

Labour-Management Relations and Industrial Conflict in Calabar and Port-Harcourt Sea Ports: A Theoretical Exposition

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ABSTRACT: *The study is an assessment of the effect of the inter-relationship of labour-management relationship and industrial conflict in Nigeria Port Authority, Calabar and Port-Harcourt in a general scale. To effectively determine the interrelationship, four null hypotheses were formulated based on the identified major independent variable namely; leadership behavior, communication behavior, collective bargaining and implementation of employees-management agreement. A 30 items research questions were developed and used on 300 randomly selected employees of two ports (males and females). The sample will be made up of 190(63%) workers from Port-Harcourt and 110(37%) from Calabar Port. Multi-stage sampling techniwue will be employed, this will consist of the stratified, cluster, proportional and simple random sampling procedures respectively. Foremost, the stratified sampling procedure will be employed in dividing the entire study area into two major strata on the abses of two states (Cross Rivers and River State). Data will be collected by the researcher in company of two research assistants (who will be adequately trained). To evaluate labour-management relations and industrial conflicts, data collected during fieldwork will be subjected to editing, scoring and analysis. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage and frequencies will be reported. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) test will be the statistical test for the hypotheses. Out of the four null hypotheses that were tested, three were rejected while one was accepted. The three rejected hypotheses were leadership behavior, collective bargaining and implementation of labour-management agreement while communication behavior was accepted. The research therefore recommend that mutual relationships are very critical in enhancing cordiality, trust building and engenders industrial harmony and peaceful coexistence in an organization. The study contributes to the body of knowledge in the sense that authoritative leadership breeds conflicts while democratic leadership engenders industrial harmony.*

KEY WORDS: industrial conflict, labour-management relations, collective bargaining, trade unionism, industrial relations.

INTRODUCTION

Labour management dispute is gradually gaining unprecedented proportion in the Nigeria Industrial relation system. Since the introduction of Wage/Salary system in Nigeria, there have been series of face-offs, strikes and disagreement between workers and management in private and public organization. Indeed organizations are created to achieve specific goals. These goals are achieved through cooperative and harmonious human and social activities between labour and management. Organization in this regard is a system of cooperative human activities, designed towards the efficient achievement of some stated objectives. Its effectiveness and ability to survive depends to a considerable extent on the harmonious relationship between labour and management (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Etuk, 1990) Walton and Dalton (1969) and Robins (1974) argued that task interdependence, goal and reward structure, competition for scarce resources, communication obstacles and various Jurisdictional ambiguities could bring about Industrial conflict. Dalton and Walton (1972) stated that the most fundamental antecedent of Industrial conflict is the extent to which the successful performance of one person or unit depends on the performance of another.

Whether conflict occurs in a group or organization, depends to a large extent on the formal goals defining task achievement in organization and rewards given to people for their performance. A cooperative goal structure positively links, the goals of group members so that one person's goal achievements are beneficial to the achievement of other member's goals. However, failure to achieve set goals result to Industrial conflict. Closely related to the effects of reward and goal structures in organizations is the conflict that can emerge when different units within an organization engage in the use of limited or scarce resources. Cascio (1994) stated that, organizational resources could run out and could cause Industrial conflict. Elaborating further, Cascio stressed that organizational resources may be concrete such as money, supplies, personnel or space. Also competition in organization could occur over more abstract resources as well, such as prestige, popularity or power. When organizational resources become leaner as a result of budget cuts, employees are more inclined to compete for resources and the competition can degenerate into industrial conflict.

Agwu(1982) asserted that Industrial conflict emanates from uncertainty over ambiguity in work responsibilities. This has to do with "Who should do what, how they should perform their tasks and the relative responsibilities of employees and management relationship with employees. When there is lack of accountability for the performance of units in an organization, disagreement can arise over who has responsibility for success and failures: Industrial conflict has antecedent in organizational differentiation that occurs as a result of division and specialization of labour. Lawrence and Larch (1962) observed that the various departments or units within the organization can differ greatly on the formality of their structures, the extent to which they are task-oriented versus relationship-oriented. Organizational differences cause employees to develop very different

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views of the way things should be done and these differences in orientation can lead to Industrial conflict.

Mitigating Industrial conflict implies re-conceptualizing labour-management relations in organizations. Labour-management relations is also subjected to diverse and often times, complex environmental factors such as the technological characteristics of the work place and work community, the locus and distribution of power in the larger society. Sloane and Witney, (1985), Chamberlain and Kuhn (1965) asserted that behavior variables and other environmental factors such as human motivation and perceptions influence labour-management relations. Conflict could result from the characteristics of the employees. Some employees seem more predisposed to aggressive behavior than others. Kochan (1980) found that plant managers and union employees with need of power and dominance were more likely to engage in conflict, whereas those with high need for affiliation were more likely to cooperate. Strikes, lock-outs, work-to-rule actions etc. are manifestations of Industrial conflict. In every negotiation between the labour and management, there exists the possibility of a strike. A work stoppage by industrial employees must be the result of a lawful labour dispute and not in violation of an existing agreement between management and the union. Casio (1994) asserted that unfair labour practices of the employers could result to strike.

Nwagbara (2004) stated that the existence of Industrial relations system as a process of defining power and authority relations among the parties involved presupposes the existence of conflict or Industrial dispute. She further stressed that Industrial Conflict is an inevitable occurrence in organization because workers and management are brought under one roof on unequal basis and with divergent goals.

Industrial conflict manifests itself in different forms all of which show the outcome of a dissatisfied organizational group against another within an Industrial or organizational framework or structure. Katz and Kahn (1978) identified three organizational conditions for conflict. These are system conflict, which occurs when the different parts of the organizations are not interacting effectively. Conflict in this situation can arise from defective communication or poor motivation. Vertical conflict situation depicts power relations and mainly concerns the use and acceptance of authority. This is very pronounced in bureaucratic set-ups. Laterally, conflicts exists when people who seem to have basically the same levels of authority in an organization and pursuing similar goals disagree as to what should be done, at what time and for whom. Specific forms of Industrial conflict include conflict with management, which is employees (public or private), boycotts, absenteeism, grievance handling, labour turnover and poor work. Other overt expressions of Industrial conflicts include strikes, lock-out, go-slow, overtime ban, work to rules, obstruction of new policies, refusal to participate in joint committee, pursuit of exaggerated complaints, etc.

Industrial conflict is one of the outcomes of class differences and misunderstanding which sometimes result to work hostility, confrontation and breakdown of cordial relationships among

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labour and management staff. In any organization, strike is one of the many manifestations and outcome of industrial conflict. Experience and researches over the years have shown that strike is one of the most common and potent weapon employed by workers to express their grievances and press home their demands. The history of strike in the Nigerian Civil Service dates back to 1945 when a nationwide strike was staged against the erstwhile colonial government, since then the incidence of strike penetrated Industrial Organizations and has been on the increase, getting higher in some years and ebbing in others: Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has recorded series of strike over the years. These have sometimes been conflict of interest and conflicts over rights. Conflicts of interest relating to issues of bargaining and collective agreement and conditions of work while rights conflicts have been those involving alleged violations of right of employees already existing in collective agreement or contract of employment.

Labour-management relations in Nigerian Ports Authority has not been harmonious and peaceful. However, it is important to recognize that too much harmony in an organization can be as harmful as too little. Industrial conflict appears to be a recurring phenomenon in Nigerian Ports Authority, harmonious working relations between labour and management are critical to organizations. Traditionally, in Nigerian Ports Authority, both parties have assumed a win-lose, adversarial posture- towards each other. To achieve the long term organizational success, labour and management must learn to accommodate one another's needs rather than repudiate them. By so doing, management and labour can achieve goals at once, increase productivity and improve the quality of work life.

On the basis of the above analysis, some pertinent questions become glaring to many sociologists, can an organization or establishment be peaceful or conducive? What factors necessitates Industrial peace? What roles do factors like leadership style, communication modes, worker participation and collective bargaining play in organizational set up.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between organizational leadership behaviour (democratic, authoritarian and Laissez-faire) and industrial conflict.
2. There is no significant relationship between communication behavior and industrial conflict.
3. There is no significant relationship between an entrenched culture of collective bargaining and industrial conflict.
4. There is no significant relationship between implementation of labour-management agreement and industrial conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational leadership behaviour and industrial conflict

The relation between leadership behavior and productivity of an organization has been described as a vital factor influencing the growth and peaceful industrial environment of the organization (Huges, 1976). Though there is no consensus on specific definitions of what leadership is, there is no dispute at all about the duties to be performed by an organizational leader, in order to maintain harmonious environment. Aderounmu and Ehlametalor (1981) perceive leadership as ability to initiate action and motivate and direct others towards the fulfillment of a common goal of an organization (be it a school system or a manufacturing set-up). There is Tannenbaun-Schmidt Leadership model which shows the relationship between the authority of a manager and the freedom of its team. According to the model, on one hand, leaders tell employees directly what to do without discussion and on the other hand, leaders give their team complete freedom. (Tannenbaun and Schmidt, 1958)

Mann (1951) and Morton (1969) report separately that in some studies, effective leaders were said to be assertive and aggressive, in others mild-mannered and restrained; in some, quick and decisive, while in some others, reflective and diplomatic, on the basis of the foregoing, it is clear that both personality and situational factors are important in determining the effective performance of an organizational leader, that encourages/promotes industrial harmony.

Whether the organizational head or management head (or group of heads) is called leader, administrator or director, the industrial head requires an update knowledge of the theory, concept and practice of leadership (Igwe, 1990). It is therefore expedient to state that: how a leader exercises his authority depicts his style of leadership in any organization. Blau and Scott (1963) have identified the autocratic, democratic and Laissez-faire styles. Again, another important factor that would enhance harmonious labour-relations is the ability of management to be sensitive to special problems affecting union leaders' behaviour. Furthermore, industrial relations are the interactions between management and employees. The conditions that lead to healthy relations include good communication, rewards and incentives for employees, and support for your staff's work balance. (Sherman, 2021).

Authoritarian Style

This style of leadership behaviour has been found to be dictatorial: imposes task and methods on subordinate. There is absence of effective communication; and is always nagging and suspicious (Bassey, 1997). Authoritarian leader stresses organizational goals with little or no attention to idiographic dimensions. He is thus task-and-achievement oriented and objective in approach. According to, Encyclopedia of Terms, authoritarian leadership refers to any situation where a leader keeps hold of as much power and authority as possible. It is also known as coercive or dictatorial leadership. Authoritarian leaders, tend to keep all the decision- making authority to

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themselves and make the decisions about policies, procedures, tasks, structures, rewards and punishment themselves. The reason is that most authoritarian leaders retain control and require total obedience and absolute compliance. (Zhang and Xie, Y.H. 2017)

A crop of internal factors contribute/influence the relationship between workers and management. These factors according to Ootobo (2000) are - nature of physical environment of the work place, style of management, orientation or social consciousness of workers, conditions of service, efficiency of the promotion system, and cumbersomeness of grievance and disputes settlement procedures. Similarly Fashoyin (1999) identified the following Internal factors and their influence on industrial relations in formal organizations, structural variable, and inadequate decision making power of management, management policies, intra-organization conflict, interpersonal and personal sources of conflicts, and procedural sources of conflict.

According to Fashoyin (1999), the concept and use of structural variable, is an attempt by one of the parties to change the structure of bargaining or content of the negotiable list during collective bargaining process. For instance, in 1984, the trade disputes between employer's association in the banking industry and their employees was caused by the fact that the employer's association in the banking industry tried to change the bargaining structure such that certain issues as luncheon vouchers, gratuity and transportation, which were negotiated at company level were to be moved to multi-employer bargaining level. In the same vein Fashoyin (1999), argue further that, the industrial dispute between Michelin Allied Workers Union and Michelin Company was caused by structural variable. An attempt by the union to shift some issues such as - gratuity scheme, vehicle allowance, medical facilities, casual leave and end of year bonus from negotiable list caused the face-off between labour and management in Michelin Company in 1984.

Inadequate decision making/power to negotiate constitutes a source of conflict between labour and management. This according to Fashoyin (1999) happens when negotiators cannot commit the respective constituencies to an agreement because of the limited power on them; for instance, an agreement signed by management negotiators can be repudiated by top management, this will eventually result into dispute between labour and management. Management policies also formed another internal factor militating against industrial harmony in most establishments. According to Fashoyin (1999), when management developed and implement negative policy towards unions, strikes and other forms of disputes or industrial actions occurs in such organization. Similarly, Ajogun (1995) argue that, positive management policy towards labour/union marks the beginning of good relationship between labour and management. Supporting this view, Sayles and Strauss (1981) held that, some manager right from inception of union in the organization develop a negative attitude towards them, such behaviour of management encourage industrial disputes in the establishment.

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Intra-organization conflict is another source of industrial crisis. This arises as a result of diverse interests in the union, or the struggle for supremacy among unions found in a given establishment. This type of conflict according to Fashoyin (1999) is well known in Nigeria. Fashoyin (1999) observed that, more than 35 industrial unions had suffered this type of conflict, which is later, transferred to the establishment where these unions are found. For example, a faction of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), in a quest to demonstrate their claim of leadership and supremacy of the union, organized strike for its tankers drivers in 1986; this strike had nothing to do with the union's relationship with management.

Personal conflict is another visible internal source of industrial crisis in most formal organizations. This source of conflict comprises human attitudes, belief and value system of individual officials on both sides, either management or labour. There is often times complexity between personal interests and labour-management interest; such attitude from either management or labour serves as a source of conflict in the organization, because individual conflict is often times transferred to labour-management relations leading to industrial crisis (Fashoyin, 1999).

Procedural source of conflict constitute another internal means of industrial crisis in most formal organizations. Procedural source comprises of the parties at negotiation table holding on to unrealistic expectations. It involves the use of tactics, strategies and methods employed by either labour or management to win their case. In other words, it involves over commitment to bargaining position for fear of losing face; holding back concession from one's resistance point; and misrelating an opponent's resistance point or misinterpreting the extent of his bargaining power (Fashoyin, 1999).

Democratic Style

According to Igwe (1990), this leadership style ensures that as much as possible and in all given situations, the people's (workers') needs, right and freedom are guaranteed and respected. It allows self-expression, creativity, consultation, delegation, discussion and participation. The democratic management of an organization emphasizes both the monothetic and idiographic dimensions of the organization and is thus person and task-oriented, participative and non-directive. It has been emphasized to be the ideal style that enhances both organizational peace and improved/increased productivity of the organization (Bassey, 1997). Bassey (1997) further found in his study that every work organization the world over is concerned with being effective, and efficient, especially in the face of fierce world competition. Organization effectiveness and industrial peace should be the concern of everyone within the organization. Upon the attainment of its goal and objectives will rest on the success and ultimate survival and future of the organization. Thus gauging the effectiveness or success of an organization is however not an easy task; it requires analyses of the definitive structure of organization and the structure caused by human interaction; it also involves ensuring worker participation in decision making (industrial democracy) and establishing harmonious relationship between labour and management (Mullins, 2004).

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In analyzing the activities of successful organizations, both in America and Britain as well as in African nations, one central element that seems very clear is the importance of achieving productivity through the effective management of people and their commitment to, and involvement with the organization. Industrial democracy had been adopted as a method to ensuring harmonious working relationship and efficiency in these organizations (Mullins, 2004). He also states that Leadership is a relationship through which one person influences the behavior or actions of other people.(Mullins 2010:373). He says that leadership is all about determination, personality and innate ability at the right time for a particular competitive situation. According to Marsh (1971) in Otobo (2000: 216), industrial democracy is an expression with a number of meanings and usages, all concerned with the role and status of workers in industrial society and all implying, to greater or lesser extent, the participation of those who work in industry in determining the conditions of their working lives. Hence industrial democracy imply workers control, in the forms of (a) industrial unionism (b) syndicalism (c) guild socialism (d) workers' participation (e) joint consultation (f) co-ownership or any of their variants, these items and their historical antecedence are discussed below.

Laissez-Faire Style

The term 'Laissez-Faire' of French origin and means letting people do as they like. This type of leadership style in organizations allows the members to be at liberty to take their own decisions. This type of leadership behaviour is said to be indecisive, indifferent and chaotic (Austin, French and Hall, 1972). The leadership here appears to lack clear vision on the goals of the organization and what it takes to develop one. He gives complete freedom to staff; atmosphere is often relaxed, and he lacks control and supervision. Under these conditions, there could be high exhibition of peace and harmony, but the organizational goals may not be highly achieved due to too much care-freedom and lukewarm attitude to work by all staff. According to Otobo (2000), organizations that are predominantly laissez faire in their management style are bound to be inducing conflict and running contrary to promoting industrial harmony to a high degree. This is because, everyone within such organizations continue to exert authority and power to determine the growth and direction of the organization from their perspective.

Effective Communication and Industrial Conflict

According to Barnlund (1970) one of the basic characteristic of human communication is that, it is the basis to change our views of the world and of ourselves". Those asides from common social rituals, human beings nearly always talk in a context of change. What prompts communication is the desire for someone else to see our facts and appreciate our values, share our feelings and accept our decisions. Communication is initiated, consciously or unconsciously to change the other person. Barnlund formulated transactional model of communication to overcome the limitations of earlier models.

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According to Ihejiamaizu, (1996) most conflicts in organizations are caused by lack of communication behaviour of labour-management. Hence, for peaceful labour-management relations to exist, effective communication process must be caused to exist. Leadership need to influence employees through set goals. In the same vein, when conflict occurs, improved and effective communication measure is often used to solve and restore harmony and bridge such gaps (Bovee and Thill, 1986).

Barlund (1968) thus stated clearly and concisely the role and goal of communication in human lives as follows: communication arises out of the need to reduce uncertainty, to act effectively, to defend or strengthen the ego. On other occasions they are means of evolving more deeply satisfying ways of expressing ourselves. The aim of communication is to increase the number and consistency of our meanings within the limits set by patterns of evaluation that have proven successful in the past, our emerging needs and drives, and the demands of the physical and social setting of the moment. Communication ceases when the meanings are adequate; it is initiated as soon as new meanings are required. However, since man is homeostatic, rather than static organism, it is impossible to discover any permanently satisfying way of relating to his needs; each temporary adjustment is both receiving and disturbing, leading to successful noble ways of relating to him and his environment.

Most conflicts are caused by lack of effective communication between labour and management. Hence, for peaceful labour relations to exist, effective communication is a gateway to harmonious labour management relationship. Leadership needs to influence employees through communication to direct their affairs towards achieving set goals. In the same vein, when conflict occurs, communication is often used to bridge such gap (Bovee&Thill, 1986).

According Bohlander et al (2000), there is no best way of ensuring harmonies in labour-management relations, organizations need to develop policies and strategies that best suit their individual circumstances. A large number of issues must be taken into consideration while drawing out policies, example - the type of technology it uses, its internal structure and culture and the degree and nature of trade organization within the establishment. Once these variables are given due consideration before labour relations policies are made in an organization, harmonious labour-management relationship can be ensured.

Effective Collective Bargaining and Industrial Conflict

One very important factor which reduces industrial conflicts (or sues for industrial democracy) is effective collective bargaining. According to Grabb (1997) and Dahrendorf (1998) industrial democracy is an arrangement which involves workers participation in decision making, sharing responsibility and authority in the work place. In Germany, half of the supervisory board of directors (which elects management) is elected by the shareholders, and the other half by the workers. Although industrial democracy generally refers to the organization model in which

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workplace are run directly by the people who work in them in place of private or state ownership of the means of production, there are also representative forms of industrial democracy. Representative industrial democracy includes decision making structures such as the formation of committees and consultative bodies to facilitate communication between management, unions and staff.

Collective bargaining is the "machinery for discussion and negotiation, whether formal or informal, between employers and workers' representatives, aimed at reaching mutual agreement or understanding on the general employment relationship between the employers and workers" (Fashoyin 1999: 103). It is the process of arriving at or attempting to arrive at, a collective agreement" (Nigeria Labour Act, 1994). According to American National Labour Act of 1978 in Mondy, Noe and Premeaux (1999): collective bargaining is the performance of mutual obligation of the employer and representative of employees to meet at reasonable times and centre in good faith with respect to wages, hours of work and other terms or condition of employment, or the negotiation of an agreement, or any question arising there under, and the execution of a written contract incorporating any agreement reached if requested by either party; such obligation does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or require the making of a concession.

Collective bargaining can also be defined as a process in which unions, as designated representatives of employees in specified units negotiate terms of employment with appropriate employers (Barbash, 1980). The aims of collective bargaining are to accommodate, reconcile and oftentimes compromise the conflicting interest of the parties. Collective bargaining also serves as a "cushion" to conflict of interest in organization, and while it does not remove conflict, it facilitates its accommodation, to enable the two sides to work together harmoniously. Collective bargaining is a guiding principle of labour relations; it is a standard-setting machinery which constitutes a vital source of regulation governing wages, salaries and the employment condition, mutually agreed between worker and management and in conformity with labour policies. In other words, collective bargaining establishes a set of rules guiding relationship between parties during grievance settlement (Fashoyin, 1999).

In the Nigeria context, Damachi (1979) argues that collective bargaining provides room for industrial democracy. It is the only way through which workers participation in decision-making. It subsists, therefore, as a form of industrial democracy, but only if all sides labour, management and government subscribe to and believe in democratic principles in the workplace as an extension of political democracy in the larger society.

Collective bargaining in Nigeria began in the public sector. This was as a result of the mere absence of private sector at the turn of the century; the earliest private sector organizations in Nigeria, the British Bank of West African (now known as First Bank of Nigeria) founded in 1894 was unionized in 1942. In the same vein, the Royal Niger Company (now UAC of Nigeria), the largest

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conglomerate in Nigeria then, was not organized or unionized until 1946. Thus, the history of collective bargaining began in the public sector where, ironically, the machinery has performed relatively poor (Fashoyin 1999).

According to Fashoyin (1999) the earlier evidence of negotiation in Nigeria was in 1937 and 1947 when the colonial government established provincial wage committees throughout the country. The function the committees were to carry out was principally periodic wage reviews for daily paid employees in the public service; surprisingly, until 1942, these committees were composed exclusively of government officials and wage determination was thus unilateral. This unilateral nature created tension, anxiety and suspicion among the various stakeholders, hence, resulting to a change of position. In a short while, the committees were expanded to include worker's representatives: This therefore marked the beginning of collective bargaining in Nigeria. From Fashoyin's (1999) postulations, it shows that the concept of collective bargaining dates back to the 1930s or earlier and this was also the result of some expression of policy or labour dissatisfaction on the processes of policy making and organizational development.

In the private sector, collective bargaining began precisely in 1955 when the Joint Industrial Councils (JICs) was established (Fashoyin, 1999). Even as at that period, much of the development in labour relations took place in the quasi-government institutions however, which was an attempt in 1947. Similarly, the African Timber and Plywood, Sapele, set up in 1954, a joint consultative which discussed employment conditions while full negotiation on terms of employment commenced in 1959, and by 1957, more than 212 negotiations and consultative committees were in existence in 1957, Since then, collective bargaining had become a vital tool for settling industrial conflicts in both private and public sectors of Nigeria.

However, management attitude/policies towards negotiation with labour had over the years affected the importance of collective bargaining in settling industrial conflicts in some organizations in Nigeria. Fashoyin (1999:107) further observed that: an understanding of employer's bargaining policies is crucially important not just because employers are a major industrial relations actor but also because their policies would significantly determine the extent to which a union can achieve its job interest.

The presence of a union in an organization is, for most part, bound to create anxieties among management personnel. For not only are unions seen as a challenge to the right of management, dealing with unions could be viewed by management as time-consuming, financially overburdensome and crisis-prone. Often times, unions are seen as introducing inefficiency in the management of company resources, management's anti-union policies have become moderate since the late 1970s, partly due to education and partly, and perhaps more significantly, due to public policy which explicitly makes union recognition a statutory requirement. In spite of this favourable environment, however, some employers, particularly Asian, Lebanese and indigenous

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entrepreneurs still operate anti-union policies. In such cases, the approach ranges from the application of subtle pressure to extreme cases of harassment and dismissal.

According to Article 2 of the Collective bargaining Convention, 1981 (No.154) Collective bargaining extends to all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organizations, on the one hand, and one or more worker's organizations on the other, for:

- a. Determining working conditions and terms of employment; and/or
- b. Regulating relations between employers and workers; and/or
- c. Regulating relations between employers or their organizations and a workers' organization or workers' organizations (Article 2 of the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154).)

Labour Act of 1974 defines Collective bargaining as the process of arriving at, or attempting to arrive at a collective agreement. The aims are to accommodate, reconcile and oftentimes compromise the conflicting interests of the parties.(Labour Act of 1974). According to Fashoyin (1992), it is a cushion to this conflict, it facilitates its accommodation to enable the two sides work together harmoniously.Indeed, collective bargaining entails constant dialogue on the terms and conditions of employment by workers (represented by their unions) and the employer (represented by the management). According to Nwagbara (2001), the bargaining process is not haphazard and has acquired a complex status nowadays than was the case in the early years of industrial revolution. In the present dispensation, professionals such as lawyers and other specialized and skilled agents are used by the parties in collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining is no doubt the centre-piece of the tripartite relationship in the industrial relations system. As in the case of an industrial system, collective bargaining is part of the broad idea of workers participation in industry, a natural reaction to the initial capitalist industrialism, with its emphasis on heavy industry and desolate over management control, poor wages and alienation of workers.

Collective bargaining is often regarded as a method or process of conducting negotiations about wages and working conditions and other terms of employment between an employer or employees' association on the one hand, and representatives of workers and their organization on the other hand, with a view to arriving at a collective agreement (ILO).

Much empirical studies have been carried out by social anthropologists to determine the effects of collective bargaining on labour-management relations and industrial conflict, the world over. In a study by Fashoyin (1992) to determine the structure and effect of which collective bargaining influences the general working environment of an organization, the instruments of the research were a structured questionnaire and an interview schedule. Data analysis by the Pearson product

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moment correlation revealed that effective collective bargaining exerts a high positive significant relationship with industrial harmony, industrial conflict and increased industrial productivity. Furthermore, it was found out that the choice of levels and structure which negotiations take place depend on the strength of the parties (labour and management) involved, their organizations, the economic situation and the subject of bargaining.

In a follow-up studies by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 1994), Nwagbara (2007) among others, the principle of collective bargaining is seen as a means by which industrial organizations and society as a whole achieve industrial and organizational harmony and improve productivity. The collective bargaining principle according to Dahrendorf (1990) was rampant in the late 19 and early 20th centuries. Collective bargaining (a form of industrial democracy, Dahrendorf (1998) along with anarcho-syndicalism and new unionism represented one of the dominant tendencies in revolutionary socialism and played a prominent role in international labour movements, while their influence declined after the defeat of the anarchists in the Spanish revolution of 1939 (Dahrendorf, 1998).

According to Ikoh (2000), one of the principal approaches to conflict resolution is collective bargaining. Conflict in organisation seems unavoidable but that does not mean it can not be reduced when it occurs. If conflict is not handled correctly it will affect the organisation adversely. If conflicts are not handled properly it might lead to unimaginable proportion and the organization suffers. In 1974, Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann developed five modes of conflict management. The Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode list five modes of conflict responses: competing, accommodating, avoiding, collaborating and compromising.

Competing Approach: People who take this approach are always resolute in what they believe and want. Competing approach is useful and important in emergency situations when urgent decisions need to be taken. However, misuse of this style can hinder learning and discourage workers.

Accommodating Approach: This approach is low on assertiveness but high cooperation. An accommodating approach is used by managers that seem to appear reasonable in taking decisions. Managers who adopt this style show that they are peacemakers willing to succumb where necessary and always want to create rapport and goodwill with everyone.

Avoiding approach: Managers who don't want to handle conflict avoid it completely. Sometimes this approach is necessary when a problem should be addressed at a future date.

According to the University of California, Berkeley, there are three reasons why the avoidance approach is taken—first, exposing oneself to ridicule or rejection, second, recognizing we may have contributed the problem and lastly, willingness to change.

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Collaborating approach: To demonstrate some sense of unity, managers may likely want to collaborate by being assertive and showing a high degree of unity. This is a sort of win-win approach because both sides favoured the approach and because they have an important work to do, both sides decide to work together.

Compromising approach: This approach is moderately cooperative and assertive. A compromising approach to conflict management looks for mutually acceptable solution, this approach looks for a middle ground for both parties where they can lay claim to victory. Pondy(1967), also identified three major conceptual approaches to resolving industrial conflict, namely: bargaining approach, bureaucratic approach and systems approach.

- i. **Bargaining approach:** This deals with interest groups who compete for limited resources. And, to attempt either to increase the pool of available resources or decreased the demands of the competing parties,
- ii. **Bureaucratic approach:** This deals with the vertical authority of relationships in a hierarchical structure. Conflict in this circumstance occurs when superiors attempt to control subordinates and the latter resist such control. The strategy to adopt to resolve the conflict is to substitute impersonal bureaucratic rules for personal control.
- iii. **Systems approach:** The system model is posited to have been manifested by Von Beterlanffy (1964) and corroborated by many sociologists like Pandey (1967), Likert (1967), Vroom (1964) and Kohnhauser (1964) amongst various others. This approach to conflict resolution deals with the lateral or horizontal relationship between functions (for instance, marketing and production of an organization. There are two basic strategies to reduce functional conflict and attain coordination. First, the leader reduces goal differentiation by modified incentives or by proper selection training or assignment procedures. Secondly, the leader reduces functional interdependence and common resources by reducing pressure for common consensus, and by loosening up schedules or introducing buffers (inventories or contingency funnels).Luthans (1973) suggested three basis categories for resolving Interpersonal conflict in the organization to include:
- iv. **Lose-Lose:** A lose-Lose approach to conflict resolution is where both parties to the conflict lose: According to Grabb (1997) a common approach is to compromise or take the middle way in the dispute. Another approach is to pay off one of the parties in the conflict. Such payment could be in the form of bribe. A third approach involves the use of an outside third party or arbitrator. The final approach here is when the parties in the conflict resort to bureaucratic rules and existing regulations to resolve the conflict. In all the approaches, both parties to the conflict lose. According to Ephraim (2001), it is sometimes the only way to resolve a conflict, but it is generally less desirable than the win-loss (or especially, the win-win) strategy.
- v. **Win-Lose:** In this case, one party in a conflict situation attempts to marshal its forces to win. These examples can be found in superior subordinate relationships (Ephraim, 2001).

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Line-staff confrontations, union-management relations, and many other organizational conflicts are noticeable in industrial relations. The win-lose strategy of conflict resolutions is both functional and dysfunctional for the organization. It is functional in the sense that it creates a competitive to win and can also bring about cohesiveness and strong esprit-de-corps among individuals, or groups in the conflict situation. On the other hand, it is dysfunctional in the sense that it ignores other solutions such as a cooperative, mutually agreed upon outcome; there are pressures to conform which may stifle a questioning, creative atmosphere for conflict resolution: The greatest problem associated with this strategy is that someone must always lose; and those losers learn a lot in the process, but losers tend to be bitter and vindictive. A much better strategy is one that both parties in a conflict situation win.

- vi. **Win-Win:** This approach (according to Offiong, 1987:14) seems to be the healthiest from a human and industrial stand point. Here, the needs of both parties in the conflict situations are met and parties receive rewarding outcomes. Other strategies put forth by other scholars are as follows:
- vii. **Advance:** Ekpo (1987) suggested this strategy, which involves the leader simply ignoring the conflict. The strategy is said to be useful if the matter is considered trivial, or believed to be the symptoms of some other crucial matter. However, the subjective trivial judgment can be detrimental as the conflict could escalate and get out of control.
- viii. **Containment:** This strategy makes use of representatives from conflict groups to iron out their problems and resolve them amicably. The management can restructure the interaction between problem solving activities. The management may resort to collective bargaining by encouraging the parties to trade concession and arrive at a compromise. The use of representatives may work in situations where group sentiments have not hardened; which is also true of restructuring tactics. According to Offiong (1987) this bargaining approach can succeed where the power between the two parties are symmetrical.
- ix. **Gentle confrontation:** According to Ikoh (2005: 58) this approach was first suggested by Suthermeister (1976); and it allows for management to redesign work structure or the parties are asked to diagnose the causes of their conflicts, search for effective ways to control them as well as affect their non-conciliation. This often results in a win-win situation (Suthermeister, 1969).
- x. **Compromise:** Oti (2001) agrees that workers and management meet to agree on certain differences. In this type of conflict situation, management is expected to be less authoritarian at the negotiation table. The views of workers must be studied and handled methodologically that would avoid the degeneration of the current issue.
- xi. **Authority imposition:** This, according to Robinson (1997) and corroborated by Iko (2003) involves direct intervention by the leader to impose a solution on the conflicting parties. This strategy may be useful where a quick action must be taken or where an unpopular decision must be imposed. This is usually a win-lose situation; and if, a bureaucratic

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- situation takes place without first diagnosing the cause of the conflict, the matter is likely to resurface in the future and probably in a worse form (Offiong, 1988).
- xii. **Communication/education:** Kossen (198) is of the view that conflict arise from the inability of workers to accept certain changes. Management should communicate with workers and show them the need for change.
- xiii. **Cooperation:** In situations of resistant to change, active resisters could be co-opted and given desirable role to play in decision-making.
- xiv. **Job design:** So much emphasis has been placed upon the technical aspect of production, mechanical efficiency, division of labour and specialization. This has led to higher turnover, strikes or poor work. The harmful social effects are ignored. Advocates of the social-technical approach regard these two as part of interlocking in the organizational system, where a change in either can affect the whole system (Elemi, 2000) and Ikoh (2000). Job enlargement and job enrichment are techniques advocated for redesigning jobs (Kossen, 1987).
- xv. **Diffusion:** For Offiong (1988) and Oti (2000) this approach involves smoothing up an appeal to super-ordinate goals. This approach also uses persuasions but in addition, exhorts the parties to divert their attention to a more important issue that is a super-ordinate goal that is common to them all.
- xvi. **Counseling:** This approach purported to have been propounded by Offiong (1988). Disarm the opposition: Here, the worker is stopped from his abnormal behaviour by taking away the factors (or aspects) contributing to the conflict. For instance, if Tony is fond of getting late to the office, ne could be asked to start keeping the time book and to draw the redline at 8:00 a.m. every morning (Oti, 2001).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is discussed under the following sub headings that reflect the direct theoretical issues involved:

1. Neo-functionalist perspective.
2. Coser/Marxists conflict functionalism.
3. Human relations theory.

Neo-functionalist Perspective

The proponents of this theory were Jeffrey Alexander and Neil Smelser. This is a new functionalist perspective. Functionalism is a keyconsensus theory. Functionalism was founded by a French sociologist, Emile Durkheim. Further key theorists of this sociological perspective were Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton .It carries the tenets of structural functionalism aimed to emphasize theco-existence of consensus and dissensus, order and disorder, continuity and change. These are all dichotomous perspectives of the society.Neo-functionalism emphasized and elaborated the relevant salient elements of the symbiotic structure of the society that were consistently de-

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emphasized and underplayed by the mother theory. The theory places more emphasis on gradual change or moving equilibrium rather than being static, as well as tension or conflict generated by continuous interaction instead of consensus. The theory argues that there is no possibility that two person in the society or organization can interrelate without any disagreement based on their different backgrounds and orientations. The reason for this position is that the operators of these organizations are from different economic and social background as well as interact based on different thinking abilities, attitudes and pursuing different goals. The vision and missions are different; hence processes also differ as well. This explains why tension or conflict must be expected in any social interaction. Tension or conflict is functional in that it allows for change and a possibility of a reorganization of roles in the system. The neo-functionalists are of the opinion that social integration and disintegration are too obvious manifestations in interaction. Therefore, integration is a social possibility rather than a given or social imperative. The theory stresses that structural fixity emphasized by functionalism welcomes no change rather lives with the erroneous assumption that what society approves is right.

This theory has relevance to the present study. It implies that organizational life is a two-sided relationship, that is, consensus and conflict. The labour-management relations are built on stability and instability. The antagonistic labour management relation is viewed as normal. It is not possible for workers in Nigerian Port Authority Calabar and Port Harcourt to exist with the employer or management without occasional tension or conflict. Based on this theory, industrial conflict is a possibility because of task interdependence, competition for scarce resources, communication obstacles and various jurisdictional ambiguities. In pursuit of the goals of Nigerian Port Authority, conflict usually ensues between labour and management. The conflict exists also alongside industrial harmony.

Coser Marxist Conflict Functionalism

The proponent of this theory is Lewis Coser. Conflict functionalism of Lewis Coser grew out of his dissatisfaction with Talcott Parson's functionalism. The theory addresses the issue of conflict on the one hand and equally emphasizes the positive function of social conflict in the maintenance of the social system. The theory maintains that conflict is not pathological but as useful in the social system. The theory states that social order can be seen as representing a system of variously interrelated and integrated parts. In spite of the interrelationship, all social systems are fraught with tensions, frictions, imbalances and opposition. These various violent disruptions and seemingly overt deviant behaviours which are typically viewed as disruptive to the system but are also necessary integration stimulants to strengthen and energize the system. With such stimulation, the system could adjust better to the environmental demands where it exists. Dissenting behaviour and deviance are not a disease that should be treated but a "reaction to what is perceived as sickness in the body social".

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The theory asserts that conflict resides in legitimacy. This is concerned with what is legal, judicious or administratively provided or what is right and acceptable. Conflict performs several functions. In closely structured group, conflict helps to stabilize and integrate its members by eliminating sources of dissatisfaction, conflict within the organization or group helps to revitalize group norms and emergence of new ones. It helps to bring to light areas of discontent and suggested solutions to reach consensus and achieve equilibrium. This theory has implication for this study. Based on this theory, the social and cultural system where the Nigerian Port Authority is located acts as a conditioning input into the industrial relations system in a very diffused way. The actors in the labour-relations in Nigerian Port Authority are members of the large social system. These values and goals of the social system are directly or indirectly infused into labour relations. The theory asserts that these values and goals are the sources of tensions, frictions, imbalances and oppositions in the industrial organization.

The theory also implies that internal conflict in labour management relations in Nigeria Port Authority serves as a means of asserting and ascertaining the relative strength of antagonistic interests between workers and management. It sees the conflict in Nigerian Port Authority as residing in legitimacy. The economically motivated strike by workers may be viewed as legal or judicious. The theory posits that the antagonistic labour-management relations is functional because it is a reaction to the ailment in the work organization.

Human Relations Theory

The human relations theory is associated with Elton Mayo (1927). The theory is a psychological approach to the understanding of how organization works. It sets to analyze human behaviour in the organizational setting. The theory came about in 1927 when Elton Mayo and his colleagues conducted a research on working conditions and employees working behaviour in the Western Electrical Company of Chicago, which is now known as the "Hawthorne Experiment". The experiment established that the essential nature of organization is humanistic and that the dominant factor is human relationship, with an informal group functioning in such formal settings. It emphasizes that in solving organizational problem, it is necessary to understand the multi-dimensional nature of man. This means that an organization is the set of work relationship that grows out of the natural interaction of persons working together over a long period of time.

Two major elements are important in any organization as seen by the humanists. They are:

- i. Existence of a formal structure of organization
- ii. Informal groups existing within a formal organization.

Formal organizations are open systems which are influenced by internal and external factors (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Industrial conflict in formal organization is determined by internal and external forces or factors. An informal organization is the pattern of the actual behaviour of the

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people engaged in it. The human relations theory maintained that informal relationships are necessary for the healthy life of the organization as the formal ones. The theory assumes that an informal organization may or may not be subversive in the sense that it resists and seeks to thwart management objectives. This gives rise to industrial conflict. Again, that, a management institution in which the main outline of formal and informal organization coincide is a healthy and happy one.

The human relations view of organization indicates that man is a social being and hence his behaviour is determined primarily by his relationship with his immediate associates in the work environment. The theory concludes that management should apply democratic leadership rather than autocratic to curb tension in the system, he should foster satisfying social environment to ensure a better employer-employees relationship.

The theory has implication for this study. Firstly, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) is a formal organization with employers who constitute management and the employees, the labour which constitute informal group with the formal complex organization. The theory implies that the informal group could be involved in certain actions that could be inimical to the goals of management. Such a situation could cause tension, stress or strain in the organization: This could result to industrial conflict which could bring about disharmony in the organization. The theory again implies that attempt by the organization to succeed with people is inherently fraught with conflicts. Thus, the ordinary labour-management relations in Nigeria Port Authority are conflictual so long as informal organization operates.

Conclusively therefore, the human relation theory addressed the formal structural problems that are inherent in a poorly related environment or groups. The differentials and breakdown in social relationship between groups of labour and management staff leads to conflict. Their (human social theorists) assertion shows that organizational goals cannot be adequately achieved without an improved human relations and interaction. It follows that these seemingly short comings are what the human theorists attempt to bridge the gap and strengthen social human relations.

Summary of theoretical Framework

From the theoretical models examined above, it could be argued that all the theories can be used to explain labour-management relations and industrial conflict in Nigeria Port Authority Calabar and Port Harcourt respectively. Specifically, this study would adopt the Coser/ Marxists conflict functionalism theories, as its theoretical framework. The proposition for these theories is based on the idea that theories are complementary to each other. The Coser/Marxist theory looks at conflict in labour management relations, as a function in an organization, while the Human Relation theory looks at attitude/belief system of workers and management in organization.

Based on the above, these theories could be adjudged as most suitable for the understanding of the effects of labour-management relations on industrial conflict in organization.

METHODOLOGY

This area presents the research methodology that was adopted in the study. It highlights the research design, population of the study, sampling procedure, the sample, instrument of data collection, administration of research instrument, validity and reliability of instrument, and method of data analysis.

Research Design

The research design used in this study is the cross-sectional survey as data were collected at single point in time (Salkind, 2022). According to Thiel (2022) survey design studies individual attitudes, feelings and opinions. It allows for the study and interpretation of relationships among variables (Salkind, 2022). Similarly, Osuala (1982) and Nwagbara (2001) observed that, survey design studies both small and large populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables. Survey design as a research method, does not only uncover data, but interpret, synthesize, and integrates these data and points to implications and interrelationships. Survey design permits random sampling, and thus is less expensive and efficient. Especially, survey allows for the adequate use of questionnaires, and interviews to determine respondent's reaction and opinion about sociological phenomena-as likened to the variables in this study. These characteristics essentially aligned with the goal of the present study and therefore make it appropriate for it

Population of the Study

This study investigates the effect of labour-management relations and industrial conflict among federal parastatals with particular focus on the Nigerian Ports Authority, Calabar and Port Harcourt. Nigerian Ports Authority is the focus of this study as there is record of industrial conflict in the organization. Calabar and Port Harcourt ports were chosen as they are the major ports in South-east where the present study is located. The population of this study consists of all cadres of staff/employees (junior, intermediate and senior), in Calabar and Port Harcourt ports. As at the time of this research, the population of staff was (817) covering junior, intermediate and senior of N.P.A. Calabar and 420 staff in N.P.A., Port Harcourt. In summary, 817 workers (532 males and 285 females) constituted the total population of workforce of the two ports.

The characteristics of the workers (population of the study) such as gender, age, departments, educational attainment and years of working experience, among others were fully analyzed in the post-field section of the study.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study consists of 300 randomly selected staff/workers of the Nigeria Ports Authority of Calabar and Port Harcourt zones (male and female). This sample adequately met the sample size requirement of Yamane (1967). The sample was made up of 190 (63%) workers from Port Harcourt Port and 110 (37%) from Calabar Port. This sample of 36.7 % of the total population is adjudged representative. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed for this study. These consist of the stratified, cluster, proportional and the simple random sampling procedures respectively. Foremost, the stratified sampling procedure was employed in dividing (or identifying) the entire study area into 2 major strata on the basis of the two states (Cross Rivers and Rivers States). Then, cluster sampling procedure was adopted in identifying departments in each of the two sampled Ports of Calabar and Port Harcourt. This was done in line with the departments in the organization that are 12 departments. The department include: Admin/Personnel, Training, Operations, Dock Yard, Harbour, Store, Engineering, Transport, Medical, Estate, Fire Services and Security.

Finally, the proportional and simple random sampling procedures were employed in selecting at least 4 staff each from the 3 cadres of workers (senior, intermediate and junior) from each department of the organization in the two ports. By these procedures, 300 staff wererandomly selected from Port Harcourt and Calabar ports to constitute the sample for this study.

To carry out the random sampling, "Yes" and "No" was written on pieces of paper and folded into paper balls, and put into a container (a polythene bag) for the staff in each department to pick. The numbers of paper balls was equal to the number of staffs in a department, with the number of "yes" being equal to the number of staff to be proportionately sampled in a department; while others carried "no". Each staff was made to select a ball from the container without replacement. This means, sampling without replacement as stipulated by Denga and Ali (1997); and Oduandlhejiamazu (2001). For instance, in the administration/personnel department of the Calabar zone, with 38 staff (8 senior, 14 intermediate and 16 junior), senior, and 9 each of intermediate and junior staff were randomly selected. Similarly, from the same department in Port Harcourt port, with 42 staff (6 senior, 13 intermediate and 23 junior), 4 senior, 10 intermediate and 21 junior staff were randomly selected. This procedure wascontinued in all the 12 departments until a total of 190 and 110 staff were selected from the Port Harcourt and Calabar port respectively for the study.

Instrument of Data Collection

The main instrumentused for generating data for this study was the structured questionnaire entitled Labour Management Relations and Industrial Conflict Assessment Questionnaire (LMRICAQ).The instrument consists of 38 items in two sections (A & B).

Sections A

Sections A consists of 8 items meant to elicit personal information on the respondents. This part provided data on respondent's gender, age, educational qualification, marital status, designation, and number of year spent in the organization

Section B

Section B consists of 30 items meant to elicit information from the respondents on the independent and the dependent variables. The independent variable of this study is Labour - management relations, while the dependent variable is industrial conflict. The independent variable was measured on four dimensions (organizational leadership behaviour; effective formal communication behavior, collective bargaining; and implementation of labour-management agreement).

Organizational leadership behavior

This dimension of labour-management relations assesses the leadership style of the organization as perceived by the respondent. Three types of leadership styles (democratic, authoritarian and Laissez-faire) were assessed. Six items were used to measure the variable. Sample item is "our management is too harsh in taking decision".

Effective communication

Effective communication dimension assesses the participants' perception of communication process and effectiveness. Six items were used to measure the variable. Sample item is "I like to work with ease, when there is communication flow between me and my colleagues"

Collective bargaining

This dimension assesses participants' perceived degree at which decision and issues are resolved through collective bargaining. Six items were used to measure the variable. Sample item is "organizational peace in my establishment is borne out of frequent dialogue between labour and management.

Implementation of labour-management agreement

Implementation of labour-management agreement measures respondents' attitudes towards the manners of management agreement. Six items were used to measure the variable. Sample item is "workers relate cordially with management even when collective agreements are not implemented". The dependent variable for this study is industrial conflict.

Industrial conflict

Industrial conflict is the dependent variable for this study. It is measured with six items. Sample item is "There is constant meeting between labour and management in our organization". Likert summated rating scale format was adopted in the construction of the questionnaire. A-six point

scale that ranged from 1=strongly disagree, 2 =moderately disagree, 3= disagree, 4 = agree, 5= moderately agree, 6 = strongly agree will be used. Likert scales are useful for collecting data on attitudes and perceptions from large samples of people, Likert scaling format is widely adopted in the social science and has been accepted to provide data that can be operationalized as interval level data (Lionello, Atletta, Mitchell, & Kang, 2021). A six point Likert scale is adopted for the present study as it falls within the range of scaling points that have been reported to provide satisfactory indices of reliability, validity, and discriminating power in data analysis (Taherdoost, 2019). Primary data consist of generating data/information from the respondents directly by the researcher through the use of two research instrument, the questionnaire and a structured interview schedule will be used first to enable the researcher get acquainted with the parastatals or the study area. The actual fieldwork will be carried out personally with the assistance of a staff from each of the sub-stratum of the study area. About 340 questionnaires were distributed.

Validity of the Instrument

Validity here refers to the degree to which the questionnaire measure what it purports or intended to measure, and nothing else. (Anderson, Fontinha, & Robson, 2020; Thiel, 2022). The content validity of the questionnaire was determined through a thorough inspection of the items in the questionnaire. Experts also vet the questionnaire to determine its content validity on the basis of each major variable of the study. The items, after being developed by the researcher, were presented to the project supervisor, who scrutinized each item, to ensure that they conform to each major variable. Irrelevant items were expunged, while relevant ones introduced. The instrument is adjudged to have face and content validity. In addition, since the adopted research measure is being introduced into the literature, test of construct validity was also examined. Construct validity is the extent to which a measure has been found to be appropriately related to one or more other variables of theoretical relevance to it. (Howitts & Cramer, 2020). To test for construct validity, the two components (discriminant and convergent validity) were tested. And r^2 of .82 was observed for the discriminant validity while r^2 of .79 was observed for convergent validity. The two r^2 observed are adjudged to be satisfactory.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency or the degree to which a measuring instrument measures what it purports to measure over a period of time (Anderson, Fontinha, & Robson, 2020; Thiel, 2022). The split half method was adopted in determining the reliability of the study instrument. This involves giving the questionnaire to a sample of 30 dock workers in one of the zones (Calabar) to fill, and then retrieved on the same day. The retrieved questionnaires were coded, and the codes split into 2-equal halves of "even" and "odd" number items. The two halves were subjected to the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analytical Procedure. This was then converted to the actual reliability measure to determine the actual reliability coefficient of the instrument. For the independent variable, that is labour-management relations, the total split-half reliability test result

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was .82. For each of the dimensions, the following reliability coefficients were obtained for the four dimensions.

The four dimensions – Organizational Leadership behavior, effective formal communication behavior, collective bargaining and implementation of labour-management agreement had split half reliability test result of .75, .82, .73 and .87 respectively.

For the dependent variable, that is industrial conflict, split-half reliability test result of .89 was obtained.

For the independent variable – labour management relations, Cronbach’s alpha of .88 was obtained for the total scale. However, Cronbach’s alpha of .82, .87, .86 and .69 were obtained for the various dimensions that covered organizational leadership behavior, effective formal communication behavior, collective bargaining and implementation of labour-management agreement respectively. For the dependent variable, which is industrial conflict, Cronbach’s alpha test result of .92 was obtained.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were collected directly by the researcher in company of 2 research assistants (who were properly trained for this purpose). At the collection field, the researcher first introduces himself and his assistants and the purpose of their mission to the head of departments in each NPA Zone (Calabar and Port Harcourt). The researcher then demand for the appropriate staff position list in each of the zones. This was used for carrying out the sampling and effective distribution of copies of the questionnaires to the sampled respondents. Each department was covered per day so as to enhance effective retrieval of the questionnaires on the same day. The retrieved questionnaires from respondents were subjected to preparation by scoring/coding. To facilitate this process, a coding schedule was developed for each of the sessions of the research instruments. The coding schedule is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 1: Coding Schedule for the Research Instrument (LMRIPAS)

Section B: Research Variables	Items	Response Option	Code	Expected Score	
				Minimum	Maximum
H1: Organizational Leadership behavior	6	SA, A, UD, D SD	1-5	1	5
H2: Effectiveness of communication	6	SA, A, UD, D SD	1-5	1	5
H3: Effective collective bargaining	6	SA, A, UD, D SD	1-5	1	5
H4: Implementation of labour-management agreement	6	SA, A, UD, D SD	1-5	1	5

(H1 – H4) Hypotheses 1-4**Source: Field Work 2022.****Method of Data Analysis**

To evaluate labour management relation and industrial conflict, the data collected during fieldwork were subjected to editing, scoring and analysis. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, and frequencies were reported. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was the statistical test for the hypotheses. Since the present study investigates the relationship between labour-management relations and industrial conflict among employees of NPA, the choice of the statistical test is adjudged appropriate and adequate. Since Pearson Product Moment Correlation for test of hypothesis is a parametric statistical test, several assumptions that guide its applications were observed in data collection process and analysis. For instance, test of normality, linearity and auto-correlation were conducted on the data prior to test of the hypotheses. Likert scale format anchored on a five points were used to collect data in order to meet the assumption of interval level of measurement. And data that are independent of each other were collected to satisfy the assumption of independent response from the participants. Frequency distribution and tables were constructed where necessary. The test of significance was based on 0.05 level of significance as this is widely used in the social science disciplines.

Common Method Variance

This study adopted self-administered questionnaire and the extant literature has linked the method of data collection to common method variance (Tehseen, Ramayah & Sajilan, 2017). Common method variance is co-variation between measures of distinct constructs caused by identical measurement methods rather than the constructs themselves (Bozionelos & Simmering, 2022). According to Kaltsonoudi, Tsigilis, and Karteroliotis (2022) common method variance refers to “the amount of uncontrolled systematic error leading to biased estimates of scale reliability and validity and to spurious covariance shared among variables due to common method and/or

common source employed in survey-based researches”. Common method bias is a serious and problematic issue that has the potential to jeopardize the validity of the research findings. The effect is seen in either falsely inflated observed relationships among measures or deflated correlations (Liang, Lin, Shiao, & Chen, 2021). Therefore some procedural control of common method bias was implemented in the design. The procedures include: having the focal variables presented to the participants in separate sheets of paper. This is to ensure physical gap that hinders participant’s flow of thought from one variable to the other. Through the covering letter, the participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. This aimed at encouraging participation and honesty in response. In addition, the procedural control measures, common method variance, diagnostic statistical procedure (the Harman single-factor test) were conducted on the data sets. The test aided in finding out whether common variance bias is present in the data sets (Rodríguez-Ardura, & Meseguer-Artola, 2020; Tehseen, Ramayah & Sajilan, 2017).

Control Variables

Some socio-demographic variables that include gender, age, tenure, and education were included in data analysis as covariates. A covariate is variable which correlates with the variables that are the researcher’s main focus of interest. In the analysis of covariance it is the undesired influence of the covariate that is controlled for (Howitt, & Cramer, 2017). The choice of these variables as covariate is founded on the extant empirical studies that report positive relationship between the socio-demographics and the present research variables (e.g. Bhavani, 2012; Delak & Sirok, 2022), and theoretical propositions such as socio-cultural theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) that identified gender differences in social behavior. Testing for covariates is needful since it reduces omitted variable bias in model specification (Cooper, Eva, Zarea, Newman, Lee, & Obschonka, 2020), particularly in simple model that the present study represents.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this section the findings from the analysis of data gathered from the field with structured questionnaire were presented. The presentation opened with socio-demographic statistics and followed with tests of hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

In Table 2 the demographic characteristics of the respondents that covered gender, age, religion, marital status, and educational qualification were presented. Males were 195 (65%), while females were 105 (35%). For age distribution, 40 (13.33%) respondents were between the ages of 15 and 25, 76 (25.33%) participants were between the ages of 26-35, 140 (46.67%) participants were between the ages of 36 and 45 and 44 (15.65%) participants were 46 and above years old. The age frequency shows that most of the respondents in the sample were between the age brackets of 36-45. For religion, 201 (67%) of the respondents were Christians, 79 (26.3%) were Muslims, and 20 (4.7%) African Traditional Religion practitioners. Christians were more as participants because the study was carried out in the south-eastern part of this country that was dominated by

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Christianity faith. Formarital status 71 (23.67%) of the respondents were single, 170 (56.67%) were married, widows were 15 (5%), widowers were 30 (10%) and divorced were 14 (4.66%). For educational qualification, most of the respondents went to tertiary institutions 246 (83%). Those who had Secondary school educations were 40 (13.3%). Respondents with primary school certificates were 11 (3.7%). This implies that the proportion of the population sampled have the requisite knowledge to contribute to the subject matter of this research.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic statistics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	195	65%
Female	105	35%
Total	300	100%
Age		
15-25yrs.	40	13.33%
26-36yrs	76	25.33%
37-45ys.	140	46.67%
46 and above	44	15.67%
Total	300	100%
Religion		
Christianity	201	67%
Islam	79	26.3%
African Traditional Religion	20	6.7%
Others	nil	
Total	300	100%
Marital Status		
Single	71	23.67%
Married	170	56.67%
Widow	15	5%
Widower	30	10%
Divorced	14	4.66%
Total	300	100%
Educational Qualification		
Primary	11	3.7%
Secondary	40	13.3%
Tertiary	249	83%
Total	300	100%

Source: Field work, 2022

Table 2 shows participants' responses to the individual items that make up the research survey. The statistics reported is descriptive form (frequency and percentage).

Table 3: Participants Responses to the Individual Item on the Research Survey

S/N	Variables and Items	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR			
1	Our Chief Executive is very good and democratic	SD D UD A SA Total	113 90 17 50 30 300	37.7% 30% 5.7% 16.7% 10% 100%
2	Our management is too harsh in taking decision.	SD D UD A SA Total	40 38 12 110 100 300	13.33% 12.67% 4% 36.67% 33.33% 100%
3	Our management always listens to workers' demands and complaints.	SD D UD A SA Total	103 110 30 30 27 300	34.33% 36.67% 10% 10% 9% 100%
4	Our management is generally too weak	SD D UD A SA Total	40 35 45 100 80 300	13.33% 11.67% 15% 33.33% 26.67% 100%
5	Whether management is weak or not, does not affect my job progress.	SD D UD A SA Total	55 40 20 105 80 300	18.33% 13.33% 6.67% 35% 26.67% 100%
6	Being harsh-democratic is the best way to deal with workers	SD D UD A	110 70 10 60	36.67% 23.33% 3.33% 20%

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		SA Total	50 300	16.67% 100%
	COMMUNICATION			
7	I obey rules and regulations that are properly communicated to me.	SD D UD A SA Total	60 70 10 80 80 300	20% 23.33% 3.33% 26.67% 26.67% 100%
8	I like to work with ease, when there is communication flow between me and my colleagues.	SD D UD A SA Total	80 89 11 70 50 300	26.67% 29.66% 3.67% 23.33% 16.67% 100%
9	I feel happy when I communicate my grievance to management.	SD D UD A SA Total	101 90 14 50 45 300	33.66% 30% 4.67% 16.67% 15% 100%
10	I am committed in my duty whether there is communication flow or not between staff management.	SD D UD A SA Total	89 102 8 60 41 300	29.66% 34% 2.67% 20% 13.67% 100%
11	Lack of information flow does not bar my relationship with management.	SD D UD A SA Total	100 92 14 54 40 300	30.33% 30.67% 4.67% 18% 13.3% 100%
12	Mutual trust exists between workers and management whether there is information flow or not.	SD D UD A SA Total	80 100 20 58 42 300	26.67% 33.33% 6.67% 19.33% 14% 100%
	COLLECTIVE BARGAINING			

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13	I feel committed to decisions reached through bargaining process in the organization.	SD D UD A SA Total	106 84 10 60 40 300	35.33% 28% 3.33% 20% 13.3% 100%
14	Organizational peace in my establishment is borne out of frequent dialogue between labour and management.	SD D UD A SA Total	110 80 10 58 42 300	36.67% 26.67% 3.33% 19.33% 14% 100%
15	Bargaining process between labour and management creates harmonious relationship.	SD D UD A SA Total	70 90 15 65 60 300	23.33% 30% 5% 21.67% 20% 100%
16	I abide by the rules and regulations in my organization	SD D UD A SA Total	102 88 10 40 60 300	34% 29.33% 3.33% 19.33% 14% 100%
17	Bargaining process in my establishment promotes industrial crisis	SD D UD A SA Total	130 84 16 40 30 300	43.33% 28% 5.33% 13.33% 10% 100%
18	I am committed to rules that I participate in making	SD D UD A SA Total	114 118 11 37 20 300	38% 39.33% 3.67% 12.33% 6.67% 100%
	IMPLEMENTATION OF LABOUR MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT			
19	Workers relate harmoniously with management when management is committed to implementing decisions that favour all workers.	SD D UD A SA	102 88 12 60 38	34% 29.33% 4% 20% 12.67%

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		Total	300	100%
20	Worker protest when management fails to carry our collective agreement.	SD	102	34%
		D	88	29.33%
		UD	12	4%
		A	60	20%
		SA	38	12.67%
		Total	300	100%
21	Implementation of collective agreement by management does not contribute to industrial peace.	SD	140	46.67%
		D	80	26.67%
		UD	10	3.33%
		A	45	15%
		SA	25	8.33%
		Total	300	100%
22	Workers are committed to their duty whether management implements collective agreement or not.	SD	60	20%
		D	70	23.33%
		UD	10	3.33%
		A	100	33.33%
		SA	60	20%
		Total	300	100%
23	Workers relate cordially with management even when collective agreements are not implemented.	SD	100	33.33%
		D	120	40%
		UD	10	3.33%
		A	50	16.67%
		SA	20	6.67%
		Total	300	100%
24	I enjoy working with management even when they are not committed to implementing collective agreement between labour and them.	SD	110	36.67%
		D	100	33.33%
		UD	15	5%
		A	45	15%
		SA	30	10%
		Total	300	100%
	INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT			
25	There is mutual relationship and respect between labour and management in my organization.	SD	100	33.33%
		D	90	30%
		UD	10	3.33%
		A	60	20%
		SA	40	13.33%
		Total	300	100%
26	Our working environment is generally conducive	SD	112	37.33%
		D	88	29.33%
		UD	10	3.33%
		A	40	13.33%
		SA	50	16.67%

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		Total	300	100%
27	Management is not committed to grievance settlement	SD D UD A SA Total	40 30 10 120 100 300	13.33% 10% 3.33% 40% 33.33% 100%
28	Management and workers do not interact freely and frequently on organizational issues	SD D UD A SA Total	113 87 10 40 50 300	37.67% 29% 3.33% 13.33% 16.67% 100%
29	There is constant meeting between labour and management in our organization	SD D UD A SA Total	120 100 12 38 30 300	40% 33.33% 4% 12.67% 10% 100%
30	The peace of my establishment is not tied to the decisions between management and labour.	SD D UD A SA Total	40 30 15 120 95 300	13.33% 10% 5% 40% 31.67% 100%

Source: Field work, 2022

Test of Hypotheses and Discussion of Findings

Four hypotheses that were stated in null form were tested in this study.

Table 4: Leadership Behaviour (Democracy, Laissez faire and Authoritarian) and Industrial Conflict

Variables	N	M	SD	DF	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> ²	<i>P</i>
Democratic leadership	300	1.62	.66				
				288	-.22	.05	.001
Industrial Conflict	300	4.06	.65				
Laissez faire	300	2.49	1.03				
				288	-.14	.02	.01
Industrial Conflict	300	4.06	.65				
Authoritarian	300	4.02	.62				
				298	.22	.05	.001
Industrial Conflict	300	4.06	.65				

Source: Field Work 2022.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between organizational leadership (Democracy, Laissez faire and Authoritarian) and industrial conflict.

Table 4 shows Pearson product moment correlation coefficients on the relationships between the three dimensions of organizational leadership behaviour (democracy, laissez faire and authoritarian) with industrial conflict. In the table row 2, 3 and 4 present the statistics on the relationship between democratic leadership and industrial conflict. The correlation coefficient ($r(399) = -.22, < .05$) observed indicates significant negative relationship between democratic leadership and industrial conflicts. The $r^2 (.05)$ statistics indicates that democratic leadership behaviour accounts for 5% percent variance in industrial conflict. On the basis of Cohen's (1988) criterion, $r^2 (0.05)$ indicates small effect size and this implies that democratic leadership behavior has some impact on industrial conflict.

In addition, row 4, 6, and 7 of table 4.3 present the statistics on the relationship between laissez faire leadership and industrial conflicts. The correlation coefficient ($r(399) = -.14, < .05$) observed indicates significant negative relationship between laissez faire leadership and industrial conflicts. The $r^2 (.02)$ statistics indicates that laissez faire leadership behaviour accounts for 2 percent variance in industrial conflicts. On the basis of Cohen's (1988) criterion, $r^2 (.02)$ indicates small

effect size and this implies that democratic leadership behaviour has trivial impact on industrial conflict. Rows 8, 9 and 10 present the statistics on the relationship between authoritarian leadership and industrial conflicts. The correlation coefficient ($r(399) = .22, < .05$) observed indicates significant positive relationship between authoritarian leadership and industrial conflicts. The $r^2(.05)$ statistics indicates that authoritarian leadership behaviour accounts for 4% percent variance in industrial conflicts. On the basis of Cohen's (1988) criterion, $r^2(.04.)$ indicates small effect size and this implies that authoritarian leadership behaviour has little impact on industrial conflict.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Relationship between communication behaviour and industrial conflicts

Variables	N	M	SD	DF	r	r^2	P
Communication behavior	300	2.49	1.04				
				298	.05	.002	.31
Industrial conflicts	300	300	4.06	.65			

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between communication behavior industrial conflicts.

Pearson correlation coefficient (Table 5) indicates non-significant positive relationship between leaders' communication behaviour and industrial conflicts, $r(300) = .05, p > .05$. Therefore, hypothesis 2 (that is, there is no significant relationship between communication behavior in organization and industrial conflict was confirmed. The $r^2(.002)$ statistics indicates that communication behavior in organization accounts for less than 1 percent variance in the level of industrial conflict. On the basis of Cohen's (1988) criterion, $r^2(.002)$ indicates small effect size and this means that communication behavior in organization has little impact on the level of industrial conflicts.

The finding on the test of relationship between communication behaviour and industrial conflict was not significant and it is unexpected. Theoretically, communication has been presented to enhance relationship. Srivastava (2006) posited that the system of communication by the management or by the union is a useful analytical framework to explain the behaviour of the organizations and disputes and that communication is critical in avoidance of disputes through trust building, better superior-subordinate relationship, and involving people. In an empirical study Mojaye and Dedekuma (2015) concluded that while effective communication may not necessarily bring about good industrial relations but it could engender industrial harmony.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Collective bargaining and industrial conflicts.

Variables	N	M	SD	Df	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> ²	<i>P</i>
Collective bargaining	300	2.63	.99				
				298	-.13	.01	.02
Industrial conflicts	300	300	4.06	.65			

Source: Field Work 2022

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between collective bargaining and industrial conflict

Pearson correlation coefficient (Table 6.) indicates significant negative relationship between collective bargaining and industrial conflicts, $r(300) = .13, p < .05$. Therefore, hypothesis 3 (that is, there is no significant relationship between collective bargaining and industrial conflict) was not supported. The r^2 (.01) statistics indicates that collective bargaining accounts for 1 percent variance in the level of industrial conflict. On the basis of Cohen's (1988) criterion, r^2 (.01) indicates small effect size and this means that collective bargaining has little impact on the level of industrial conflicts.

More so, collective bargaining significantly and negatively relates with industrial conflict. In other words the more the organization engages in collective bargaining the less industrial conflict the organization experiences. This finding is expected as it is in line with several theoretical and practical presentations. According to Femi, Asaley, Arisukwu, and Rasak, (2019) collective bargaining is an effective instrument for management of industrial conflict. Empirically, OginniAjibola, and Olaniyan, (2021) reported a strong relationship between collective bargaining and industrial harmony and recommended that frequent adoption of collective bargaining in issues of employees' terms and conditions of service be regular and first choice in labour matters. Similarly, Ehor, and Konya (2020) observed significant relationship between collective bargaining and industrial harmony and recommended that tertiary institutions management should be more committed to collective bargaining agreement in order to foster industrial harmony.

Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship between Implementation of Agreement and industrial conflicts.

Variables	N	M	SD	DF	R	<i>r</i> ²	P
Implementation of Agreement	300	2.42	1.06				
				298	-.16	.02	.004
Industrial conflicts	300	300	4.06	.65			

Source: Field Work 2022

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between implementation of labour-management agreement and industrial conflict

Pearson correlation coefficient (Table 7. indicates significant positive relationship between Implementation of agreement and industrial conflicts, $r(300) = -.16$, $p < .05$). Therefore, hypothesis 4 (there is no significant relationship between implementation of agreement and industrial conflict) was not supported. The $r^2 (.02)$ statistics indicates that implementation of agreement accounts for 2 percent variance in the level industrial conflict. On the basis of Cohen's (1988) criterion, $r^2 (.02)$ indicates small effect size and this means that implementation of agreement has little impact on industrial conflicts.

Finally, implementation of agreement significantly and negatively relate with industrial conflicts. That is as organization improves on implementation of agreement industrial conflict is reduced. This finding has support in the conclusion of Ojo (2022) that deficient collective bargaining and failure to implement the agreements have been a dominant factor in the industrial conflict between Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Federal Government of Nigeria.

Table 8: Summary of Findings

S/N	Hypothesis	Decision
1	There is no significant relationship between organizational leadership (Democracy, Laissez faire and Authoritarian) and industrial conflict	Rejected
2	There is no significant relationship between communication behavior industrial conflict	Accepted
3	There is no significant relationship between collective bargaining and industrial conflict	Rejected
4	There is no significant relationship between implementation of labour-management agreement and industrial conflict	Rejected

Source: Field Work 2022

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Industrial conflict is a common feature of several organizations in Nigeria. Conflict in organization could be at the individual, group or organizational level. Conflict at organizational level which industrial conflict essentially represents is usually functions of poor salary or poor work environment. In organizational study literature harmonious labour-management relations is widely presented as ameliorating factor in industrial conflict. In the light of the theoretical proposal and

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empirical outcomes on the positive role of labour-management relations in industrial conflicts this study examined the nature of relationship organizational leadership, communication behaviour, collective bargaining and implementation of labour-management agreement has with industrial conflict. The present study was conducted among staff of two sea ports (Calabar and Port Harcourt Sea Ports) in Nigeria. The study population was 817 that include all categories of the workforce.

A sample of 300 participants was drawn from the work force of the two sea ports. The study adopted cross sectional design as data were collected at one point in time. More so, the study is quantitative. Several theories such as neo-functionalism, Marxist conflict functionalism and human relations) offered explanation for the hypothesized relationship between labour-management relations and industrial conflict. The present study adopted the Marxist conflict functionalism. Marxist conflict functionalism was of choice in the present study as it addresses the issue of conflict on one the hand and equally emphasizes the positive function of social conflict in the maintenance of the social system.

Four hypotheses stated in null form were tested in the study. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied on the collected data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson r) was the inferential statistics adopted in testing the hypotheses. The statistical test offered support to only one out of the four hypotheses tested.

Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between organizational leadership, communication behaviour, collective bargaining, implementation of labour-management agreement and industrial conflict. Analysis of the data revealed that organization leadership, collective bargaining and implementation of labour-management agreement significantly relate with industrial conflict while communication behaviour did not significantly relate with industrial conflict. Several conclusions could draw from the magnitude and the direction of relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable of the present study.

From the findings on hypothesis 1 it could be concluded that leadership style significantly relate with industrial conflict and that the effect size of the relationship as indicated by the r^2 statistics is of importance. This conclusion is based on the significant relationship the three forms of leadership individually has with industrial conflict. Within the leadership variable another conclusion deducible is that the various leadership styles (Democratic leadership ,laissez faire and autocratic leaderships) relate differently with industrial conflict in terms of magnitude and direction. Democratic leadership and laissez faire leadership independently relate significantly and negatively with industrial conflict while autocratic leadership relate significant and positively with industrial conflict. The effect size statistics for the separate relationship is of importance as shown by the r^2 statistics.

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The finding on hypothesis 2 leads to the conclusion that organization communication behaviour is not an important factor to address when industrial conflict is the issue. This conclusion is reached since the relationship between organization communication and industrial conflict was not significant and the effect statistics as indicated by r^2 is inconsequential.

More so, the finding of hypothesis 3 leads to the conclusion that collective bargaining is an important factor to address when industrial conflict is the issue. This conclusion is reached since the relationship between collective bargaining and industrial conflict was significant and the effect statistics as indicated by r^2 is of some value. Similarly, the finding of hypothesis 4 leads to the conclusion that implementation of labour-management agreement is an important factor to consider when addressing industrial conflict. This conclusion is reached since the relationship between implementation of labour-management agreement and industrial conflict was significant and the effect statistics of the relationship as indicated by r^2 is of some value.

Contribution to Knowledge

The present study offered some theoretical and practical contributions to the extant body of knowledge.

- a) From theoretical perspective, this study contributed to the literature on Labour-Management relations and industrial conflict. This is important as adequate empirical investigation is needed on the relationship between organizational leadership, communication behavior, collective bargaining, implementation of labour-management agreement and industrial conflict in order to generate sufficient findings that could guide practice. More so, the directions of the relationship that exist between the independent variables and the dependent variable of this study as revealed by person r statistics indicate confirmation of Marxist conflict functionalist theory. To that extent therefore, this study contributed to the literature on the empirical test of the theory.
- b) Secondly, in terms of practice, this study through its findings made some substantial contribution to knowledge.
 - (i) Firstly, the democratic style of leadership is more desirable and most cherished in an organizational setting, while the authoritarian style of leadership is so undesirable because it is often destructive. This study has provided guidance and direction for management of Nigerian sea-ports. Simply put Nigerian sea-ports authorities should have democratic style of leadership as choice of leadership for industrial harmony to prevail.
 - (ii) Secondly, since one of the objectives of this study is to find out how collective bargaining positively or negatively affects industrial conflict, one can say based on the findings that collective bargaining is a veritable tool in labour-management relations.
 - (iii) Thirdly, since another objective of this study is to investigate whether the implementation or non-implementation of labour-management agreement has

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affected industrial conflict, one can conveniently say that the implementation of labour-management agreement is one of the conditions necessary for industrial harmony. Since the implementation of labour-management agreement supports industrial peace, in the manner beneficial to the organization. Nigeria Ports Authority should ensure that agreement implementation is in the tool kit of their industrial relations and make honoring labour-management agreement a priority in their effort to achieve industrial peace.

- (iv) Organizational disharmony or industrial conflict, based on the findings in this study should not be seen completely as being destructive to the organization, conflict should not be seen in its entirety as dysfunctional to the organization, rather this study has actually made us to understand that conflict has a way of correcting major ills in the organization, which at the end of the day becomes beneficial to both the employee (Union) and the employers (Management). To this end, it has changed the notion held by some scholars that conflict is entirely destructive to any organization. To this extent therefore, it has enriched and added to the body of knowledge. This is in line with Lewis Coser's theory which maintains that conflict is not pathological but as useful and beneficial to the social system as industrial harmony. The theory posits that the antagonistic labour-management relations are functional because it is a reaction to the ailment in the work place.

Recommendations

The present study examined the labour-management relations and industrial conflict using two sea-ports (Calabar and Port Harcourt) in Nigeria. Four elements of labour-management relations (Organizational leadership, Communication behavior, Collective bargaining and Implementation of labour-management agreement) served as the independent variables while industrial conflict was the dependent variable. Results from statistical analysis of the data lead to the following recommendation.

- (a) Firstly, in terms of leadership approach (democratic, laissez-faire and authoritarian) that will ensure peaceful labour-management relations in Nigeria sea-ports, democratic leadership should be of choice and authoritarian leadership should be totally avoided. This recommendation is based on the findings that, of the leadership styles examined, the democratic leadership has the greater potential for industrial harmony and authoritarian leadership is completely prone to industrial conflict.
- (b) Secondly, the finding on the relationship between collective bargaining and industrial conflict revealed that collective bargaining has the potential for industrial harmony and peaceful co-existence in any organization. Therefore, to ensure peaceful industrial relations in Nigerian sea ports, it is recommended that management of Nigerian Ports Authority incorporates collective bargaining among the mechanisms of handling labour-management issues.

- (c) Thirdly, finding on the test of relationship between implementation of agreement reached between labour and management has implication for cordial labour-management relations. This understanding is revealed in the negative relationship between implementation of labour management agreement and industrial conflict. Therefore, it is recommended that in Nigeria sea-ports, agreement reached between labour and management should always and fully be implemented to ensure harmonious industrial relationship in the organization. Finally, conflict or disharmony in Nigeria Ports Authority should not be seen as dysfunctional rather it should be seen as a condition that allows for positive change and tendency for reorganization of roles for peaceful coexistence of labour and management.

Limitation and suggestion for further studies

The present study has some design limitations that should be taking into consideration when interpreting and adopting the findings. First, this study used data that were collected from single source (self-report). Though several procedural control of common-method variance was considered in the design of this study, the possibility of common method bias influencing the findings of the study cannot be ruled out completely. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies collect data from multisource (e.g., self-report, others report). The present study solely examined the direct relationship between labour-management relations and industrial conflict. As well documented in the literature, relationships between organizational variables are usually moderated and mediated. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies investigate when moderation and mediation variables in the relationship between labour-management relations and industrial conflict. Results from such studies will provide practical knowledge on how and when labour-management relations relates with industrial conflict. This study adopted a model of leadership perspective that has democratic, laissez faire and authoritarian as components. To provide comprehensive knowledge on the subject of leadership behaviour and industrial conflict future study should examine how other models of leadership (e.g., transformational, transactional) relate to industrial conflict.

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