

# Managing Industrial Conflict in the Federal Tertiary Institutions in the South East Nigeria: Praxis and Implications for Organizational Performance

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**Abstract:** *The Study was carried out to assess industrial conflict and management in Federal Universities in the South East of Nigeria. It stems from the fact that over the years the environment of Nigerian universities has been turbulent and characterized by industrial disharmony. Hypotheses were formulated to guide the study, and data were collected using the questionnaire, observation, face to face interview and focus group discussion tools. Data collected were analyzed and hypotheses tested using SPSS version 2. The findings revealed that poor funding of Nigeria universities has negative effect on the quality of teaching and research. Flowing from the findings, appropriate recommendations were proffered which include Universities in Nigeria attracting research grants from grant institutions overseas.*

**Keywords:** labour conflict, leadership, funding of local government, collective bargaining

## 1.0 Introduction

There is a tripartite employment relationship among the tertiary institutions, the union and the employer in making and enforcing job rules. The relationship presupposes a congenial and equal participation in issues affecting any of the parties.

Therefore, good industrial relation management is vital to the productivity of workers in organization, considering that management has been defined as the process of combining and utilizing or allocating an organizations inputs (man, materials and money) for planning, organizing, directing and controlling to the purpose of providing goods and services or whatever the objectives (Aka, 2009).

Poor management is bound to occur in an organization with inappropriate or wrong industrial relations management within the organization's framework. Therefore, employers should involve in industrial relations in determining vital issues that affect workers, such as their working conditions, settlement of disputes as they arise, as they are likely to make workers to feel accepted, thereby enhancing productivity in the organization. Again, industrial relation is machinery used by both the employers of labour and employees to reach a compromise for job value, wages, salaries and increase in productivity of employees. To enhance productivity of workers as regards industrial relations management, industrial relations officials are elected by the employees to represent them, although at times, the employers of labour are also involved in appointing officials of such unions. In such cases, the interest of the employers is safe-guarded, and the activities of the union are controlled by the employers of labour. Industrial relations management not only enhances productivity of the workers, but it also helps in settling disputes through collective bargaining, in the areas of job satisfaction, job regulation and job rules (Donkor, 2010).

From the colonial days labour conflict and strike have become a regular occurrence, not only in the tertiary institutions, but in other sectors of the Nigerian Economy. Akereke (2010) contends that from 2009 to 2018, millions of days were lost to strikes by workers of tertiary institutions, especially the university system across Nigeria over conditions of service. These revelations indicated an increase in the dimensions of labour management conflict.

## 1.1 Statement of Problem

One of the most fundamental problems currently destabilizing the survival of the Nigerian tertiary institutions is the issue of labour conflict and management. Most of the tertiary institution workers are very often restless and confrontational in their approach to issues which affect them as a group, such as the government not fulfilling some of the employment contracts between it and the workers. As a result, they adopt anti-government posture which if care is not taken can tear the state apart.

The government of Nigeria always perceive the workers as lazy, uncooperative individuals, who always hold secret labour meetings and plan drastic actions against government, as well as any organization they consider a threat to the labour interest, while the workers in turn perceive the government as exploiting them (Chukwu 2008). It is this perceptual basis arising from the government and the workers that sometimes serve as the "brewing pot" of the conflict (Halimatu, 2002). Thus, the tertiary

institutions have turned to a breeding ground for conflicts. The problem has been compounded by the inability of government to keep to the agreement reached which oftentimes lead to strike action.

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.

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 extent to which funding affects quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.
2. To examine the extent to which funding affects quality of research in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

### 1.4 Hypotheses

1. Funding has no significant effect on quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.
2. Funding has no significant effect on quality of research in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Concept of Labour Conflict

Conflict by nature is a constant phenomenon in any human organization. It is so ubiquitous in social life that it has been isolated by some as the basic unit for understanding social existence (Ajala, 2003; Alimba, 2010). Otite (2001) conceptualized conflict as a way of settling problems originating from opposing interests and from the continuity of society. Ajala (2003) succinctly summarizes the discourse on conflict when he said that conflict is the mechanism which keeps society going.

Several scholars of public administration and management science at large have drastically endeavored to annihilate the obfuscation and intellectual ambiguity shredded in the meaning, scope, and general conceptualization of the term, labour conflict and management. The evaluation of the concept will be based on its reality and fitness to contemporary society (Dontigne, 2017). Tudor (2003), underscores this point when he agreed that:

*Despite the best management practices in administration and communication, labour conflict will still occur in organizations. A total absence of conflict would be unbelievable, boring and a strong indication that such conflicts are being suppressed. One of the characteristics of a mature group (government and employees) is its willingness and ability to bring suppressed conflicts to the surface where they may be discussed with a greater opportunity of resolving them.*

The implication of the above summation is that conflict is a natural occurrence in everyday inter-relationships. Any organization without the slightest signs of conflict implies that the organization is not dynamic and nothing significant is going on in that organization (Anyanwu, 1999). Wexley and Yukl (1997), observed conflict as a dispute or struggle between two parties that is characterized by overt expression of hostility and/or intentional interference in the goal attainment of the opposing party. Interference can involve either active attempts to block someone's goal attainment or passive resistance such as withholding necessary supplies of information from both party.

In furthering this argument, they stated that more often, conflicts occur when two parties have goals that are incompatible. However, conflicts also occur even when the goals of the parties are compatible and the consequences of this type of conflict affects everyone concerned adversely. This latter type is often referred to as pseudo-conflict and it is important to distinguish it from conflict where real differences exist between goals or values of the parties. Pseudo-conflict, where there is a common goal or purpose, may still manifest as a result of individual differences on the best approach to adopt in the actualisation of the goals, lending credence to our earlier summation that conflict is inevitable in every dynamic and complex organisation.

In the views of Gordian (1998), labour conflict is an expression of dissatisfaction within the employment relationship especially those pertaining to the employment contract. Similarly, Marshal (2000) viewed labour conflict as

*resulting from the incompatible interest of workers and employers in the work places; disagreement arising from the terms and the conditions of employment; clashes resulting from opposing views held by the management and participants in the work place and fashioned according to their steps and positions on the organizations location.*

This is also in line with the view of Round house (1994), that labour conflict is a whole range of behaviour and attitude that expresses opposition. On the other hand, Burton (2005), observes that;

*Conflict, like sex, is an essential creative element in human relationship. It is the means to change, the course of our social values, of welfare, security, justice and opportunity for development to be achieved. Conflict is neither to be depreciated nor feared, that conflict like sex, is to be enjoyed. Thus, perceives conflict essentially as a social phenomenon with both creative and destructive manifestations.*

In a similar notion, Hill (1998), however, argued that based on these assumptions, the interpretation of conflict is that human beings make choices regarding their behaviour, and conflict may form the interplay of these choices. Honeyman (2013), in defining labour conflict, distinguished disputes between management and a group of employees from that between management and a single employee. According to him, the term "labor-management conflict" generally refers to disputes between an employer and a *group* of employees, while a conflict between an employer and a single employee acting alone is usually referred to as an "employment" dispute. An organized labor union is usually involved in labor-management conflicts, though these conflicts can be as basic as two employees approaching a supervisor with a shared complaint about overtime or some other working condition.

Fajana (2000), on his part, sees industrial conflict (or labour conflict) as the inability of these parties either between employers and employees or within their groups to reach an amicable agreement connected to the object of employer-employees' interaction, whether or not this inability results in strikes or lockout or other forms of protestation. Another definition that seems to be one of the most acceptable sociological definitions of industrial conflict is that of Kornhauser,

## **2.2 Causes of Labour Conflict**

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, Onyeonoru (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 to 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.

### 2.3 Effects of Labour Conflict on industrial harmony

According to Michael, (1996), Strike as a typical/indicator of labour conflict has four dimensions which includes:

- Frequency: The number of work stoppages in a given unit of analysis over specific period of time.
- Breath: The number of workers who participate in work stoppages
- Durations: The length of stoppage usually in main days of work lost.
- Impact: The number of working days lost through stoppages.

The Bureau of labour and employment statistics reported the following data on actual stricken in the year 2000; cases handled. 65, workers in new strikes 319,000. The data implies that strike frequency cases handled and duration (main days lost) are not insignificant in the country. The legal right of employers to continue operations during a strike in effect, employers attempt to undermine a strike and ultimately the union involved. It also escalates the level of acrimony and distrust during and after a strike, not only between striking workers and also their constricting counter parts.

Otobo (2005) stated that the general effect or impacts of strikes and lock-out on workers and management (private and public) may be usefully examined at three levels, all of which would be affected by actual conduct and the agreement, duration of conflict, and the agreement reached. These three levels are, the social: psychological, political and economic effects. At the socio-psychological level, it does not matter to any of the sides whether the strike has been successful or not from their own point of view. If the strike had been deliberately provoked by some members of management in order to introduce some changes and such changes become part of agreement ending the strike, the prestige and status of such managers are enhanced before all other members of management as they are judged competent. From the workers point of view; this could be regarded as defeat expect when concessions granted in either area more than compensate for these new changes; if they did then both workers and management usually claim victory. Otobo (2005) further stresses that in some situations, workers have found it difficult to sustain a long strike without their demand being met. When coupled with mal handling and denting of union involves the effect of a settlement upon the internal and external strength of union upon the wants and attitude of its members, and the reputation of the union in the community and with other unions.

The strength of the union and its ability to shut down the company's operations whether other unions will co-operate with the striking unions. The degree to which striking members will be able to withstand the loss of salaries, will they be able to secure work elsewhere? To what extent will the union itself be able to provide benefits to its members? The degree to which public opinions will be sympathetic or at least, not automatically to the purpose of the strike. The role that the government can be expected to take in the event of a strike.

### 2.4 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 (Deutsch 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-Azeez<sup>1</sup>, 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 unilaterally.

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.

**Mediation:** The Trade Disputes Act of 1976 and amended by the Trade Disputes (Amendment) Act of 1977. Section 3 of the Act, provided a comprehensive process of dispute settlement aside the internal procedure. Under this Act, if the attempt to settle the

disputes through enterprise's own machinery and procedures fails, the party shall within 7 days of failure meet together either by themselves or through their representatives under the presidency of a mediator to settle the disputes amicably.

**Collective Bargaining:** One important attribute of collective bargaining is that it is based on the principle of voluntarism. This means that both employees and management are expected to voluntarily iron out their differences.

**Conciliation:** A conciliator is appointed to look into the cases and circumstances of the disputes between employees and management and by negotiation with the parties attempt to bring about a settlement.

**Arbitration:** The arbitration procedure is generally time consuming, but it has the advantage of encouraging parties. In the interim, the Head of State or the Minister of labour can make the arbitration obligatory and binding if the possibility of a strike action is considered familiar to public order or against the general interest, as in cases involving essential service.

Ndum and Okey (2013) argued that efficient and effective management of conflicts is fundamental to the development of any society. They maintain that managing conflict towards proactive and constructive action is the best approach in resolving conflict in the university. When conflict arises, we need to be able to manage them properly, so that it becomes a positive force, rather than a negative one, which would threaten the individual or group. If conflicts arise and are not managed properly, it will lead to delay of work, disinterest and lack of action and in extreme cases, it might lead to complete breakdown of the system.

In resolving university conflict, developing a constructive communication process and influential conflict negotiator's personality are very important. No doubt, schools cannot avoid experiencing one conflict or the other but a great deal of such conflict can be managed and be guided from disrupting school efforts towards attaining its manifest and latent goals if the conflicting parties are systematic in the way they communicate their grievances, situation of the conflict and their readiness to negotiate for peace and if the negotiator mediating the resolution process is of good personality (Agbonna; Yusuf & Onifade, 2009). Conflict management in schools demands appropriate leadership style of the school administrator or chief executive. Leadership and administrative expertise remains central. A more participatory and supportive style of leadership and management behavior is likely to assist in conflict management. Demers in Magaula (2007) articulated three strategies of peaceful crisis resolution between and among warring parties; mediation, arbitration and reconciliation. Magagula (2007) also argued that each of the approach of Demers could be used by universities to resolve crisis among and between aggrieved parties. Clarification of goals and objectives is also vital. The clarification and continual refinement of goals and objectives, role definitions and performance standards help to avoid misunderstanding and conflicts. Focusing attention on super-ordinate goals, that are shared by parties in conflicts, may also help to defuse hostility and lead to more cooperative behaviour. Providing valid information and avenue for expression of views Information is needed to avoid blocking of communication flow that may lead to differences in perceptions. Effective management information system (MIS) is essential to provide requisite information which minimizes delays and ensures maximum utilization of resources. Most Nigerian universities lack effective computerized management information system for capturing, processing, storing, retrieving and disseminating relevant information (Alabi, 2002). There is need for better understanding and cooperation between the University system as a whole and the government. The decision-makers and their advisers need to be better informed on how the universities operate, while the university community needs to acquaint itself with the ways of the government, generally. Invariably, the universities will neither develop attitudes of hostility or servility towards the government, nor the government intolerant of the universities. Ibukun (1997), highlighted some conflict resolution measures such as the use of authority, and command, problem solving, appeal to superior organisation goals, changing the structure of the organization, prevention and avoidance, expansion of opportunities and resources, compromise and agreement and changing the behaviour

## 2.6. Managing Conflicts in Nigerian Universities

Aina (2015) noted that, efficient and effective management of conflicts is fundamental to the development of any society, but the prevailing situations in Nigeria constitute a reversal of this reality. Many Nigerian schools - higher or lower levels of school have been experiencing organizational conflicts and insecurity that in most cases hinder them from achieving the purpose for which they were established (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2011). To him, the unwholesome disharmony in Nigerian tertiary institutions can be reduced drastically by adopting and implementing the following strategies:

1. Proper funding of the university system
2. Principles of democratic governance

3. Better condition of service for staff
4. Conducive teaching-learning environment
5. Better information channel
6. Dialogue between school authority and students
7. Investment in training and development of university staff

### **Proper Funding of the University System**

Nigerian universities need to be adequately funded as the gross underfunding of the system has been rendering the university incapacitated. Funds should be made available to the universities as and when due so that the university managers can give prompt attention to the needs of the university staff. While this is done, trade union disputes will be minimised. In addition, universities should also seek alternative sources of revenue generation to augment whatever the government allocates to them. Besides the issue of proper funding is the principle of accountability and transparency. There is the need for accountability and transparency on the part of the university administrators. Unions will always complain when they are 'kept in the dark' as regards how fund allocated to the university system is being spent. There is the need for an effective monitoring of the fund allocated to the sector. Mgbekem (2004) suggested that a reliable accounting system should be established in each Nigerian university in order to guarantee accountability, honesty and transparency (Ekundayo, 2012).

### **Role of the Governing Council in Conflict Management in Nigerian Universities**

The governing council is the governing authority of each University and has the custody, control and disposition of all property and finances of the University. The governing council plays the following roles in promoting peace in Nigerian universities:

Participates in the making, amendment or revocation of university statutes;

1. Governs, manages and regulates the finances, accounts, investments, property, business of the university and for that purpose appoints bankers and solicitors to audit the accounts of the university;
2. Determines in consultation with the senate all university fees;
3. Establishes after considering the recommendations of senate faculties, institutes, departments and prescribes their organizations, constitution and functions;
4. Authorizes after considering the recommendation of the senate the establishments for both academic and administrative staff and with the approval of the senate suspend, or abolish any academic post;
5. Regulates the salaries and determines the conditions of service of staff;
6. Exercises powers of removal from office and other disciplinary control on staff;
7. Institutes in consultation with the senate, fellowship, scholarship, prizes and other endowments;
8. Promotes and makes provision for research;

Supervises and controls the residence and discipline of students and makes arrangements for their health and general welfare; and Provides for the welfare of all staff and their spouses, children and dependants including payment of pensions and other retirement benefits (Shu'ara, 2010; Adebayo, 2001; Adepoju, 1998).

### **3.0 Methodology**

The research design adopted in this study is the descriptive survey design. Primary and secondary sources of data was used; the primary source of data was obtained through the use of questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the respondents at the four Universities. The secondary sources of data used in the study were from books and documents obtained from the nation and state libraries and those of schools and ministries; Nnamdi Azikiwe University,

### **4.0 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 1**

$H_0$ : Funding has no significant effect on quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

$H_1$ : Funding has a significant effect on quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

#### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Funding	378	75.6000	72.49000	4.00	204.00

#### One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Z-Test)

		Funding
N		378
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	75.6000
	Std. Deviation	72.49000
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.256
	Positive	.256
	Negative	-.189
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.571
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.009

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

The analysis above also shows that the probability value (0.009) is less than the alpha value (0.05), the researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternative which says that funding has a significant effect on quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

## Hypotheses 2

$H_0$ : Funding has no significant effect on quality of research in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

$H_1$ : Funding has a significant effect on quality of research in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

#### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Funding	378	75.6000	70.5501	8.00	201.00

#### One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov (Z-Test)

		Funding
N		378
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	75.6000
	Std. Deviation	70.5500
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.311

	Positive	.311
	Negative	-.201
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.6111
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.001

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

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

### 5.1 Summary of the Findings

1. Funding has a significant effect on quality of teaching in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.  
( $P - \text{value} = 0.009 < 0.05, \text{confident interval}; 0.05$ )
2. funding has a significant effect on quality of research in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.  
( $P - \text{value} = 0.001 < 0.05, \text{confident interval}; 0.05$ )

### 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. 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.
2. 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.
3. The Nigeria universities should pursue more vigorously linkages and grants from institutions in developed countries.

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