the most used means of managing conflict.

Available studies appear to contend that most of the conflicts are caused by staff welfare issues which include salaries and wages, allowances, promotions and general conditions of service. There are even accusations that the government has not done enough to quell the ugly trend of strikes in the various citadels of learning. This may be so, given the history of labour conflicts in the university system. According to Nnaji (2014), the Nigerian universities have been experiencing trade union disputes since 1980s. Primarily, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) trade disputes and strikes have been of great concern to many Nigerians given the negative consequences it has had on the image and performance of the country's university system (Onyeonoru 2002 and Asiyai 2006).

However, it appears that in spite of all these scholarly efforts, the Nigerian industrial climate is far from being purged of the menace of industrial conflicts. With respect to the Nigerian educational sector - especially the university system, an amicable solution to the issues which specially pertain to funding, and general condition of service seem to be far from sight. Thus, previous researchers have only attempted to address the symptoms, ignoring the root causes. This study therefore, adopts a more holistic approach to not just the issues that triggers the conflict, but the root causes to forestall future occurrence. This approach has not been effectively explored, making this study, a one of its kind in academic discussion on conflict management and organizational performance.

## 1.3.    Objectives of the Study

1.      To determine the relationship between constant upward review of wages and quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.
2.      To ascertain the relationship between collective bargaining and stable academic calendar in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

**1.5.**     **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses which were stated in null form are to be given a validity test in this research

1.  There is no significant relationship between constant upward review of wages and quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.
2.  There is no significant relationship between collective bargaining and stable academic **1.6.**

**2.0 Literature Review**

**2.1     Causes of Labour Conflicts**

According to Sayles (1993:10), labour conflict as a phenomenon has its causes as the dissatisfaction of workers about their wages or salaries. Darmach (1998) also declares that there are many causes of labour conflicts. According to him, however, issues relating to finance – wages, salaries, condition of service, among others -are, in fact, the major causes of labour conflicts. Flowing from this line of thought, Crouch (2002), posited that it is in the general interest of labour to increase its price to reduce its work burden and to gain control over its own development. The opposite to the preceding illustration is that capital interest is the general focus of employers, that is to reduce the price of labour, to increase the amount of work that can be extracted and subordinate labour to marginal control. This according to Marshal (2002) is said to arise when there is derivation from the expectation relating to the terms and conditions of work especially when it affects the employees.

Similarly, Onyeanoru (2005), also stressed that labour conflict can arise as a result of incompatible interest of workers and employees in the working environment, the disagreement arising from terms and conditions of employment, Clashes resulting from opposing view held by workers about their relationship. However, Azzulence (1999) opined that

> *"labour conflict can be caused when there is absenteeism, output restrictions, job changing, negligence, accident at work, breach of contract of policy, unconscious forms of protest and individualization, etc."*

According Otobo (2003) stated that, the causes of labour conflict are numerous, some of which are peculiar to respective organizations internally, and some others located externally. Thus, the causes of labour conflict are internal and external, both often influences one another. Internal sources of conflict would include: Style of management; Nature of physical environment of the work place; Orientation or social consciousness of workers; Other conditions of service; Efficiency or otherwise of the promotion system; Cumbersomeness of grievances; Dispute procedure; On the other hand, the external causes of conflict includes: Government industrial and economic  policies; Nature of labour legislation; Unpatriotic and unethical behavioural of political class; National economic mismanagement\General distribution of wealth and power in society; and The nature of capitalist economy. Some of the external sources of conflict might not directly instigate labour conflict to influence general expectations, substantially determine nature of workers' demand, have a bearing on the intensity of conflict and set the whole tenor the conduct of industrial relations. Two points have to be emphasized; first, it is because the worker lacks any direct control over the future of his job that his desire to establish a right to the job is always a potential source of conflict.

Secondly, the actual exercise even from workers who do not ordinarily questions its legitimacy. The exercise of managerial power therefore is a perpetual source of conflict in industries. The ownership or position of power does not automatically make one a good manager and clearly the conduct of many managers leave a lot to be desired.

**2.2     Conflict Management**

Conflict management is a term that is often confused with disputes settlement, conflict management, and conflict resolution. It is then necessary to distinguish the various terms for proper understanding and adequately address issues of conflict management which is the main variable of this study. Spangler (2013) points out that though these terms are often used interchangeable, they differ from each other. Disputes are generally considered to be disagreements that involve negotiable interests. Such issues can be settled through negotiation, mediation, or adjudication. They are generally short-term and, given the right process, lend themselves to the development of mutually satisfactory solutions. Dispute settlement therefore refers to the working out of a mutually satisfactory agreement between the parties involved. Dispute settlement is primarily concerned with upholding established social norms (of right and wrong) and is aimed at bringing the dispute to an end, without necessarily dealing with its fundamental causes

(Burton and Dukes, 1990). Thus, although the particular dispute might be settled permanently, another similar or related dispute may arise again later if the underlying causes are still present (Burton 1990).

Spangler (2013) insisted that conflicts last longer and are more deeply rooted than disputes. They tend to arise over non-negotiable issues such as fundamental human needs, intolerable moral differences, or high-stakes distributional issues regarding essential resources, such as money, water, or land. To truly resolve a conflict, the solution must go beyond just satisfying the parties' interests, as occurs in dispute settlement. To end or resolve a long-term conflict, a relatively stable solution that identifies and deals with the underlying sources of the conflict must be found. This is a more difficult task than simple dispute settlement, because resolution means going beyond negotiating interests to meet all sides' basic needs, while simultaneously finding a way to respect their underlying values and identities. However, some of the same intervention processes used in dispute settlement (i.e., mediation) are also used to achieve resolution.

Conflict management involves the control, but not resolution, of a long-term or deep-rooted conflict. Administrators and managers usually have recourse to conflict management when complete resolution seems to be impossible, yet something needs to be done. In cases of resolution-resistant or even intractable conflict, it is possible to manage the situation in ways that make it more constructive and less destructive (Deutch 1973 cited in Spangler 2013). The goal of conflict management is to intervene in ways that make the ongoing conflict more beneficial and less damaging to all sides.

One of the earliest researchers of conflict management, Mary Parker Follett found that conflict was managed by individuals in three main ways: domination, compromise, and integration. She also found other ways of handling conflict that were employed by organizations, such as avoidance and suppression (Wikipedia, 2015).

Hotepo, Asokere, Abdul-Azeez1, and Ajemunigbohun (2010) also agreed that conflict can be managed in different ways, some focusing on interpersonal relationships and others on structural changes. Roy, and Clifford (1974) advocate that managing conflict toward constructive action is the best approach in resolving conflict in organization. When conflict arises, we need to be able to manage them properly, so that it becomes a positive force, rather than a negative force, which would threaten the individual or group.

Derr (1975) suggests three major approaches for managing conflicts: collaboration, bargaining and power play. The appropriate use of these methods depends on the individual and organizational state.

Collaboration involves people surfacing their differences (get them out in the open) and then work on the problems until they have attained mutually satisfactory solutions. This approach assumes that people will be motivated to expend the time and energy for such problem-solving activity.

Bargaining on the other hand assumes that neither party will emerge satisfied from the confrontation but that both, through negotiation, can get something they do not have at the start, or more of something they need, usually by giving up something of lesser importance. One party generally wins more than the other; by the skillful use of tactical trades, he can get the maximum possible from the other side.

Third approach, power play, differs from the other two approaches because of its emphasis is on self-interest. Whereas, in collaboration and bargaining the two sides come together to try to resolve their problems, while power play is the dominant mode, the actions are unilateral or in coalitions acting unilaterly.

Philip (2014) who referred labour conflict management as the effective means of resolving grievances and issues between governments and unions to avert recurrence of labour unrest, suggested that grievances between the unions and Governments should not always result to labour unrest if well managed. He then suggests that Industrial disputes can be successfully managed through collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is a means of settling conflicts between groups of workers, representatives of labour unions and relevant employers whereby they come together to negotiate their grievances.

Teague and Doherty (2011) however insisted that most labour conflicts can be resolved through appointment of ombudsman, mediation, peer review, management review board or arbitration. An ombudsman is a designated 'neutral' third party inside an organisation assigned the role of assisting the resolution of a grievance or conflict situation. The activities of an ombudsman include fact-finding, providing counselling and conciliation between disputing parties. High grade persuasion skills are the key asset of a good ombudsman; Mediation is a process under the stewardship of a third party designed to help those involved in a

dispute reach a mutually acceptable settlement. The third party has no direct authority in the process and is limited to proposing or suggesting options that may open a pathway to a mutually agreeable resolution; Peer review is a panel composed of appropriate employees or employees and managers which listens to the competing arguments in a dispute, reflects upon the available evidence and proposes a resolution. Whether or not the decision of the panel is binding varies across organizations; Management review boards (also called dispute resolution boards) are solely composed of managers and have more or less the same remit as peer reviews. Again the decision of the panel may or may not be final; In arbitration, a neutral third party is empowered to adjudicate in a dispute and set out a resolution to the conflict. This may or may not be binding depending upon the prevailing labour legislation and the design of the arbitration process.

Dontigny (2017) noted that in any situation involving more than one person, conflict can arise. The causes of conflict range from philosophical differences and divergent goals to power imbalances. Unmanaged or poorly managed conflicts generate a breakdown in trust and lost productivity. He is therefore recommending five basic conflict management strategies which he believes should place organizations in positions they can better deal with conflicts before they escalate beyond repair. These strategies include: accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, compromising, and competing

The accommodating strategy essentially entails giving the opposing side what it wants. The use of accommodation often occurs when one of the parties wishes to keep the peace or perceives the issue as minor. For example, a business that requires formal dress may institute a "casual Friday" policy as a low-stakes means of keeping the peace with the rank and file. Employees who use accommodation as a primary conflict management strategy, however, may keep track and develop resentment.

The avoidance strategy seeks to put off conflict indefinitely. By delaying or ignoring the conflict, the avoider hopes the problem resolves itself without a confrontation. Those who actively avoid conflict frequently have low esteem or hold a position of low power. In some circumstances, avoiding can serve as a profitable conflict management strategy, such as after the dismissal of a popular but unproductive employee. The hiring of a more productive replacement for the position soothes much of the conflict.

Collaboration works by integrating ideas set out by multiple people. The objective is to find a creative solution acceptable to everyone. Collaboration, though useful, calls for a significant time commitment not appropriate to all conflicts. For example, a business owner should work collaboratively with the manager to establish policies, but collaborative decision-making regarding office supplies wastes time better spent on other activities.

The compromising strategy typically calls for both sides of a conflict to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable, if not agreeable, solution. This strategy prevails most often in conflicts where the parties hold approximately equivalent power. Business owners frequently employ compromise during contract negotiations with other businesses when each party stands to lose something valuable, such as a customer or necessary service.

Competition operates as a zero-sum game, in which one side wins and other loses. Highly assertive personalities often fall back on competition as a conflict management strategy. The competitive strategy works best in a limited number of conflicts, such as emergency situations. In general, business owners benefit from holding the competitive strategy in reserve for crisis situations and decisions that generate ill-will, such as pay cuts or layoffs. Ojo and Abolade (2013) summarized the most common methods of labour conflicts resolution in Nigeria to include:

**Joint Consultation:** This is a powerful tool for resolving conflicts. Joint consultation could be defined as a meeting between the workers and their employers where the relationships is seen not as terms of bargaining strength but in terms of their worth and ability to contribute to the subject being discussed. Hence, discussions focus on mutual interest to both sides. Subjects like welfare, canteen, safety, productivity and so on are discussed. It is perhaps the joint benefit to be derived from such meeting that makes joint consultation suitable for discussing problems in industry.

## 2.4      Causes of Conflict in Universities

Ndum & Okey (2013) observed that, potentials for conflicts are multifarious within the university system. Some of these are indicated below:

**Continuous competition for scarce resources**: Research, teaching, student amenities, staff pay and other welfare services all have their claims on the limited resources at the disposal of the university. Hence, there is deprivation (relative or absolute) of the needs of all the groups within the system. The consequences of inadequate provision of financial resources to the university system are

the decay of structures and the decline in services and functions. According to Sanda (1992), there is direct connection between deprivation which leads to frustration, and aggression. The conflicts which result from the frustrated are often directed against the defined aggressors or perpetrators of the undesirable state of affairs. Gross mismanagement of available resources could also result in conflicts. These conflicts could take the form of strikes, demonstration, boycott of lectures and violent riots.

**Autonomy and academic freedom**: Autonomy drives are those situations when one group either seeks to exercise control over some activity that another party regards as its own domain or seeks to insulate itself from such control (Idowu, 1985). Academic freedom, according to Sanda (1992) connotes freedom to organize the university, design and teach courses, associate with others, project, imbibe, exchange and hold ideas without any fear of harassment or victimization, and challenge established orthodoxies without any fear of contradiction, all in the pursuit of truth. However, events such as outright ban of university staff and students' associations fear of premature retirement, or rationalization of programmes as a result of government overregulation all result in decreasing autonomy, decline in morale, goal displacement and ultimately, conflicts.

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**Perceived Goal Incompatibility**: The potential for conflict is likely to be high where groups or individuals perceive and interpret the same phenomenon differently. In the university system, attention needs to be focused on the critical point of contact between the teacher and the learner. The psychology of learning suggests that students will not learn well unless they are actively involved in the process, and so accept responsibility for their learning activities. So, if students do really feel that they are learning, much else will be forgiven. If not, they need to be listened to; otherwise, as posited by Geoffery (1977), they are going to find some other way to attract attention to themselves (Alabi, 2002).

**Management Style of Universities**: Though a university is an academic enterprise, a lot of academic effectiveness rests on administrative support machinery. Hence, the management competencies of university managers determine to a large extent, the severity of conflicts within the university, irrespective of the origin of the conflict (internal or external). Managers who have tendencies to authoritarianism and dogmatism are particularly conflict-prone. Equally prone to conflicts, according to Miner (1973), are those with low self-esteem and a disposition to distrust and suspicion (Alabi, 2002).

In university administration, eight spheres are identified for the goal of quality education to be attained (Sanda, 1991). These spheres are finances, students, academic programme, committee system, personnel, welfare, reward system and physical facilities. Any significant lapse (s) in any of these areas might lead to a revolt. Role ambiguity/role dissatisfaction, conflicts occur when the role prescriptions are vague and uncertain. This is usually characterized by loose-lying power where various groups and individuals seek to grasp the power. Also, employees dissatisfied with their roles as defined by the organization are likely to be involved in conflicts. For instance, the non-academic staff are the relatively low-income group who might find it difficult to get direct financial and psychological rewards from working harder or better (since the productivity of the university workers is not easily quantified, as in other enterprises). The major manifestations of conflicts caused by dissatisfaction are failure or refusal to work, either temporarily or permanently, resulting in absenteeism or separation (Alabi, 2002).

**Difference in Values and Lifestyles**: Probably because of the concentration of young adolescents, possibly experiencing freedom and independence for the first time, the university campuses are filled with and threatened by, noise, aggressive styles of dress, sexual behaviours, aesthetics and secret peer associations (e.g. cultism). The older members - academic and administrators - impose rules and regulations. The young may answer back by demanding for, and claiming, their democratic rights, culminating in minor conflicts or even ghastly skirmishes between the students and the university authority (Alabi, 2002).

**Politics and National Issues**: In addition to conflicts arising from situations intrinsic to the university, some arise due to political objectives outside the university. Political control of education in terms of financial and administrative policies bring about conflicts between the university and the government. The Federal Government, through the Federal Ministry of Education and National Universities Commission (NUC), controls the structure, curriculum, budget and calendar of the universities. Also through

the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), all admissions to the universities are controlled and manipulated (Quota system). A new dimension to this control is the appointment of sole administrators (Military and Civilian) to run the universities (Major General Mamman Kotangora (rtd) for Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and Professor Gomwalk for University of Nigeria, Nsukka, from 1995 (Alabi, 2002).

Moreover, national issues, especially with political undertones, do bring about conflict. For instance, the issue of annulled June 12, 1993 Presidential elections brought about violent demonstrations of university students against the state, resulting to deaths, destruction and frequent disruptions of academic calendar. Furthermore, in a society filled with frustrating potentials, such as underdevelopment, and inflation due to price hike in petroleum products, government action or inaction can compel the people to direct their aggressions at agencies of the state, at the slightest sign of provocation (Alabi, 2002).

**Communication Barrier:** Poor communication, communication overload, total absence of information or feedback mechanism, poor perception pernicious, ambiguity in communication and ignorance can degenerate into either conflict or crises.

## 2.6     Concept of Performance

The term performance has been defined repeatedly and at different times in the social evolution and it is in a continuous development, without having reached an agreement, because there is a numerous series of factors which influence performance directly or indirectly, such as the activities performed by the entity, the interests and the objectives of each economic entity (Avram and Rus, 2013). According to Avram and Rus, (2013) the term, performance has a Latin origin, where the verb performance had the meaning of finalizing a predetermined activity. Nowadays, the significance of performance comes from the English language, from the verb to perform, which signifies the regular accomplishment of a thing that requires ability or a certain skill. The noun performance therefore denotes the manner of achieving the objectives predetermined by an entity.

Albu (2005) considered the concept of performance as not being easy to define, because it is an ambiguous and integrative concept. Performance means success, competitiveness, achievement, action, constant effort, it is optimizing the present and protecting the future. Performance is created by a company through environmental reporting, following the way of creating value. According to Alazard and Separi (1998), performance leads to a global vision of interdependencies between internal and external parameters, quantitative and qualitative, technical and human, physical and financial ones of management.

Interest in management and performance measurement has increased considerably in the last 60 years. Number of publications on this topic has also grown significantly. Without doubt this can be attributed to fundamental changes in business environment and perceptions. Furthermore, performance is not a subject easily addressed. It is clear the need to study and rethink the concept and, in this context, to rethink how performance measurement is done. Thus, the concept of performance and performance measurement are analyzed in time, being directly influenced by the evaluation criteria of it, thus we can find the following periods (Avram and Rus, 2013):

1.  Between 1957-1979, a period when the evaluation of performance does not know a convergence, this one being defined on the basis of a range of evaluation criteria, such as: profitability, productivity, creativity, flexibility, adaptability, growth, development, market penetration, planning, quality of staff;

2.  Between 1981-1994, a period when performance is defined as being a standard of the level of achieving the organisational, strategic objectives; thus, it is considered that an activity is successful if it achieves the goals. Under these circumstances, performance depends on the multiple established goals and objectives;

3.  Between 1995-2000, when performance is defined according to productivity and efficiency of the economic entity, thus, by means of productivity, the results achieved at the involved means being reported, and by means of efficiency, the results achieved at the predicted results;

4.  From 2000 until present, when performance is defined according to value creation. The success in a company activity lies in its capacity to identify the sources of value creation and to exploit them properly. The value is judged both from the products point of view and from the organization as a whole. Throughout these periods, a gradual transition is made starting from the economic performance to the organizational and social one and then to the global one. Performance evolved altogether with society development, being in a permanent adjustment to the social and environmental conditions of the period to which the performance reference is made.

Iulia Jianu (2007) in the book Evaluarea, prezentarea si analiza performantei întreprinderii, makes a detailed presentation about the notion of performance, throughout its evolution, out of which we have considered relevant the views of the following authors:

- Georgopoulos and Tannenbaum (1957) considered it as being the equivalent of organizational efficiency, which represents the degree with which an organization, as social system and keeping in mind some limited resources and means, achieves its goals without an excessive effort from its members. The criteria used for assessing performance are: productivity, flexibility, inter-organizational tensions; - Yachtman and Seashore (1967) defined performance as being the company capacity to exploit the environment so as to achieve rare and essential resources to its function; - Price (1968) considered that performance is synonymous with organizational effectiveness, he posited that it uses the following as criteria of evaluating performance: productivity, conformity, institutionalizing; - Labrousse (1971) characterized company performance, during this period, as being a chain of attributes specific to it: a company capable of coping with foreign competition, a well-run company which manages to quantify its productive effort at minimum costs, a company capable of exploiting a niche and establishing an important enlargement; - Moh (1972) identified as criteria of evaluating performance: productivity, flexibility, adaptability; - Gibson (1973) uses the following criteria in assessing performance: productivity, efficiency, satisfaction, flexibility, development, survival. - Harrison (1974) defines performance as the final outcome of evaluating the effort; - Shashua and Goldschmidt (1974) are the first researchers who managed to define the concept of financial performance, according to the following criteria: profit margin, share profitability, capital profitability, rate of operating capital, rate of activity. These criteria simply represent indicators for measuring profitability and financial position, indicating the enterprise performance; - Klein (1976) sustains that performance is a subjective and relative notion, mentioning six indicators which highlight the company performance: growth of the added value, return on engaged capitals, growth of fixed assets, changes in the workforce, covering the operating needs from the working capital, appointed liability compared with self-financing capacity;

- Dubois (1979) does not define performance, but he assesses it using five rating indicators: growth, profitability, productivity, liability, solvency; - Bourguignon (1995) defines performance as being determined by achieving the organizational objectives;

- Burlaud and Langlois (1999) consider that performance is not bad or good in itself. It is the same performance which can be evaluated as good if the objective is modest, or as bad if the objective is ambitious; - Cohen (1995) makes a comparison between performance and efficiency and he sustains that performance assessment consists in comparing a monetary indicator showing the outcome of the company and a monetary indicator related to the employed means;

is often assessed on these bases.

## 2.7    Funding and the Nigerian University System

Funding is critical to the establishment and maintenance of a university. It takes huge capital investment to build new schools, upgrade and expand existing ones. The inability of government to increase budgetary allocation to the education sector as a result of dwindling government finances have negatively affected access to and quality of education at all levels. Education, as a key component of human capital formation is recognized as being vital in increasing the productive capacity of people. Education, especially at the higher level, contributes directly to economic growth by making individual workers more productive and indirectly by leading to the creation of knowledge, ideas, and technological innovation (Larocque, 2008).

An investment in education is very beneficial to the society, both at the micro level as well as macro level and affects the system both directly and indirectly. Increase in individual's wage is a direct effect while the increasing externalities associated to education are an indirect effect (Dahlin, 2005). Education is basic to development, and also regarded as the only instrument through which the society can be transformed. As a salient factor in transition programme, education equips human resources with the needed knowledge, skills and competencies, which would make them functional, and contribute to the all-round development of the nation. It does not only help to supply the essential human capital which is a necessary condition for sustained economic growth but it is a key to poverty reduction and vehicle for promoting equity, fairness and social justice (Yesufu, 2000).

The Nigerian government recognized the role of education and human capital in economic development. Consequently, at independence; it embarked on quantitative and qualitative measures of expanding educational facilities at all levels. Hence, from five universities in 1970, the number rose to 24 in 1986. As at 2014, the number of educational institutions, namely, primary, secondary and tertiary stood at 62,406; 23,874; and 346 respectively. Sadly, government initiatives have not been translated into remarkable educational and human capital development due to many factors amongst which is inadequate funding. In the early

1970s the country had a lot to spend as a result of the oil boom of the era. This partly accounted for the upsurge in the number of educational institutions during the period. However, the downturn of the economy in the 1980s and the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), supported by both the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have adversely affected the amount of funds available for education.

Since the advent of democratic governance in our country in 1999, successive Nigerian governments have underscored the need to invest substantially in the educational sector. As at 1977 the federal government spent 8.4 percent of total expenditure on education. It rose to 10.4 percent of total expenditure in 1980. It, however, fluctuated significantly between 1985 and 2007. As at 2007 only 8.7 percent of total expenditure was spent on education. In the periods between 2010 and 2017, the education sector received the following allocation from the federal budget, N249.086 billion in 2010; N306.3 billion in 2011; N400.15 billion in 2012; N426.53 billion in 2013; N493 billion in 2014; N492.34 billion in 2015; N367.73 billion in 2016 and N448.01 billion in 2017. The percentage of the above figures ranges from 6.0 percent to 8.7 percent of the total annual budget for those years. All these fell below the minimum standard of 25.0 percent of annual budget prescribed by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (Kanayo cited in Halidu, 2018),

Nigeria's educational system was also accompanied by structural defects, inefficiency and ineffectiveness which today place the country at its lowest ebb in human capital development and utilization. The educational system tended to produce more of those who lack job skills for employment than those the economy requires to remain vibrant. The emphasis has been on linear expansion in the size of the educational system without any broad and dynamic concept of the qualitative dimensions of the system. The result of this inadequate educational system include decreasing industrial capacity utilization, rising unemployment, rising poverty, social insecurity by ebullient jobless youths, and structural imbalance and system configuration (Dauda, 2009). All these underscore the fact that education is yet to produce the desired results in accordance with its inability to improve the human resource stock of the nation.

## 3.0    Methodology

The research design adopted in this study is the descriptive survey design. Data collection was through structured questionnaire and oral interview. This was done through the Likert-type scale procedure. The Likert-type scale employed has five categories namely: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A) Undecided (UD); Disagree (DA); Strongly Disagree (SD). Each level is assigned a number ranging from 5 (SA) to 1 (SD). Five - point Likert scale procedure was adopted to ascertain forms of labour conflicts as well as effects of conflicts on academic activities and graduate output. In the 5-point Likert scale procedure, a theoretical mean value of 3.0 is taken as a criterion to judge the means for response to items in the questionnaire. Therefore, any item in the instrument which has a mean equal to or higher than 3.0 was regarded as either high or agree as the case may be while items with less than 3.0 was regarded as low or disagree

The population of the study consist of both academic and non-academic staff of the functional and approved Federal Universities in the four states of the region. From the National University Commission (NUC) website, each state has at least one federal, state and a cluster of private universities. For the population of study, formal requests were made to the Registrars' offices of the four Universities of study. The responses indicated a population of 2484 academic staff and non-academic staff of 8541.

**Table 3.1: Population Distribution of the Universities**

|  | University | Population | | Grand Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | **Non-academic staff** | **Academic staff** |  |
| **1** | University of Nigeria, Nsukka | 4602 | 1004 | 5606 |
| **2** | Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka | 1233 | 614 | 1847 |
| **3** | Federal University of Technology Owerri | 1872 | 507 | 2379 |
| **4** | Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike | 834 | 359 | 1193 |
|  | **Total** | **8541** | **2484** | **11025** |

**Source:** National University Commission (NUC), 2017

The population of interest for this study comprises of 11,025 staff, which is rather large and hence the need for a more appropriate sample for the study. The Taro Yamane formula, Yamane (1973) for finite population, is considered appropriate and is therefore used to determine the sample size for this study thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{[1+N(e)^2\ ]}$$

Where: n= sample size.

N= population of interest, (which is 11,025)

e= error estimate/level of significance, which is normally 5%

Solving:

$$n = \frac{11025}{[1+11025(0.05)^2\ ]}$$

n        = 386

The sample size for this study is therefore n = 386.

**Table 3.2: Population Distribution of the Universities**

|   | University | Population | Sample |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | University of Nigeria, Nsukka | 5606 | 196 |
| 2 | Nnamdi Azikiwe University | 1847 | 65 |
| 3 | Federal University of Technology Owerri | 2379 | 83 |
| 4 | Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike | 1193 | 42 |
|   | **Total** | **11025** | **386** |

**Source:** National University Commission (NUC), 2017

Forty (40) copies of the questionnaire was distributed to a sample from University of Benin, Edo state, to test for the reliability of the research instrument. Cronbach alpha method, which is the most widely used measure of reliability, was employed for the purpose. The Cronbach alpha coefficient gives a measure of the accuracy or consistency with which a set of items measure a single construct.

Decision guidelines for interpretation of the Cronbach coefficient was: < 0.60 unacceptable, 0.60-0.65 undesirable, 0.66-0.70 acceptable (which connotes a fair degree of internal reliability), 0.71 - 0.80 respectable (which connotes a good degree of internal reliability), 0.81 - 0.90 very good (which connotes a very good degree of internal reliability), and > 0.90 (which connotes a very high/good degree of internal reliability). Therefore, the Cronbach coefficient of 0.89 (table 3.2) indicates that the research instrument possessed a very good degree of internal reliability.

**Table** 3.3: **Reliability Test Result**

| Case Processing Summary | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | N | % |

|  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Valid | 40 | 100.0 |
| Cases | Excluded[a] | 0 | .0 |
|  | Total | 40 | 100.0 |

a.  Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| 0.783 | 0.789 | 40 |

**Sources: SPSS output. Ver. 21**

The study employed descriptive and inferential statistics, in the presentation and analysis of data. Descriptive statistics to be used include mean, frequency counts, tables, bar-and pie charts. Tests of hypotheses were done using three statistical tools with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS, version 23). Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using Pearson product moment correlation, hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested using Z-test. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient *(r)* assesses the degree that quantitative variables are linearly related in a sample.

The correlation formula is given below:

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

$$0 < r^2 < 1$$

In this study, $r^2$ is used to determine the relationship between the sub-variables.

The Z-test formula is

$$Z = \frac{x^- - \mu}{s/\sqrt{u}}$$

Where  x̄ = Sample mean

μ = Population mean

n = Sample size

n-1 = Degree of freedom

**Decision Rule:** Accept the alternative hypothesis when the probability value is less than alpha otherwise reject. All the analysis will be tested at alpha level of 0.0

**4.2 Test of Hypotheses using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 23)**

**Decision rule: We** accept the null hypothesis when the probability value is greater than the alpha value, otherwise we reject it.

**Hypotheses I**

$H_0$: There is no significant relationship between constant upward review of wages and quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

$H_1$: There is a significant relationship between constant upward review of wages and quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

**Descriptive Statistics**

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Constant upward review of wages | 75.6000 | 69.20401 | 378 |
| Quality of Teaching | 75.6000 | 71.57401 | 378 |

**Correlations**

|  |  | Constant upward review of wages | Quality of Teaching |
|---|---|---|---|
| Constant upward review of wages | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .089 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .001 |
|  | N | 378 | 378 |
| Quality of Teaching | Pearson Correlation | 0.89 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 |  |
|  | N | 378 | 378 |

From the analysis above, it shows that the probability value (0.001) is less than the alpha value (0.05), the researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternative which says that there is a significant relationship between constant upward review of wages and quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria, with a correlation value of 0.89.

**Hypotheses II**

$H_0$: There is no significant relationship between collective bargaining and stable academic calendar in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

$H_1$: There is a significant relationship between collective bargaining and stable academic calendar in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

**Descriptive Statistics**

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Collective Bargaining | 75.6000 | 73.0990 | 378 |
| Stable Academic Calendar | 75.6000 | 68.9998 | 378 |

**Correlations**

|  |  | Collective Bargaining | Stable Academic Calendar |
|---|---|---|---|
| Collective Bargaining | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .081 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .023 |
|  | N | 378 | 378 |
| Stable Academic Calendar | Pearson Correlation | .081 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .023 |  |
|  | N | 378 | 378 |

From the analysis above, it shows that the probability value (0.023) is less than the alpha value (0.05), the researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternative which says that there is a significant relationship between collective bargaining and stable academic calendar in federal universities in South East, Nigeria, with a correlation value of 0.081.

**5.1 Summary of Findings**

The following findings were made from the Analysis:
1.  There is a significant relationship between constant upward review of wages and quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

$$( P - value = 0.001 < 0.05, \qquad r = 0.89)$$

2. There is a significant relationship between collective bargaining and stable academic calendar in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

$$( P - value = 0.023 < 0.05, \qquad r = 0.081)$$

3. Funding has a significant effect on quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

$$( P - value = 0.009 < 0.05, confident\ interval; 0.05)$$

4. funding has a significant effect on quality of research in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

$$( P - value = 0.001 < 0.05, confident\ interval; 0.05)$$

## 5.2. Conclusion

Based on the summary of findings, the researcher concludes that the underlying strategies for conflict management- constant upward review of wages, collective bargaining and funding– significantly affect performance – quality of teaching, stable academic calendar, quality of research. Above all this study shows that labour conflict management has a great effect on performance of Nigerian universities, hence, all parties involved, especially the government, should make genuine efforts at effectively exploring the tools of conflict management in order to address the challenges of the Nigerian educational sector in general and the university sector in particular.

## 5.3  Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made;

1. Government should ensure that salary increment and constant payment of earned allowances to workers is institutionalized. This will help to cushion the effects of inflation and rising cost of living on the real income of workers.
2. The Nigerian government should introduce the process of entrenchment of industrial democracy whereby there is ample opportunity for a mutually beneficial bargaining process and agreements reached should be adhered to and effectively implemented.
3. Despite the competing demands for the nation's meagre resources, government should consider it imperative to increase – on a percentage basis – funding for the education sector from the national budget. The additional funding advocated for can be obtained if the government muster the political and administrative will to block all loophole in the management of our public finance.
4. In addition, government should provide the enabling policy and regulatory environment that will expose its university system to international collaborations, partnership and funding so as to address the research and funding gaps prevalent in the nation's university system.

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