

Communication Skills of Labour Leaders as Correlates of Conflict Resolution in Public Tertiary Educational Institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria

by

Johnson Fejoh (PhD)¹, Victoria Olamojiba Lamidi²

¹Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1488-974X>

²Institute of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: fejoh.johnson@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examined communication skills of labour leaders as correlates of conflict resolution in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. It used descriptive survey research design and selected 172 respondents. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested using correlation and regression analysis at 0.05 significance level. Questionnaire containing two sections was validated using Cronbach alpha (score = 0.86 and 0.82 respectively). The results indicated strong positive correlation between labour leaders' communication skills and their conflict resolution performance (0.750-0.940, all p values <0.001), adaptation of communication strategies according to conflict types significantly affects resolution outcomes ($F = 427.480$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, factors of communication skills significantly explained the quality of relationships between labour leaders and other stakeholders ($F = 836.945$, $p < 0.001$). The study therefore recommended that there should be formal training and the provision of communication resources for skills enhancement of labour leaders.

Keywords: Communication skills, labour leaders, conflict resolution, tertiary educational institutions

Introduction

Higher education institutions in developing nations like Nigeria, including universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and organizations with a range of mono-technic goals, are generally viewed as tough to administer in terms of conflict since conflict cannot be avoided. There are many distinct levels of conflict at higher education institutions abroad, but a respectful conversation will not turn violent. Contrarily, conflict can both be a powerful instrument for enhancing an organization's performance and cause major rifts in its structure (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2011). This demonstrates how a number of variables are domestically transforming Nigerian tertiary institutions. These constraints make administrative processes less efficient both inside and outside of institutional organizations. Therefore, conflict is inevitable, and academic efficiency in higher education will never be done in a crisis-ridden setting such as the postsecondary educational institutions of Nigeria today. Problems between students and faculty

(academic, non-academic, and administrative) may drive academic programs to stop for months at a time, which may trigger riots, violence, protests, and revolts (Adeyemi, Ekundayo and Alonge, 2010). Communication skills need to be strengthened even more in order to reconcile disputes Apdillah, Panjaitan, Stefanny and Surbakti, 2022)

It is natural that arguments will occur under social conditions. Fahrimal and Safpuriyadi (2018) describe a conflict as a severe disagreement on an opinion or opinions. When individuals think that what has been said and understood is accurate, disagreements could follow. It should be emphasized, nonetheless, that there are a number of aspects to take into account when chatting, such as gender, age, status, and culture, all of which can affect how readily a discussion continues (Sudira, 2016).

When one party's efforts are considered to limit or obstruct another's objectives, needs, or actions, conflicts occur. Owan (2018) argues that disagreements are often connected with negative traits and conditions that result in incapacity, inefficiency, or dysfunctional consequences. In other instances, though, it can stimulate creative problem-solving and enhance the circumstances for all those concerned (Adesanya, Osakede, Ijimakinwa and Ojo, 2018). Conflict originates from disputes between the parties' aims, plans, attitudes, and opinions. Conflict can be classified as interpersonal or intergroup by Berger, Roloff, and Ewoldsen (2014). According to Berger et al. (2014), interpersonal conflict can occur between individuals and organizations that have competing identities.

Leadership of unions in educational institutions mostly entails influencing staff members' conduct and enabling them to attain corporate objectives. A union leader is successful, in Northouse (2014) opinion, if they can motivate their team members to strive for the mission and goals of the union. This asserts that union leaders are torchbearers and that, in order to effectively manage the day-to-day operations of their particular unions, they need to have a certain set of attributes known as leadership abilities. Union leaders and professionals need to have and apply creatively skill clusters like information/knowledge/critical awareness skills, systematic inquiry skills, analytical skills, technical skills, human relations and communication skills, and management and organizational skills (Onyene, Oladipo and Enueme, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is an inevitable situation in any organisation, and this is even more so in the case of public tertiary educational institutions where a diverse set of stakeholders hold varying interests and expectations. Labour unions represent interests and welfare of academic and non-academic staff and are one of the key actors in the higher education system. On the other hand, interaction between labour unions and management of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria had always been replete with frequent and protracted industrial actions that emanate from unresolved conflicts over assorted issues bordering on salary, funding, autonomy, academic freedom, and working conditions (Majekodunmi and Ogundele, 2020).

The consequences of such a conflict to quality and delivery of the education, reputation and image to the institutions are huge and far-reaching. The above reasons make it necessary for the development of sound strategies or protocols for conflict management and resolution leading to healthy relations of labour in higher education. On communication, it has been noted that the communication skills of the parties are among the key factors in the outcome of matters conflict management and resolution, with a keener focus being placed on labour leaders doubling up as spokespersons and negotiators for the unions.

However, the extent and quality of communication skills of labour leaders in public tertiary institutions in Nigeria have not been well assessed and documented. Hence, there is the literature gap on how communication skills of labour leaders with relationship to conflict management and resolution within higher education context impact the outcome of negotiations during resolutions of disputes. In view of the above, this study intends to fill this gap by examining the communication skills of labour leaders as correlates of conflict resolution in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine communication skills of labour leaders as correlates of conflict resolution in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the self-perception of labour leaders of their communication skills in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State and its effect on their conflict resolution performance.
- ii. identify the main sources and types of conflicts that labour leaders in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State face and how they use communication skills to resolve them.
- iii. evaluate the best practices and challenges of communication skills training for labour leaders in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State and how it influences their conflict resolution outcomes.
- iv. Examine the impact of communication skills of labour leaders in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State on their relationships with other stakeholders such as management, staff, and students.

Research Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

H01: There is no positive relationship between the perception of labour leaders on their own communication skills and their ability to resolve conflicts in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Ho2: The use of communication skills by labour leaders varies according to the sources and types of conflicts that they encounter in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Ho3: The quality of relationships between labour leaders and other stakeholders such as management, staff, and students is not influenced by the communication skills of labour leaders in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Communication Skills

Communication skills are essential for communicating ideas, emotions, facts, and intentions. Effective communication is crucial in both personal and professional settings, as it aids in the formation of relationships, the resolution of problems, and the accomplishment of goals. According to DeVito (2017), communication skills include the ability to encode and decode verbal and nonverbal messages and to adapt one's behavior during conversations, the process of which is influenced by individual and situational variables.

Communication skills are an adequate transfer of information, ideas, opinions, as well as feelings. Communication has to be understood in that sense both as verbal and non-verbal communication, listening, feedback, persuasiveness as well as problem solving. Communication skills would also comprise the development of trust, common understanding and cooperation between the parties to conflict and collaboration between the conflicting parties. The development of misunderstandings, misperceptions, and grievances which would escalate a conflict could be eliminated, minimized, or resolved through communication skills (Rahim, 2017).

Components of Communication Skills

Effective communication skills involve a range of components, including verbal and nonverbal elements, active listening, empathy, and adaptability.

1. Verbal Communication: The use of spoken or written words to communicate messages is known as verbal communication. It is frequently the most visible and widely used mode of communication. This component comprises language, grammar, intelligibility, and the capacity to coherently organize thoughts (Wood, 2019). Competent verbal communication ensures that messages be accurately transmitted, fostering mutual comprehension.

2. Nonverbal Communication: Nonverbal communication comprises of signs and signals that do not rely on spoken or written words to convey meaning yet are just as significant. Body language, facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice are all parts of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication, according to Mehrabian (1971), might have higher

weight than verbal communication in determining the meaning of a message. Nonverbal cues can indicate emotions, intentions, and attitudes, giving verbal statements additional complexity.

3. Active Listening: Active listening is a critical part of excellent communication. It comprises not only hearing words but also fully comprehending their meaning, which necessitates attention, feedback, and clarification. Active listening, according to Adler, Rosenfeld, and Proctor (2019), increases good discourse by suggesting that the listener loves the speaker's message and is genuinely engrossed in the conversation.

4. Empathy: Empathy is the ability to comprehend and share another person's feelings. It is crucial in communication because it produces a sense of connection and rapport. Empathy, in the context of communication skills, allows people to detect and respond to the emotional needs of others, thereby forming interpersonal ties (Davis, 2016).

5. Adaptability: In communication, adaptability refers to the ability to alter one's communication style to match the demands and preferences of the audience. It is crucial while talking with different people or in different contexts. Effective communicators can adjust their technique to ensure that messages are heard and digested as efficiently as feasible (Gudykunst and Kim, 2019).

Concept of Conflict

Conflict is seen as an emotional reaction to a circumstance or exchange that implies a disagreement of some kind. Fear, despair, hatred, rage, and hopelessness are all plausible sensations to experience. When two people are at odds with one another, even if they do not voice or admit their feelings, a conflict is likely to emerge. Even if the behavioral component is minimal, the conflict is enormous for the person experiencing the symptoms. Conflict comes when we transmit our opinions, defend our perspectives, and satisfy our needs in such a way that it interferes with another person's ability to meet their needs. This conflictual behavior may include an intentional attempt to advance one's own agenda at the expense of another. It could be a ploy for power. There could be violence. It might be detrimental. Alternatively, the same activities could be courteous, helpful, and considerate. Regardless of tone, the purpose of conflict behavior is to signal disagreement or match expectations. The issue of reciprocity arises again. It is apparent that the nature of a dispute in one dimension has a big impact on the other two dimensions. Individuals can quickly enter and quit conflict, and the severity or type of conflict in each dimension can alter frequently and rapidly. A shift in the degree of conflict in one dimension does not always result in a corresponding shift in the other dimensions, even if all three have an impact on one another. A drop in one dimension may be accompanied by an increase in another (Mayer, 2001).

Life will undoubtedly contain conflict, which will arise spontaneously throughout our everyday activities. People and/or groups will continue to differ or hold competing opinions. Conflict

inherently impacts the human experience, and it can have a wide range of repercussions for our decisions and behaviors. Rather than being perceived as a dreadful activity, it should be viewed as a chance for growth and learning with the possibility for beneficial outcomes. Effective dispute resolution and management can result in positive outcomes; these themes will be discussed further later in the chapter (Evans, 2013).

Relationship between Communication Skills and Conflict Resolution in Tertiary Institution

The ability to explain oneself clearly, listen attentively, and engage effectively with others is referred to as communication skills. Conflict resolution is the process of resolving a disagreement or dispute in a peaceful and mutually agreed manner. Communication skills and conflict resolution are intricately related since communication is frequently the key to preventing, managing, and resolving disagreements in a range of circumstances, including tertiary institutions (Coursera Inc., 2020).

Tertiary institutions, such as universities and colleges, are centers of higher learning where students, teachers, and staff connect with one another for academic, professional, and social reasons. Conflicts can occur from a variety of causes, including differences in ideas, values, interests, ambitions, expectations, personalities, cultures, or backgrounds (Chibuokwu and Nwosu, 2012; Nizeyimana and Ouedraogo, 2021). Misunderstandings, miscommunication, disinformation, or a lack of communication can all contribute to conflict (Nizeyimana and Ouedraogo, 2021). Conflicts can have a negative impact on the academic performance, well-being, and relationships of the persons involved, as well as the institution's overall climate and culture (Chibuokwu and Nwosu, 2012; Nizeyimana and Ouedraogo, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Social Exchange Theory (SET). This theory represents one of the gold standards to understand workplace behavior (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). It is such a common phenomenon until it does so deep embed in our daily life. Not only these exchanges within, they would also not be limited to the organizations but extended to our family, friends and relatives also, and that too on a subtle basis. Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, and Hall (2017) describe the SET as a move by an actor towards the target; attitudinal or behavioral reaction to the recipient in reciprocity, and resultant relationship. In the dynamic corporate relationships that typify today's corporate world (Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu, 2018).

Social exchange theory has been applied to various domains of social life, such as interpersonal relationships, family, work, health, education, politics, and culture. It has been used to explain phenomena such as attraction, love, commitment, satisfaction, conflict, power, influence, trust, cooperation, competition, altruism, aggression, justice, and social change (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange theory has also been criticized for its assumptions of rationality

and self-interest, its neglect of emotions and values, its focus on individual rather than collective behavior, its lack of empirical support and testability, and its ethnocentric and gender-biased perspective (Cook and Rice, 2003; Ritzer and Goodman, 2004).

Social exchange theory is one of the most influential and widely used theories in social psychology and sociology. It provides a useful framework for understanding how people interact with each other in different contexts and situations. It also offers insights into how people can improve their relationships and well-being by enhancing their communication skills and managing their costs and benefits effectively (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

Social exchange theory is relevant for the study of communication skills of labour leaders as correlates of conflict resolution in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria because it can help to understand how labour leaders and their followers, as well as the management of the institutions, interact with each other in terms of costs and benefits. Communication skills are an important factor that can affect the outcomes and satisfaction of social exchanges, as well as the norms and rules that govern them.

Empirical Review

Chibuokwu and Nwosu (2012) researched on conflict studies and conflict resolution in tertiary institutions: the case of Nigerian polytechnics. Conflict was classified in the study as an intrinsic aspect of human society that originates from material scarcity and value differences, and conflict resolution as a peaceful and productive process of settling a disagreement or dispute. The study used secondary data from books, journals, newspapers, and the internet in a descriptive and analytical manner. Unresolved conflicts, increasing school fees, lack of communication, alienation of students from decision making, bad infrastructure, inadequate funding, academic corruption, cultism, and political meddling were all recognized as contributing factors to conflict in higher institutions. The study also stressed the adverse effects of conflict on students' academic performance, well-being, and relationships, as well as the institution's and society's economic losses and social instability. The study made some recommendations for conflict resolution in tertiary institutions, such as involving stakeholders and civil society, consulting with students' union governments, dialogue and negotiation, mediation and arbitration, effective communication, respect for human rights and the rule of law, provision of adequate facilities and resources, promotion of academic integrity and quality assurance, and participation of stakeholders and civil society.

Cobis and Jamalullai (2022) explored the role of communication in dispute resolution on the social media platform Twitter. The study was a descriptive qualitative research that intended to uncover and explore the function of communication in settling conflicts on Twitter, a medium that allows users to freely express their opinions but also has the potential for conflict. The notion of conflict communication theory was employed in the study, which analyzes the notions of communication theory and social conflict. The constructivism paradigm was applied in the

study, which posits that reality is socially constructed through human interaction and interpretation. The study acquired information from a variety of sources, including a literature review, observation, and interviews. Thematic analysis was utilized to evaluate the data, which comprises identifying, classifying, and interpreting themes in the data. The study discovered that communication plays a vital impact in the success of conflict resolution on Twitter. Negotiation, mediation, arbitration, coalition, and avoidance were emphasized as tactics of communication that can be applied to resolve issues on Twitter in the study. The study also highlighted the aspects that influence the conflict resolution communication process, such as the characteristics of the parties engaged, the type and intensity of the conflict, the context and culture of the communication, and the communicators' ethical and moral standards. The study concluded that engaging the parties concerned to communicate is one sort of successful conflict resolution to deal with issues on Twitter social media. According to the study, while communication involves gaps that could lead to conflict, good communication can be one approach to reduce conflict escalation and achieve peace. Further research should be performed to investigate the impact of communication in conflict resolution on Twitter social media on other aspects of society, such as political, economic, social, and cultural factors.

Brinia, Selimi, Dimos, and Kondea (2022) conducted a study on the effects of communication on educational organization effectiveness. The study was a quantitative study that intended to evaluate the relationship between communication and organizational efficiency in Greek primary schools. The notion of conflict communication theory was employed in the study, which analyzes the notions of communication theory and social conflict. The constructivism paradigm was applied in the study, which posits that reality is socially constructed through human interaction and interpretation. The study gathered information from 296 teachers aged 25 to 64 who answered a questionnaire regarding their communication satisfaction and sense of efficacy in their schools. SPSS software was used to examine the data, as well as other statistical tests such as the independent-samples T-test, one-way ANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis, and Mann-Whitney. According to the findings of the study, communication has a major impact on the effectiveness of educational organizations. Feedback, participation, setting, and culture were identified as communication components that affect teachers' satisfaction and impression of efficacy in the study. The study also highlighted the variables that influence the communication process in educational institutions, such as teacher qualifications, conflict type and severity, and communicators' ethical and moral standards. According to the study, communication is a vital factor in the successful running of educational organizations. According to the study, developing an efficient communication system within an educational institution has the potential to become a driving force in enhancing its performance. The study contributes to the current literature on communication as a component in educational organization effectiveness. It stressed the importance of the teachers' association as the school's major administrative body and aimed to link the communication component to all areas of school effectiveness. Further research on the impact of communication in educational organizations on other aspects of society, such as political, economic, social, and cultural variables, was recommended by the study.

Methodology

Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design is suitable for this study because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large and representative sample of the population using a standardized questionnaire.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all the labour leaders in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye and Tai-Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode. The labour leaders in these institutions include the executive members of the following unions: Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), and National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT). The total number of labour leaders in these institutions was estimated to be 300, based on the average number of executive members per union.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used to select the sample from the population is stratified random sampling, which involved dividing the population into homogeneous groups (strata) and selecting a random sample from each group. The stratified random sampling method is appropriate for this study because it ensured that each group of labour leaders is adequately represented in the sample and reduces the sampling error. The strata for this study were based on the type of institution and the type of union. Therefore, there are eight strata in total, as shown in the table below:

| Name of Institution | Name of Union | Number of Labour Leaders | Proportion (%) | Sample Size |
|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| OOU | ASUU | 50 | 16.67 | 29 |
| OOU | NASU | 50 | 16.67 | 29 |
| OOU | SSANU | 50 | 16.67 | 29 |
| OOU | NAAT | 25 | 8.33 | 14 |
| TASUED | ASUU | 50 | 16.67 | 29 |
| TASUED | NASU | 25 | 8.33 | 14 |
| TASUED | SSANU | 25 | 8.33 | 14 |
| TASUED | NAAT | 25 | 8.33 | 14 |
| Total | | 300 | 100 | 172 |

Sample Size

The sample size of the study was determined by using the Taro Yamane formula, which is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + \frac{N}{n}}$$

$$1 + N(e)^2$$

where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the margin of error. Assuming a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the sample size for this study is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{300}{1 + 300(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 171.43$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study is 172 respondents.

Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire that consisted of two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A contained questions on the demographic information of the respondents, such as their name, institution, position, gender, age, educational qualification, and years of experience. Section B contained questions on the communication skills and conflict resolution of the respondents, based on the four research questions of the study. The questions in Section B were designed using the Likert scale format, which ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree).

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The validity of the questionnaire was ensured by using existing scales that have been tested and validated by previous researchers, as well as by seeking feedback from experts and conducting a pilot test. In addition, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured by using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which indicated the internal consistency of the items in each scale. The value returned Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.86.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through both online and offline modes. The online mode involved sending email invitation with a link to an online survey platform of google form where the respondents were able to fill out and submit as appropriate.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using quantitative data analysis that involved using descriptive and inferential statistics to handle the test of all the hypotheses. The descriptive statistics included frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, which were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their responses to each item in the questionnaire. The inferential statistics included correlation and regression, which were used to examine the relationships between communication skills and conflict resolution among labour leaders and other stakeholders in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Results

Test of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no positive relationship between the perception of labour leaders on their own communication skills and their ability to resolve conflicts in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Correlations

| | | | I often receive feedback on my communication skills as a labour leader | I need to improve my communication skills to be a more effective labour leader | My communication skills enable me to negotiate and compromise with others | I find it difficult to express my views and concerns as a labour leader |
|--|---------------------|--------|--|--|---|---|
| I am confident in my communication skills as a labour leader | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .880** | .910** | .940** | .750** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 |
| I often receive feedback on my communication skills from others | Pearson Correlation | .880** | 1 | .887** | .893** | .898** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 |
| I need to improve my communication skills to be a more effective labour leader | Pearson Correlation | .910** | .887** | 1 | .880** | .730** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 |
| My communication skills enable me to negotiate and compromise with others. | Pearson Correlation | .940** | .893** | .880** | 1 | .779** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 |
| I find it difficult to express my views and concerns as a labour leader | Pearson Correlation | .750** | .898** | .730** | .779** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 | 172 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between the perception of the labor leaders to their communication skills and conflict resolution ability in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun state, Nigeria. Significantly, confidence in communication skills correlates with receiving of feedbacks, recognizing the need for improvement, abilities to negotiate and compromise, and effectively express views. High correlation coefficients (0.750-0.940, all p-values < 0.01) point to the fact that confidence and proficiency in communication of labor leaders improved concomitantly with their conflict

resolution capabilities. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This provides an alternate hypothesis that a positive relationship exists between perceived communication skills and effectiveness in resolving conflicts among labor leaders.

Ho2: The use of communication skills by labour leaders varies according to the sources and types of conflicts that they encounter in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .914 ^a | .835 | .833 | .36134 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Sources and types of Conflicts

ANOVA^a

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 111.627 | 2 | 55.813 | 427.480 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 22.065 | 169 | .131 | | |
| | Total | 133.692 | 171 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Use of Communication skills by labour leaders

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sources and types of conflicts.

Coefficients^a

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | Sig. |
|-------|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|-------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | .102 | .069 | | | 1.462 | .146 |
| | I rarely experience conflicts with other labour leaders or union members | .364 | .069 | .448 | .482 | 5.269 | .000 |
| | I often face conflicts with management over policy and decision making | .390 | .069 | .482 | .482 | 5.663 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Use of Communication skills by labour leaders

The regression analysis revealed that there is a significant variation in the use of communication skills by labour leaders with respect to the sources and types of conflicts experienced in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The model is highly significant ($F = 427.480$, $p < 0.001$) and accounts for 83.5% of variance in the use of communication skills. The coefficients for the impact of conflict sources on specific reveal that amongst others, conflicts with other labour leaders or union members ($\beta = 0.448$) and conflicts with management over policy decision-making ($\beta = 0.482$) significantly contribute to the variation in the use of communication skills. This supports the hypothesis that communication skills usage varies across different conflict sources and types.

Ho3: The quality of relationships between labour leaders and other stakeholders such as management, staff, and students is not influenced by the communication skills of labour leaders in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .976 ^a | .952 | .951 | .18972 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication Skills of labour leaders

ANOVA^a

| Model | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | | |
|--------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| | | | | F | Sig. |
| 1 Regression | 120.501 | 4 | 30.125 | 836.945 | .000 ^b |
| Residual | 6.011 | 167 | .036 | | |
| Total | 126.512 | 171 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of relationship with other stakeholders.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication skills of labour leaders.

Coefficients^a

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | |
|-------|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t |
| 1 | (Constant) | -.057 | .043 | | 1.321 |
| | My communication skills help me to build trust and rapport with other stakeholders. | .471 | .061 | .466 | 7.678 |
| | My communication skills help me to influence and persuade other stakeholders. | .406 | .054 | .401 | 7.467 |
| | My communication skills sometimes create misunderstandings and tensions with other stakeholders | .107 | .033 | .126 | 3.259 |
| | My communication skills are affected by the power and status differences between me and other stakeholders | .014 | .041 | .016 | .334 |

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of relationships with other stakeholders

From the regression analysis, it is indicated that the factor of communication skills significantly explained the quality of the relationships existing between labour leaders with other stakeholder groups within the public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The model is highly significant ($F = 836.945$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 95.2% of the variance in relationship quality. The coefficients denote building trust and rapport ($\beta = 0.466$) and influencing and persuading other stakeholders ($\beta = 0.401$) to be highly impacted with the communication skills of labor leaders. However, it is noteworthy that communication skills sometimes contribute to misunderstandings and tensions ($\beta = 0.126$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the impact and relationship between the communication skills of labour leaders and their conflict resolution outcomes in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The first hypothesis was rejected, as the data showed that there was a strong positive correlation between the perception of labour leaders on their own communication skills and their ability to resolve conflicts in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. This means that the higher the labour leaders rate their communication skills, the higher their conflict resolution outcomes are.

The second hypothesis was accepted, as the data showed that the use of communication skills by labour leaders varied according to the sources and types of conflicts that they encountered in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. This means that the labour leaders adapted their communication skills to suit the different situations and parties involved in the conflicts.

The third hypothesis was rejected, as the data showed that the quality of relationships between labour leaders and other stakeholders such as management, staff, and students was strongly influenced by the communication skills of labour leaders in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. This means that the labour leaders who had higher levels of communication skills were able to build trust, rapport, influence, and persuasion with other stakeholders, and avoid misunderstandings and tensions.

The study is consistent with the findings of Cobis and Jamalullai (2022) who examined the role of communication in dispute resolution. The study highlighted the aspects that influence the conflict resolution communication process, such as the characteristics of the parties engaged, the type and intensity of the conflict, the context and culture of the communication, and the communicators' ethical and moral standards. The study is also consistent with the findings of Brinia, Selimi, Dimos, and Kondea (2022) who conducted study on the effects of communication on educational organization effectiveness. The study highlighted the variables that influence the communication process in educational institutions, such as teacher qualifications, conflict type and severity, and communicators' ethical and moral standards. The study is further seen to be consistent with the findings of Osabiya (2015) which highlighted the effects of conflict resolution on effective management in the Nigerian public sector. The study also showed that workers in Nigerian public sector should be more involved in decision-making processes to limit the prevalence of conflict, and that there should be an effective communication network between workers and management.

Furthermore, the study is also consistent with the findings of Adesanya, Osakede, Ijimakinwa, and Ojo (2018) where conflict resolution in tertiary institutions in South-Western Nigeria was explored. The study discovered that conflict resolution has boosted stakeholder participation in decision-making and conflict resolution in the universities studied.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that communication skills of labour leaders have significant impact on conflict resolution in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study revealed that the labour leaders who had higher levels of communication skills were able to achieve higher conflict resolution outcomes, adapt their communication skills to suit different conflict situations and parties, and establish and maintain positive relationships with other stakeholders such as management, staff, and students.

Recommendations

Based on the study, these are the following recommendations;

- i. improvement of communication skills among the labour leaders could be enhanced through formal training, feedback, and practice which would consequently improve performance in tasks that involve the resolution of conflicts and relationship with other stakeholders.
- ii. the managers, staff and students of these tertiary institutions should also develop their communication skills to facilitate constructive dialogue and collaborations with labour leaders as this will go a long way in reducing conflicts and promote mutual understanding and respect.
- iii. opportunities must be provided for, as well as adequate time and resources made available for communication skills training for labour leaders and other stakeholders in public tertiary educational institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria since this would enhance the quality of the communication and conflict resolution that are obtainable in the various institutions.

References

Adesanya, T. O., Osakede, K. O., Ijimakinwa, S. O., & Ojo, A. D. (2018). Conflict management in tertiary institutions: A study of selected universities in South-western Nigeria. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 6(1), 1-7.

Adeyemi, T. O., Ekundayo, H.T., & Alonge, H.O. (2010), Managing students' class in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. *Journal of Research in National Development*.

Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Proctor, R. F. (2019). Interplay: The process of interpersonal communication (14th ed.). London: Oxford University Press.

Apdillah, D., Panjaitan, K., Stefanny, N. T. P., & Surbakti, F. A. (2022). The global competition in the digital society 5.0 era: The challenges of the younger generation. *Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Business*, 1(3), 75–80.

Berger, C. R., Roloff, M. E., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R. (2014). *Handbook ilmu komunikasi*. Bandung: Nusa Media.

Brinia, V., Selimi, P., Dimos, A., & Kondea, A. (2022). The impact of communication on the effectiveness of educational organizations. *Education Sciences*, 12(3), 170.

Chernyak-Hai, L., & Rabenu, E. (2018). The new era workplace relationships: is social exchange theory still relevant? *Industrial Organisation Psychology*, 11, 456–481.

Chibuokwu R. A., & Nwosu F. I. (2012). Conflict and conflict resolution in tertiary institutions: The case of Nigerian polytechnics. *Journal of Assertiveness*. Retrieved from <https://globalacademicgroup.com/journals/assertiveness/Robinson%20Azubuike.pdf>

Cobis, M. Y., & Jamalullail, J. (2022). The role of communication in conflict resolution on Twitter social media. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal*, 5(3), 20040-20047.

Cook, K. S., & Rice, E. (2003). Social exchange theory. In J. Delamater (Ed.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (pp. 53-76). London: Springer.

Coursera Inc. (2020). *Conflict resolution skills: What they are and how to use them*. Retrieved on 3rd February, 2024 from <https://www.coursera.org/articles/conflict-resolution-skills>.

Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874-900

Cropanzano, R., Anthony, E. L., Daniels, S. R., & Hall, A. V. (2017). Social exchange theory: a critical review with theoretical remedies. *Acad. Manag. Ann*, 11, 479–516.

Davis, M. H. (2016). *Empathy: A social psychological approach*. New York: Routledge.

DeVito, J. A. (2017). *The interpersonal communication book* (14th ed.). London: Pearson.

Evans, D. (2013). *How to manage conflict: Turn all conflicts into win-win outcomes*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform..

Fahrimal, Y., & Safpuriyadi, S. (2018). Komunikasi Strategik Dalam Penyelesaian Konflik Agraria Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Riset Komunikasi*, 1(1), 109–127.

Fatile, J. O., & Adejuwon, K. D. (2011). Conflict and conflict management in tertiary institutions: The case of Nigerian universities. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 7(1).

Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (2019). *Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Majekodunmi, S. A., & Ogundele, J. I. (2020). Strategic alignment of labour leaders and conflict management skills among selected trade unions in Lagos State, Nigeria. *MTU Journal of Entrepreneurship and Sustainable and Sustainable Development*, 2(1), 60-66.

Mayer, B. S. (2001). *The dynamics of conflict resolution: A practitioner's guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mehrabian, A. (1971). Verbal and nonverbal interaction of strangers in a waiting situation. *Journal of Experimental Research in Personality*, 5, 127-138.

Nizeyimana J. B., & Ouedraogo S. (2021). *The role of communication in conflict resolution and peacebuilding*. Retrieved on 3rd February, 2024 from <http://rufso.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The-Role-Of-Communication-In-Conflict-Resolution-And-Peacebuilding.pdf>

Northouse, P. G. (2014). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. London: Sage Publications

Onyene, V. E., Oladipo, S. A., & Enueme, P. U. (2011). *Introduction to management*. Lagos: Macmillan Publishers

Osabiya, B. J. (2015). Conflict management and resolution in Nigeria public sector. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 4(8), 107-120.

Owan, V. J. (2018). *Conflict management strategies and secondary school teachers' job effectiveness in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria*. B.Ed. Project, (University of Calabar, Nigeria).

Rahim, M. A. (2011). *Managing conflicts in organisations*. 4th ed.). New York: Routledge.

Ritzer, G., & Goodman, D. J. (2004). *Sociological theory* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Sudira, I. N. (2016). Dialog dalam Resolusi Konflik-Interaktif. *Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional*, 12(1), 33-42.

Wood, J. T. (2019). *Interpersonal communication: Everyday encounters* (9th ed.). Cengage Learning.