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A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

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Abstract

The paper examines the occurrence of industrial conflict between labour unions and management in the workplace. The inevitability of conflict stems from the economic interest both parties want to satisfy at any point in time in their work relations which are at variance. The economic interest of both parties is inversely related and this will always reinforce disharmony of interest in the workplace. The theoretical analysis focused on conflict theory by Karl Marx and theory of industrial pluralism by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Essentially, causes of industrial conflict was brought to the fore, its consequences and resolution mechanism were expatiated. Views of various schools of thought on conflict were examined together with functional and dysfunctional aspects of industrial conflict. Suggested measures to manage effectively the emergence of workplace conflict were also discussed. The study concluded that industrial conflict has become a recurring decimal in labour–management relations, however, the suggested measures to reduce and manage the preponderance of conflict should be followed in order to enhance workplace peace and harmonious labour management relations.

Key words:
Critical examination; industrial conflict; labour-management relations

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1. Introduction

The concept of labour-management relations refers to the totality of interactions between employers and workers in work organisations. It demonstrates how workers, their exclusive representatives, and management communicate to mutually resolve problems that impact bargaining unit of workers' working conditions. Mutual interests in maintaining working conditions typically serve as the foundation for interactions between labour and management. The legality of labour-management relations was established by the government's recognition and certain laws, sometimes known as public labour policies, that govern both the management and the union's daily operations. According to Von (2007), the study of labour-management relations helps us to understand the rules and policies which govern and organize employment, how these are established and implemented, and how they affect the needs and interests of employees and employers. However, it has been observed that no matter the degree of co-operation between labour and management, conflict is inevitable in work relations as a result of economic interests of both parties that are inversely related.

As a matter of fact, productivity and profit of work organizations (public and private) will rise only when harmony, mutual understanding and co-operation reign supreme between employer and employees. It is an atmosphere of peace that can accelerate effective work performance, meaningful contribution and positive attitude at any point in time. Employees are ready to put in their best when genuine interpersonal relations, workplace peace and unity of purpose are established. Given the fact that enduring peace is not permanent when employer and employees come together in the name of production, conflict, therefore, remains part of elements of labour-management relations. While the employer focuses attention on high productivity and increase in profit margin with cost reduction, employees want persistent rise in their wages and salaries for better standard of living and improvement in their welfare which represent additional cost to the employer. This marks the genesis of industrial conflict between the two parties in work relations.

At the level of industrial relations, industrial conflict is the conflict between workers represented by their unions and employer represented by the management (Onyeonoru, 2015; Acha, 2020). Conflict is a permanent element of the workplace since disagreement, dissatisfaction and lack of understanding cannot be ruled out completely between the workforce and the employer. A conflict is a situation characterized by the inability of those concerned to iron out their differences. It thus starts from complaints to the level one can imagine (Allotey, 2024). Industrial conflict includes any temporary suspension of normal working arrangements initiated by employees (whether through their union or not) or management, with the aim of exerting pressure within the collective bargaining process (Allotey, 2024). This definition presupposes that industrial conflict can emanate from employees or management at any point in time. The basis of industrial conflict between labour and employer is satisfaction of their respective economic interest. Industrial conflict is a serious problem concerned with employment relations such as wages, salaries, bonuses, allowances, organizational policies or government policies as well as working environment which have far reaching implication on the development of the country (Akanji, 2005; Abdullahi, 2021). Deutsch (1977) cited in Mba (2013) argued that it is virtually impossible for individuals or groups with diverse background, skills, values and norms to work together without disagreement or conflict. Industrial conflict reveals expression of dissatisfaction within the employment relationship specifically those pertaining to the employment contract. It is lack of satisfaction with certain condition or some conditions that reinforces grievances and rancor in the workplace.

Egerova and Rotenbornova (2021) affirm that industrial conflict implies dissatisfaction within the employment relationship specifically those pertaining to the employment contract and the collective interest of the organization. This presupposes that industrial conflict does not only mean conflict between the employer and the workers alone but also conflict occurs when the organizational interest and goals are affected. According to Abdullahi (2021) conflict affecting the organizational interest and goals apart from dissatisfaction within employment relationship is most evident in present-day Nigeria, for example the recent Academic Staff Union of Universities Nasarawa State University, Keffi chapter strike of Feb, 2016 which is as a result of nonpayment of Earned Academic Allowances, issues that affect employment and promotion as well as funding of the university. Similarly, the strike embarked on by the Association of Medical Doctors of Nigeria in July, 2017 as a result of hazard allowance crippled the health institutions which resulted to scores of deaths as a result of medical issues.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Types of Industrial Conflict

As a matter of fact, industrial conflict can be categorized into two, namely: organised (collective) conflict and unorganised (individual) conflict. (Oribabor, 2009; Yusuf, 2015; Odunlami, 2015; Otobo, 2005; Egerova & Rotenbornova, 2021) affirm that industrial disputes occurred as a result of non-realisation of worker's aims and aspirations. Such disputes are then expressed in many ways such as strike actions, lock-out, go-slow, work-to-rule and overtime ban according to Yesufu (2000). Organised conflict has the following elements: it is always collective, not personal; it is well planned by mobilising all affected workers to partake in it and it is a strategy to change the dissatisfying situation. As it were, organised conflict can be in the following forms: Strike which is the temporary stoppage or cessation of work by workers.

According to Salamon (2011), strikes are frequently portrayed as the best and most popular kind of collective action because they allow workers to express their solidarity and the significance of the dispute by quitting their jobs and exiting the workplace. Strikes could have the following typology:

i. Wildcat strike: This type of strike occurs when workers go on strike without giving notice.
ii. Sit-down strikes: Employees show up for work but do nothing at all.
iii. Sympathy strikes: These are acts of solidarity taken by employees who are not parties to the disputes.
iv. Constitutional strike: This kind of strike adheres to the guidelines established by collective bargaining.
v. Official strike: This is the walkout that the union's leadership calls for. On the other hand, a strike is referred to as an unofficial strike if it is not organized and planned by the union leadership.

Table 1

Disputes and strikes in Nigeria (2014 – 2021)

Year	Trade Disputes	Work Stoppages	Workers Involved	Work Hours Lost
2014	46	26	193,944	2,269,037
2015	29	26	19,826	94,664
2016	31	31	59897	359,801
2017	16	11	9,494	47,631
2018	52	27	173,858	3,158,087
2019	49	47	344,722	8,287,733
2020	51	37	259,290	4,722,910
2021	50	42	320,006	5,505,322

Source: Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity.

In addition to the strikes previously mentioned, other forms of organized conflict include "work to rule" and "slow down," where employees work at a minimum speed in order to maximize profit and efficiency. Furthermore, an example of an organized conflict is the overtime ban, which is an intentional attempt to lower the employer's output and profit. Oribabor (2009) also argued that organised conflict can also include sit-ins, where employees take over the operation of the company after empowering the management and seizing company property. Additional aspects of group conflict consist of: Picketing: a process whereby workers in an organization engage in demonstrations as a way of publicizing industrial conflict by enlisting the support of workers in other nearby companies in order to make it effective. Work-in: when employees prevent the employer from closing the factory and stopping him from realizing the full value of his business. Organized conflict from the management perspective can take the following forms: refusal to engage in negotiations with labour/workers; termination of numerous employee appointments; lowering of key personnel to the lowest position; and lock.

Unorganized conflict is conducted on an individual basis. In other words, it is individual rather than group. The following types of unorganized conflict in the workplace were noted by Basbell (2019). It could take the form of: labour turnover which is the pace at which employees join and depart a company. Absenteeism includes things like never showing up for work without warning, pilfering and stealing company property and failing to report for duty. Sabotage is the practice of employees working against the management's

goals. Output restriction is when employees consciously lower their daily output while fraud is the deliberate theft of money by an employee or group of employees from an organization. Fraud is also another type of unorganised conflict which implies stealing the money of the company though falsification of financial transactions. This is common in the account department of a work organisation.

Table 2

Summary of bank fraud in Nigeria 2018-2020

Year	Cases reported	Cases prosecuted	Persons arrested	Persons prosecuted	Cases under investigation	Amount involved in Naira
2018	60	20	172	3	40	408,049,412
2019	82	39	154	18	41	6,239,306,692
2020	38	7	62	3	32	421,171,719

Source: Federal Office of Statistics.

Filing frequent complaints to voice your displeasure with the workplace, an employee purposefully breaching organizational policies and procedures, or an employee leaving the company. It is the pinnacle of conflict in the workplace (Barrett, Rhodes & Beishon 2018; Iyamabhor, Ogundare, Ndudi & Ofune, 2024). Management approach to unorganised conflict can be in the form of**:** autocratic supervision, strict discipline, penalties given to a worker, unnecessary firing or dismissals of workers, demotion of workers to lower/lowest position, lock-out by the management against the workers and termination of appointment.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Conflict theory can be associated with the work of Karl Marx. He lived between 1818 and 1883. According to conflict theory, competition for limited resources keeps society in a state of constant conflict. The theory holds that the proletariat, or working class, and the bourgeoisie, or capital owner, are the two classes that make up society because they have access to the means of production. The main focus of the class conflict is the disagreement between the two main classes. There are individuals in each class who share a common interest. The term "bourgeoisie" designates a subset of people who dominate their society in terms of power, wealth, and means of subsistence. Because of this, people who are impoverished and members of the working class are referred to as proletariats in society. The bourgeoisie's goal in the production process is to maintain profits while achieving high productivity, large sales volumes, and sharply lower production costs. On the other hand, workers desire consistent pay increases as well as other favorable working conditions. For the capital owner, all of these represent extra expenses that will reduce his profit. In the meantime, labour on the "surplus value" is paid pitiful sums by the capital owner. Karl Marx claims that conflict between capital owners and workers in the production process is inevitable, and this is when it starts.

This conflict theory can be expatiated from the points of view of some schools of thought/perspectives on industrial conflict as put forward by Ogunbameru (2005). The traditional/classical perspective asserted that because conflict has a detrimental impact on organizational productivity, it is bad and undesirable. This point of view is relevant when parties conflict, that is, bourgeoisie (capital owners) and proletariat (employees) lack cooperation and fail to share pertinent information, which keeps them from finishing ongoing projects at work. This can have negative effects on morale among staff members and managers who may not be dealing with their work appropriately, which can cause dissatisfaction and low organizational productivity. According to this school of thought, conflict is inherently violent, illogical, and highly dysfunctional, therefore, supervisors who ensure a conflict-free environment at work deserve recognition and advancement before those who are unable to do so.

In a similar vein, the human relations perspective holds that disagreements arise naturally in all kinds of organizations and groups. Since conflict is unavoidable, it should be managed and welcomed as a natural part of the group or organization with prompt intervention. This school of thought holds that conflict cannot be completely eradicated and that there are times when it is advantageous to the group or organization. However, the interactionist school of thought affirmed that conflict arises due to strained interpersonal relationships in work organizations. The school asserts that a cooperative, harmonious, and peaceful group is not adaptable to the demands of change and innovation. Not only is conflict a good thing, but it is also necessary for any group to function well. Supervisors need to be able to foster conflict and keep it at a minimum level that allows the

group to remain functional, critical of itself, and creative. The diverse views on conflict above are clear indications that conflict is bound to erupt in the work place when economic resources are not well distributed between employer and employees that can reinforce workplace disharmony of interest and job dissatisfaction.

Theory of Industrial Pluralism

Industrial Pluralism theory was developed between 1970 and 1975 by Alan Flanders. The fundamental tenet of pluralist theory is that various people and groups, such as labour unions and management representatives, are present in the workplace and have competing interests of their own. They are also diverse. In other words, organizations are competitive and multi-structured with respect to authority, loyalty, and grouping. These groups frequently result in "a complex of tensions and competing claims which have to be managed in the interest of maintaining a viable collaborative structure" (Manu, 2015) because of their distinct sectional interests, desires, aspirations, objectives, and leadership.

The reasons why workers are represented by their union leaders include favorable terms and conditions of employment, adherence to collective bargaining agreements, efficient communication within the workplace, flexible work schedules, democratic and participatory management styles, positive attitudes from employers toward the plight of employees, motivation, and interpersonal relationships both within and between employees and management. Conflict between the union and management is therefore both reasonable and inevitable when the latter disregards the majority of the aforementioned interests and aspirations because of the financial implications. Hence, the necessity to satisfy each party's financial interests leads to conflict at work. However, it is thought that the survival of the entire organization, of which management and unions are a part, requires mutual reliance and a shared interest.

In order to harmonize the diversities and pluralism, there must be a mechanism at the workplace, which will bind the conflicting groups together and hold them back from rendering the workplace into pieces (Flanders 1975; Salamon 2011). This mechanism, invariably, should be a continuous process of concessions and compromise and collective bargaining is seen as the only mechanism for achieving this purpose. Collective bargaining is a process in which employers and unions come together to harmonize their various interests and come out with collective agreement.

Workers have the ability to form unions in order to defend their interests as a group. They can affect work rules or control through collective bargaining (Flanders, 1975). Pluralists contended that because employers and management would prefer to safeguard their own interests, workers' and unions' interests cannot always be safeguarded and left in the hands of these parties. As a result, each person should act to protect their own interests while advancing the organization as a whole. The government would always defend the interests of the state, management would always defend the interests of the owners, and unions would always defend the interests of the workforce. Conflict that can only be resolved through talks and collective bargaining may result from this.

3. Causes of Industrial Conflict

The causes of industrial conflict are diverse as postulated by various authorities in industrial relations. Some of the root causes of industrial conflict are classified into structural and personal factors (Odunlami, 2015; Ajala, 2003; Lederach, 2003; Otobo, 2005; Onyeonoru, 2015; Salamon, 2011; Fashoyin, 2013; Sacks, 1979). Structural factors: opposing interests between workers and employers: The need to meet each party's individual financial interests in the workplace gave rise to their opposing interests. Unfavorable working conditions include outdated equipment, lack of comfortable offices, irregular or nonexistent wage and salary payments, and failure to implement collective bargaining agreements. constraints incorporated into collective bargaining agreements; lack of faith in Nigeria's dispute resolution process. Autocratic approach to management. Another important element that can strengthen labour disputes is public economic policy, particularly measures like the elimination of petroleum product subsidies, low minimum wages, high inflation rates, etc. Ineffective talks between the management and the employees can also lead to conflict at work. Authority relationship: A poorly defined reporting structure and authority relationship can foster conflict within an organization. Status inconsistencies: Where there is a strong status difference between management and other workers in terms of access to good working conditions, conflict may erupt. Communication problem: When there is no effective communication network between and among the various units and employees of the organisation, conflict is inevitable.

When one department is causing delays, work that necessitates interdependence among employees or departments within an organization can lead to conflict. Typical resources: Conflict is likely to arise whenever several parties have to share limited resources. Differences in goals: Conflict may arise when work groups have different objectives to meet without being aware of another department's goal. Personal factors: Personalities: We are not the same in terms of personalities. In the workplace, some people lack interpersonal relations, some are censorious, while some are lazy. All these may bring conflict with the co–workers. Differences in perceptions among workers in a workplace. For instance, what a manager considers to be a good reward system may not be appreciated by some workers. Cultural differences: Workers in organizations come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. It could be challenging for us to relate to or collaborate with people from different tribes unless we have a thorough understanding of their culture. It's important to be aware of other people's feelings and moods at work. Conflict may arise, for example, when issues from home arise at work and are difficult for others to comprehend.

According to Rao (2017), there are two categories of causes for industrial conflict: non-economic and economic. The following economic factors have been identified: pay and bonuses; unpaid time off and working hours; layoffs; erroneous promotions; and unfavorable public economic policies. The non-economic factors that were identified include the management's refusal to acknowledge unions, their autocratic style, their inability to resolve grievances, their poor working conditions, their disrespect for collective agreements, their poor negotiating skills, and their lack of faith in the Nigerian dispute resolution system.

3.1. Consequences of Industrial Conflict

According to (Fashoyin, 2013; Okeke, 2007; Oginni & Faseyiku, 2012; Allotey, 2024; Naqvi & Anjum, 2024) the following consequences are certain to occur when there are industrial conflicts, particularly in work environments: Impacts on workers and labour unions can take many different forms, such as decreased worker income, job loss, fatalities or serious injuries, and the arrest, incarceration, and detention of union officials. The following are possible effects on the employer and organization: decreased expected revenue, asset waste from damaged raw materials, increased rent costs, damage to other valuable items, assets destroyed by striking employees, and a damaged reputation of the company. Effects on the nation or society may include: bringing the economy to a halt or standstill, it can lead to loss of lives in the hospitals, it can affect the supply of power, water, the health care delivery system, etc. The day- or man-hours lost as a result of strike if computed can be huge.

3.2. Resolution of Industrial Conflict

According to the Trade Disputes Act of 1976, machinery for industrial conflict resolution between employer and employees may take two dimensions namely: internal resolution and external resolution methods.

Resolution by Parties

The internal resolution mechanism involves the use of collective bargaining between employer and employees involved in conflict in order to establish peace. However, if this method fails, then external resolution machinery will set in. That is to say, if there is no truce through collective bargaining, the parties shall report the matter to ministry of employment, labour and productivity that will now make effort to resolve the conflict through external means.

Mediation

Primary. Within seven days of the failure of the parties involved to resolve the conflict, the parties or their representatives shall meet and appoint a mediator mutually for conflict resolution. If there is no resolution within seven days, the parties shall report the matter to the Minister of labour and productivity. The mediator shall explain the efforts made so far to resolve the conflict. The Minister is now expected to proceed to exercise the power conferred on him by section 7,8,16 and 32 as appears to him appropriate (Oginni & Faseyiku, 2012). In view of this, the Minister has the power to appoint (a) a conciliator (b) refer the dispute to industrial arbitration panel and (c) national industrial court and set up a board of inquiry.

Resolution by Conciliation

Upon receiving information about the disputes, the minister has the option to designate a Conciliator and advise the parties of the steps he plans to take to resolve the issues. The minister selects a conciliator at this point. In order to reach a settlement, the Conciliator negotiates with the parties to learn more about the circumstances and causes of the disputes. The minister's appointment of a conciliator indicates that the parties have been unable to come to an agreement. The parties must appoint the single conciliator who makes up the conciliation body. An additional instance of conciliation occurs when each party appoints one conciliator, for a total of two conciliators. In order to resolve the disputes, the Conciliators must assign themselves case details and gather any additional information that may be needed.

Following a review of the case and the addition of the parties, it will submit its settlement terms. A record of the settlement must be created and signed by the conciliation body. The parties must appoint the single conciliator who makes up the conciliation body. An additional instance of conciliation occurs when each party appoints one conciliator, for a total of two conciliators.

In order to settle disputes, the Conciliators must first gather information about the case, gather additional information as needed, and examine it. Once the parties have been added, they must submit their terms of settlement, and the Conciliation body will draft and sign a record of the settlement. The Conciliators will then forward the terms of settlement, signed by the representatives of the parties, to the Minister. The decision made will be legally binding as of the date the memorandum is signed.

Arbitration

The Trade Dispute Act of 1968, amended 1969 and Trade Disputes Act of 1976 introduced and made arbitration compulsory (Oginni & Faseyiku, 2012; Omene, 2021; Omolawal, 2022; Ukokhe & Florah, 2022; Rismayadi, 2024; Shehu-Usman, Uzochukwu, Gambo & Abubakar, 2024). Thus, the issue will be referred to the Industrial Arbitration Panel if a settlement cannot be reached and the dispute is not resolved. The practice of arbitration has existed for as long as human civilization. An impartial individual or group that is formally appointed to arbitrate disputes is known as an arbitrator.

When the disputing parties are unable to resolve the issue, the Minister refers the matter to an industrial arbitration panel (IAP). The arbitration panel is a body that arbitrates on issues that could not be resolved at conciliation level. The arbitrators of industrial arbitration panel are drawn from government, employers and workers' representatives. The Panel operates as follows:

Hearing

The panel considers the causes and circumstances of the disputes as presented by the parties and comes up with decisions or judgement (awards) which must be in writing and address the issues.

Enforcement

It is important to state that enforcement is very weak regarding the decisions of the IAP. However, when any of the parties is displeased by the judgement awarded by the IAP within 7 days, an aggrieved party is expected to put forward his position to the Minister. The Minister is expected to refer the dispute to the National Industrial Court.

Resolution by National Industrial Court

The National Industrial Court (NIC) was established on 1st January, 1976 by virtue of Section 19(1) of the Trade Union Act Dispute Decree of number (2) of 1976. There have been two amendments of the NIC: One of 1992 and 2006.

The Court is the final habitat of matters within exclusive jurisdiction for this is subject to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999. Appeal shall lie as a right of the Court of Appeal only on question of fundamental right as contained in the constitution. The Court considers all issues, information, etc. regarding the dispute as it is expected to make a final judgement or decision or Award of the disputes. However, the disputes may go beyond the NIC if a party alleges a breach of their fundamental rights particularly in a hearing of his matter. This moves to the Court of Appeal.

4. Functional Aspects of Industrial Conflict

Many people perceive industrial conflict as always being destructive and unwarranted. However, it has been discovered that sometimes industrial conflict is needed by virtue of the benefits it brings in the following ways:

It is a means to bring about radical change in the current power structure, current interaction pattern and entrenched attitudes in an organization. In an organization where there exists entrenched power structure to the detriment of employees or entrenched conservative attitudes by the top management, industrial conflict can be used as a tool to bring balance of power or diffusion of power between workers and management. Oppression and victimization that accompany the earlier entrenched power can now be submerged.

Be that as it may, industrial conflict facilitates group cohesiveness and teamwork during the moment of conflict. Sense of unity and co-operation will emerge among groups during conflict thereby promoting their cohesiveness and unity of purpose. They could speak unanimously and remain focused in order to actualize their demands.

Furthermore, industrial conflict improves group and organisational effectiveness by searching for new ways of innovation. When conflict engulfs a work organization, the ultimate desire of the parties involved is to proffer solution by contriving new ways or direction that can accelerate enduring peace and harmony. This will invariably accentuate mutual understanding between labour and management in the workplace.

To all intents and purposes, it brings about more constructive level of tension and after resolving the conflict, parties involved become more united. Rancor, bickering and disharmony of interest will be suppressed and a new dawn of co-operation will emerge by virtue of the fact that tension brought by the conflict has disappeared. With this development, good suggestions can begin to emerge from both parties on how to move the organization forward.

Industrial conflict can lead to establishment of mutual understanding and new sense of direction after such conflict had been resolved among the parties involved in conflict. Mutual suspicion, flagrant disobedience, draconian polices, workplace vendetta and acrimony will vanish to a large extent if the conflict is well managed and sense of oneness will now reign supreme. This will promote healthy relationship in the workplace that can augment high productivity and profit making.

Industrial conflict may force the employer to have a change of heart positively towards the unions by not treating workers as slaves. Respect for human dignity from employer can be established after resolving the conflict, thus, as a way of fostering workplace harmony, employers may be forced to introduce measures such as joint consultation, collective bargaining and industrial democracy in order to create an atmosphere of peace, unity, love and mutual understanding in the workplace.

Dysfunctional Aspects of Industrial Conflict

To many people, conflict in the workplace is considered an aberration because it brings enormity of problems in the following ways. It can lead to increased labour turnover, inefficiencies between work units, sabotage, physical aggression, etc. When conflict becomes a recurring decimal, labour turnover will be high because no reasonable person will like to work in an atmosphere of discord. Inefficiency may set in due to lack of peace and commitment among the workforce emanated from such conflict. Disruption of work process and physical attack may become the order of the day.

Industrial conflict can affect unity and co-operation among working groups in an organization. Absence of co-operation between management and unions or among the various units in the workplace might crop up. Things may be at cross purposes and the major functions of management such as planning, controlling, co-ordinating, leading, directing become highly elusive. High productivity and rise in the profit of the organization may suffer a setback.

During a protracted strike for instance, violence may erupt in the workplace leading to loss of lives, arrest of labour leaders and destruction of property. All these will bring about work stoppages and loss of earnings not only to the employers but also to the workers who engage in such conflict.

Managers may find it difficult to achieve their objectives and goals if industrial conflict is not well managed. By so doing, work organization will find it difficult to attain the stated goals due to absence of

atmosphere of peace and harmony. The overall effect of this is that it can dent the image of an organization, reduce organization, promote loss of profit and customers.

Suggested Measures to Reduce Persistent Industrial Conflict in Labour-Management Relations

In labour-management relations, industrial conflict has become a recurring decimal that cannot be completely eliminated but well managed to maintain a harmonious working environment through the following ways:

As a matter of necessity, the use of social dialogue must be embraced by both labour and management. This could be achieved through regular and effective communication for genuine interpersonal relations to be established. This will pave way for joint discussion of intricate issues that could generate rift between labour and management thereby reducing tension and acrimony in the workplace.

In addition, the management/employers must take cognizance of the fact that employees are partners in progress in work relations. Thus, culture of positive attitude and co-operation must be developed towards workers to engender commitment and dedication to duty. Employees must be seen as human beings with dignity having their own goals, desires, expectations and hopes which make them to be unique as a factor of production. Respect and recognition must be given to employees through management decisions and policies because without workers, the basic objectives of any work organization cannot be realized. Employees must be considered as 'significant others'. Once this can be put into practice, cohesiveness and unity that can accelerate industrial peace will be established.

Workers' participation in management is another strategy that can foster workplace harmony. Apart from the fact that it will cement unalloyed loyalty among workers, high level of commitment and motivation that can reinforce efforts at achieving organizational objectives will become feasible. This approach will suppress workplace dictatorship, unilateral decision making and reckless use of leadership power. Workers' participation in management can be in the form of collective bargaining, joint consultation, co-ownership, co-partnership, joint committee, etc.

As a matter of fact, employers of labour must always honour collective agreements with labour unions. Critical factors must be put into consideration before entering into any agreement with labour unions. Once the agreement is signed, it must be honoured by both parties. This is one decisive area where federal government and Academic Staff of Nigerian University (ASUU) has been at loggerheads since 2009. It is a complete aberration to dishonor an agreement jointly signed by two parties when it comes to area of implementation. Employers should be trusted by employees and employees should be trusted by employers.
Finally, each work organization must design a standard and acceptable mechanism for conflict management. This can only be achieved through democratic and participatory leadership styles. By so doing, grievances, rancor, disharmony of interest, complaints and resentment in the workplace can be quickly looked into and resolved amicably.

5. Conclusion

On a note of conclusion, industrial conflict is a recurring decimal in labour-management relations in contemporary society. As long as the economic interests of both employer and labour are at variance in the work process, conflict is inevitable. The paper has been able to put forward analysis of workplace conflict in terms of theoretical underpinning, causes, effects and resolution of such conflict. Moreover, various schools of thought were analysed and a critical assessment of conflict between labour and management has been brought to the fore in terms of its functional and dysfunctional analysis. Conflict, though very destructive to some people in view of its negative effects, is needed in some cases in the workplace considering its functional aspect. Above all, industrial conflict has become part and parcel of labour management relations and it cannot be eliminated completely but managed intelligently if the measures expatiated above are logically adhered to by actors in industrial relations. This will accelerate industrial harmony, labour-management co-operation, high productivity and rising profit.

6. Contribution to Knowledge

This paper offers qualitative illumination on various concepts relating to conflict among parties in work organization. More so, it provides qualitative insights and suggestions on modalities essentials for mutual co-

existence in work organization. In addition, it constitutes a source of literature to researchers who might be coming in contact with this paper. The article brings into the limelight the various dimensions of industrial conflicts which have become prevalent in labour management relations in modern society. Many work organisations faced at any point in time some of these types of conflict that have affected their image, productivity, progress and profit. It is a lesson to many work organisations on how to prevent the occurrence of these conflicts through good management policies. Secondly, the article explained the basic negative consequences of industrial conflict on employees, employers, work organisations and the larger society. This is a pointer to the fact that labour and management should always work harmoniously to accelerate industrial peace for high profit and productivity to be achieved in the workplace.

In addition, the article has made us understand that sometimes industrial conflict can produce positive effects especially when the management remains negative to the desires, aims and aspirations of workers in terms of improvement in their working lives. Once conflict takes place, management may be forced to come up with new ideas that can enhance the welfare of workers or promote labour management co-operation. The article also explains the theoretical analysis of industrial conflict which has exposed some of the root causes of workplace conflict. This will help employers, the government, managers and individuals in leadership positions to really understand how workplace conflict could emerge and the need to take cognisance of this by mapping out strategies to manage such conflict. Finally, the article will serve as a basis for future research work in academics in terms of other areas the study has not touched in terms of analysis.

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