

IMPACTS OF INDUSTRIAL DISHARMONY ON TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *The issue of disharmony in Nigerian tertiary institutions has become a significant challenge, affecting academic quality, institutional stability, and national development. This paper examines the various cases and underlying causes of disharmony within Nigerian universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Through a critical review of the literature and empirical data, the paper highlights the adverse impacts of disharmony, such as reduced academic productivity, a decline in the quality of graduates, infrastructural decay, and loss of public trust in higher education. The study argues that addressing disharmony requires collaborative efforts between government, management of institutions, staff unions, and students. By promoting inclusivity, strengthening institutional autonomy, and ensuring effective conflict management mechanisms, Nigerian tertiary institutions can foster a more harmonious and productive academic environment.*

Key words: *disharmony; Nigerian tertiary institutions; infrastructural decay.*

Introduction

Nigerian workers prefer security and permanence in their workplaces over actualization and unusual redundancies, which are frequently seen and heard about. They want a good measure of love and interaction with their coworkers; they want to be seen, recognized, and not just heard; they want acceptance and full integration into all aspects of their work. These and other goals can be achieved if employees have adequate knowledge and kept up to date on organizational developments. The

above is obviously lacking due to employers' anti-worker policies, so industrial unrests are frequent visitors to industrial settings. In the words of Nwokocha (2014) and Mojalefa (2021), it is an undeniable fact that where and when workers are deprived of the right to protest against opposing issues as a result of authoritarian and strict employer leadership styles, the result will be resistance, absenteeism, espionage, and sabotage of any effort that appears to subject them inhumanely in the workplace. During this hanging-in-the-balance scenario, the worker's productive capacity is affected, undermining any progressive process in work organizations until the situation normalizes.

Furthermore, all stakeholders, including the government, employers, workers (labor unions), and the environment, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining industrial harmony in the workplace (Odoh & Moluno, 2023). This can only be achieved through the principle of cultural dialogue involving all necessary stakeholders. Interestingly, Mayowa (2015) claims that it is not surprising that in practice, organizational policies fail to encourage the tenet as well as spirit of mutual collaboration based on reaching agreements, and as a result, unfriendly and dehumanizing labor policies remain embedded in organizations. As a result, this serves as an engine of mistrust, posing a barrier to dialogue, and tensions and crises are on the horizon, putting strain on employers and labor relations. Albert and Yahaya (2013), as cited in Girigiri and Badom (2021), emphasize that where organizations are deficient or inadequate in providing sufficient processes for equalizing varying demands submitted by other parties, patterns and the probability of conflict of interest addressing a breaking point is undoubtedly imminent, capable of interfering with the productivity chain as well as stability of organizations. It suffices to say that when employers' and workers' interactions policies decrease the spirit of social justice in an organization, the propensity for situations of crisis is already triggered.

Industrial harmony, which is pragmatically defined as the preservation of employment, can be achieved by creating a human work environment. Dehumanizing the workplace, on the contrary, is simply denying another person's humanity in the workplace. Status, power, and social connections all help to facilitate this. Creating a humane organizational culture and setting that integrates and embraces new social approaches to work by equalizing opportunities for self-improvement and growth in the workplace, while also ensuring appropriate work quality, necessitates a positive business environment. However, where this sense of humanness has been lost or been beclouded by arrogant nature of employers, the moral exclusion of these necessary demands has a consequential negative effect on the morale and obligation of the

employees in terms of putting in their effort for better performance and productivity (Odoh & Moluno, 2023).

Industrial conflict is unavoidable in modern organizations, as it has been since time immemorial, because management's dominant goal is to maximize profits (Mojalefa, 2021), whereas labor's primary concern is to guarantee and uphold the highest level of wages and the best working conditions for their employees. According to Makinde (2013), the root causes of conflict are unable to be noticed solely by examining the organization and what happens within it. Managerial, employee, and collective aspirations for organizational norms mediate a wide range of structures, processes, values, and norms found outside the organization. External financial variables such as price and wage posture, advancements in technology, market conditions, or the industrial framework can influence managerial action on the normative system; social forces such as increasing public expectations of executive performance, membership in employers' associations, trade union membership, or political variables such as laws and policies implemented by the government. Collectivity desires can be influenced by those of larger collectivities that are externally related to events in the economic and social landscape as a whole, as well as changes in other organizations (Girigiri & Badom, 2021).

Within the organization, the translation of these external stimuli into effective action upon the social organization, via the perceptions and aspirations of individuals or collectivities, is differently shaped by their location (Girigiri & Badom, 2021). This is inherently tied to the social organization and access to power, individually or collectively applied. Thus, aspirations constantly interact with the nature of the division of labour and the distribution of power produce patterns of conflict. Ibukun (2019) emphasized that conflict takes place at multiple levels among and between the various players, including workers, employers/management, and the government. Certain conflicts are related in the industrial framework. Conflicts regarding stakes among the various groups are constant and strong enough to result in prolonged work stoppages. The three primary actors in an organization develop distinct briefings and perceptions of what is important to them (Fejoh et al., 2021). The pursuit of competing goals by each at the cost of others causes severe friction, which leads to strikes/lockouts. These groups, whether organized or unorganized, express their conflicts in a variety of ways, some of which are overt and others covert. Other factors that could lead to conflict or discontent according to Girigiri and Badom (2021) include, dispute within the union, and workers' awareness of their union officials' wrongful use of union funds, as well as compromise when bargaining union issues with management. It may end up being the

primary cause in a strike (especially if workers' grievances about their circumstances are not considered serious by management).

One single event that had a significant negative impact on industrial relations within the nation between labor and government, as well as the economy, was the constant increase in the price of petrol and diesel, in spite of the fact that our nation, Nigeria, is one of the world's largest producers (Nwankwo et al., 2023). The tactical significance of having these products available at affordable prices for Nigeria's socioeconomic activities cannot be overstated. The consequences of this are that a rise in their prices has a negative impact on the prices of other commodities, transportation, and, ultimately, the population's standard of living (Girigiri and Badom, 2021). This is supported by Badom (2019), who found that an upsurge in the price of petroleum-based goods owing to its scarcity, which are extensions of oil and gas workers' industrial actions, triggered increased prices of agricultural products and increased fare. It is therefore, not unexpected that the attempted privatization of the downstream industries of the petroleum industry combined with the government's preference to constantly increasing the pump cost of oil and gas products creates a dramatic running battle between trade union and the state.

Badom, Anele, and Badey (2018) argue that Marxian conflict analysis is based on a constant battle of power between employees and their superiors over control of various aspects of work. This leads to disparities in the distribution of the organization's proceeds, job insecurity for workers, and ineffective management control strategies. Marx contended that economic influences, rather than human ideas, ideals, or values, are the primary causes of conflict as well as social change in organizations or societies. This presupposes that good industrial harmony is primarily based on economic (material) well-being of the workers. Looking at the above, perhaps, it seems very clearly that one of the constant industrial conflicts in Nigeria is due largely because of her workers poor economic (material) condition and dehumanizing nature of the working environment. As Oguwa (2022) stated, the interests of social collaborators are not entirely mutual. For example, the employer represents and mainly deals with a property interest, which is closely linked to the financial interests of a small number of shareholders. The employees' organization or union is primarily concerned with workers' material, spiritual, social, as well as psychological needs. The preceding demonstrates that employers, including their managers, on one side, and employees on the other, have diagonally divergent goals at all times, resulting in an unavoidable conflict situation.

Mukoro (2013) lends credence to this view, that the pattern of industrial relations in Nigeria has been conflictual in nature with disruptive

consequences and significant work-stoppages. Various reasons and explanations have been adduced as to why the relationship between labour and management is conflict ridden. Consequently, labour and management have developed a web of rules to govern their day-to-day interactions so as to promote harmonious relationship between them. Different conflict handling mechanisms have also been developed to minimize the occurrence and reoccurrence of industrial disharmony in tertiary institutions. Collective bargaining, work-floor democracy and other grievance management procedures were introduced to induce industrial harmony. Despite these innovations, industrial disputes seem to be assuming unprecedented level in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This study therefore examined the impacts of industrial disharmony on tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Disputes in Nigerian universities date back to the 1960s, when first-republic politicians attempted unsuccessfully to change the before independence legal image of the university system by putting universities under unwarranted government control. Starting in 1973, university lecturers went on strike. During the dictatorship of General Yakubu Gowon, university staff went on strike to demand better working conditions as a result of the deplorable conditions left behind by the Nigerian civil war. In 1980, Alhaji Shehu Shagari led another wave of strikes. When Obasanjo, the then-president, became president in 1999, ASUU demanded that the 1992 agreement be implemented (Abolo & Oguntoye, 2020).

Pressure from university staff resulted in the FGN and ASUU consensus of 2001. Following a series of appeals to the FGN for the enactment of the 2001 Agreement, ASUU called on its members to go on a total and endless nationwide strike on December 29, 2002. FGN's failure to fulfil its own part of the contract by using an avoidance strategy resulted in another three-day alerting strike on April 24, 2006. The successful election of President Yar'Adua in 2007 gave academics hope, but this was short-lived because nothing was done to put the agreement into effect. Following several unsuccessful negotiations, the employees went on endless strike in 2009. The 2009 strike can be termed the highest over time as it further involved all the facets of the university including NASU (Ndubuisi-Okolo et al., 2022).

The suspended 2009 strike could only be described as a repeat of the past, as the technical committee/inter-ministerial panel undermined the previously reached agreement; failure by the state to honor the 2009 agreement. The ASUU national body joined the strike in June 2010, after all attempts to persuade the five East-South State Governors to relent failed. Ubabukoh (2011) refers to this as the university staff union strikes because it affects all university unions. The issue of strikes, which has

been a perennial problem, did not appear to have abated. The federal government has ignored the universities' repeated calls for the complete implementation of the 2010 agreement (Odoh & Moluno, 2023). As usual in the circle of the university's conflicts, ASUU decided to drive home their demands in a one-week warning strike in September 26th, 2011. NASU also followed with their warning strike effective from 3rd October. The song of victory is yet to be sung as the universities launched a full blown nationwide indefinite strike from December 5th, 2011 to February 2nd, 2012. Conflicts in the Nigerian federal universities continue due to most unfulfilled agreements (Abolo & Oguntoye, 2020).

Odoh and Moluno (2023) define staff effectiveness as a worker's total input into their duties. It entails the general dexterity of staff in performing their duties in order to achieve organizational goals. This includes employee behavior, skills, competence, morale, connections with coworkers, and the ability to follow guidelines from management without stress. The work environment is typically a collection of people and organizations from various cultural, social, political, and economic backgrounds. Given this situation, employees' interests and expectations in organizations are bound to diverge (Igbaji, 2019). These differences in staff are reflected in their unique responses to responsibilities during conflicts. Workers' collective interest is represented through expressions by the workers' trade unions like ASUU and NASU in the universities. Workers performance during or after conflicts is typically an indication of the degree to which university unions persuade employees to respond to issues that have yet to be resolved. According to Adejuwon (2020), this would manifest as a variety of work attitudes, including low or high morale, inaction, or a lack of enthusiasm for duties. Because most conflicts arise as a result of workers' demands for better treatment, the continuation of conflicts has an impact on workers' productivity and, ultimately, hinders the accomplishment of organizational goals. Most employers have had a hostile attitude towards trade unions, particularly in higher education establishments where the administration (state or federal) serves as both employer and umpire. The union therefore finds it difficult to persuade unsatisfied and unwilling workers to increase their productivity to enable organizations achieve their goals (Adejuwon, 2020).

The educational segment, specifically tertiary institutions (universities), in Nigeria has recently experienced a series of industrial unrests. The consequences of recurred and abrupt closures of universities owing to industrial deception on academic programmes and the objectives for which they were developed can be better understood. Educational standards are now thought to be questionable. Many academic timetables in universities have become disorganized, with some

semesters being lost (Abolo & Oguntoye, 2020). Students' academic performance has dropped significantly, while different types of exam misconduct are on the rise. The situation has reached such alarming proportions that the general populace now reproaches the 'ivory towers' of producing graduates who lack the moral fibre to contribute towards the development and growth of the country. In the opinion of Odoh & Moluno (2023), empirical findings show that conflicts have a negative impact on organizational performance and the use of scarce resources. Similarly, organizational conflicts, such as those found in Nigerian universities, can have a positive impact on innovation and decision-making quality in the institutions. In addition, conflicts foster a spirit of collaboration and camaraderie among employees. This occurs especially when the staff of the universities come together to resolve the conflict. Between 1994 and 2023, the ASUU went on strike for approximately 47 months. Recurrent strikes have been among the major barriers to higher education in Nigeria. According to Chukwuka (2013), industrial conflict increased the average number of years students were anticipated to remain at university before graduating. During periods of labour unrest, the majority of pupils would have engaged in anti-social behaviour such as political brutality, armed burglary, illicit drug trade, abduction, and prostitution. The majority of Nigerians are not unaware of industrial strikes often embarked on by ASUU and NASU (Non- Academic Staff Union) (Odoh & Moluno, 2023). It appears dissatisfied with the way in which industrial strikes frequently paralyse academic activities in universities, with strong challenges to the viewed neglect of students who have been writing or protecting their research projects. Four-year courses are frequently extended to more than five years. Parents and observers typically blame either ASUU for being overly demanding in their protests or governments for failing to fund education adequately. Whatever the case, when the two elephants fight, the greenery suffers, as do the innocent students, who are partially sponsored by their parents. Unfortunately, the constant dispute over wages in our institutions of higher learning has a negative impact on the quality of education (Ndubuisi-Okolo et al., 2022).

In October 2010, all universities in Nigeria's Southeast zone went on indefinite strike, demanding the enforcement of the agreements ratified with ASUU, especially regarding salary and allowances. According to a report in the national newspapers, all tertiary institutions in Kwara State (one of Nigeria's 36 states) have gone on strike, demanding the complete execution of the Consolidated Polytechnics and Colleges of Education Salary Structure (CONPCASS) and the Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure (CONTEDISS), which take effect in January 2009. Of recent, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) declared a strike over the non-implementation of the

agreements reached with Federal Government since year 2023. The strike lasted for almost ten months and was suspended during the last week of March, 2023 (Odoh & Moluno, 2023). These are few cases of strikes that occurred in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The internal effectiveness of Nigerian universities has been harmed by frequent labor unrest. Labor unrest in Nigerian universities can take many forms, including disruptions to the academic calendar, intimidation, lockouts, strikes, picketing, and boycotts. To express their dissatisfaction with management's display of superiority and indifference to workers' plights, organized labour has recently used a variety of pressure tactics, including strike measures, picketing, boycotts, overtime bans, intimidation, active non-compliance (ANC), and a slew of others. Thus, industrial conflict has become a recurring issue in all sectors of the Nigerian economy including the educational sub-sector with attendant negative consequences for various stakeholders (Odoh & Moluno, 2023).

Various factors identified by scholars as primary causes of labor unrest in Nigeria include:

- i. Perceived Low Income:** A basic salary is a reward for employees to increase productivity and stay on the job, especially if it is commensurate with their labor. According to Ajewole (2014), Nigeria has generated more than \$300 billion in oil revenue over the last 25 years, after subtracting payments to foreign companies. Between 2004 and 2007, oil revenue totaled \$112 billion, while in 2008, the nation earned \$57 billion from oil and gas. The total oil revenue generated up to April 2008 was estimated at \$500 billion. Nonetheless, the country is impoverished, ranking as one of the world's poorest. Over 70% of the nation's population lives below the poverty line due to inequitable distribution of the national resources, restricted access to social services such as education and public health care.
- ii. Hike of Fuel Price:** The rise in fuel prices has been recognized as another major cause of strikes in our institutions. In accordance with Chukwuka (2013), in 2007, during Olusegun Obasanjo's regime, the Nigerian Labor Congress went on a nationwide strike to protest the increase in fuel prices, with the goal of fighting for the interests of Nigerian citizens, who are the primary consumers of the product.
- iii. Industrial and Economic Policies:** As stated by Igbaji (2019), potential external factors of industrial conflict include the government's industrial as well as economic policies, the scope

of labour regulations, the conduct of the economic and political groups, and national economic poor management.

- iv. **Lack of Conducive working conditions:** Unions in Nigerian universities often embark on industrial strike because of their perception on poor working conditions such as obsolete laboratory equipment, inadequate offices, and lack of research grants and shortage of power supply.
- v. **Reinstatement of the Sacked Lecturers:** For example, there was a conflict at the University of Ilorin between the university authority, which was backed by the Federal Government, and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) University of Ilorin (UNILORIN) branch. The immediate cause of the conflict was that the University of Ilorin Authority fired 49 lecturers for participating in a National Strike called by ASUU in defiance of the university's position. The dismissed lecturers proceeded to court to seek for redress. And the court ruled to the advantage of the dismissed lecturers. But despite legal victory, the Lecturers were not reinstated. The National body of ASUU went on strike severally over the non-re-instatement of the sacked Lecturers and the issue of re-negotiation of agreement reached with Federal Government in 2001 (Akingbehin, 2014).
- vi. **Federal Government/ASUU 1999 Signed Agreement:** Another factor is the Federal Government's failure to implement the agreement it signed with ASUU. Some labor agitations include allegations that one of the parties affected has refused to follow the terms of the parties' agreement. The benefits were part of the union's 2009 agreement with the federal government (Akingbehin, 2014).
- vii. **Payment of Entitlements:** As reported by Akingbehin (2014), workers have threatened to go on strike in order to demand payment of government-approved entitlements such as allowances. For example, the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) threatened to go on strike if the 2013 budget did not include its members' allowances. All of these factors, among others, usually lead to the cessation of work by unions in Nigerian universities, which will keep going until solutions are proposed.
- viii. **National Minimum Wage by the Federal Government:** In August 2011, the Nigeria Labor Congress went on a nationwide signaling strike over the Federal Government's failure to implement the new national minimum wage promised by

President Goodluck Jonathan during his presidential campaign (Chukwuka, 2013).

However, effective conflict resolution can lead to improved staff performance as well as better interactions within the organization. Staff participation, innovativeness, and productivity would all improve if conflict was properly managed. The education sector is not an exception. Therefore, the leadership of public institutions ought to strengthen their conflict management techniques in order to have a greater awareness of conflict in the university. Service quality, operational effectiveness, and both informal and formal student training and teaching have been recognized as indicators for assessing administrative staff performance in higher education establishments (Ologunde, Akindele, & Akande, 2013). According to Abba and Mugizi (2018), the roles of teaching, research/publication, and community service are critical to the development of any nation on a global scale because they promote charitable work, financial literacy, health, and decreased crime in communities. Research, which is one of the reasons for the establishment of universities, resulting to the creation of new knowledge, fostering innovation, improving service quality, and increasing university status as well as economic value, has regrettably suffered a significant decline in Nigerian universities as a result of conflict (Dickson & Biriowu, 2020). Thus, in order for the university to achieve the needed research results, conflict must be dealt with effectively.

As things stand, the government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) are unable to come to an agreement. The issue is still present and needs to be resolved appropriately for the university community to breathe the sweet scent of industrial peace. This scenario demonstrates how the government's careless attitude has exacerbated industrial discord and slowed down the steady pace of academic profundity that academic experts in the university system have projected. In spite of the listed obstacles, a variety of conflict resolution techniques have been developed to lessen the impact of the industrial discord in Nigerian universities. To promote industrial harmony in Nigerian universities, work-floor democracy, collective bargaining, and other grievance management techniques have been implemented. Unflinchingly, ASUU has tried to resolve her differences with the Federal Government of Nigeria, but to no avail. Instead, an unprecedented level of industrial disharmony appears to be developing. Given the aforementioned circumstances, workers are displaying careless attitudes towards their jobs, which include irritable behaviour as well as appearance, moodiness, anxiety, unneeded stress, insubordination, and similar traits (Odoh & Moluno, 2023).

Effects of Labor Unrest in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

The costs of labor disputes have consistently outweighed the benefits. Labor unrest has a negative impact on Nigerian universities' ability to achieve their goals. The adverse impacts of disharmony on Nigerian tertiary institutions, include reduced academic productivity, a decline in the quality of graduates, infrastructural decay, and loss of public trust in higher education. Others include:

Disruption of Academic Calendar: The academic calendars of most Nigerian universities are irregular. Many state and federal universities have lost one or more academic sessions. As a result, four-year courses are frequently extended to five or six years due to school closures caused by industrial strikes. Igbaji (2019) lamented that educational standards are now considered questionable. Many academic calendars in universities have been disorganized, resulting in the loss of some academic sessions. Students' academic performance has dropped significantly, while various forms of examination malpractice are said to be on the rise.

Retardation of the Economic: An ongoing strike causes student to repeat, drop out, waste, and brain drain, all of which have an adverse effect on economic growth. Anyim, Chidi, and Ogunyomi (2012) noted that trade disputes, such as strikes, have a significant impact on the smooth as well as orderly development of the economy, as well as the maintenance of law and order in society. They occasionally elicit reactions from the public because they may harm the public in addition to the parties involved in the conflict.

Financial Losses: All stakeholders in university education - the government, parents, and students - suffer monetary harm as a result of the ongoing labour unrest. For example, the government is required to pay the salaries of employees even while they were on strike. Parents will also have to continue nourishing their children and paying their rents. Barinem and Porbari (2021) observe that employers, particularly in the public sector, rarely use the no-work, no-pay rule, perhaps because employers are usually to blame for failing to prevent a looming strike. In the words of Igbaji (2019), the government suffers financial losses as a result of school closures, while students and parents suffer intangible losses. They further submitted that the above anomaly has contributed in no small measure to a steady decline in the quality of education as some students resorted to examination malpractice to make up for the lost time during conflicts in schools especially where these have resulted to closures.

Dropout, brain drain and educational Wastage: Strikes incur costs such as lost production or output, disruptions in essential services (oil, electricity, and banking), capacity underutilization, scarcity and high costs of essential items, unemployment, and manpower contraction,

among others. A strike-prone country is unlikely to attract foreign investors, as this index has become a critical factor for foreign industrialists and multinational corporations. However, it may be instructive to note that regardless of whether the dispute staged is deemed successful or not, some damage must have occurred, and parties and the public must bear the costs (Anyim et al., 2012).

Mutual Bargaining as a Mechanism for Compromise

Collective bargaining is characterized as all negotiations and consultations held between employers and workers represented by unions to determine all aspects of working conditions, including wages, job security, welfare, and work production. The relative bargaining power possessed and demonstrated by each requires the other party to be aware of the implications of its actions and to think bilaterally (Badom, 2019). Collective bargaining is the process by which an employer or employers and a group of employees reach an agreement on working conditions (Armstrong, 2012). Accordingly, Makinde (2013) defines collective bargaining as a mechanism for discussion as well as negotiation, whether formal or informal, between employer(s) and worker representatives with the goal of reaching an acceptable compromise or understanding on the general working relationship that exists between employer(s) and workers. As a result, acknowledging this power grants one the right to be heard. In effect, each party makes a decision based on the potential reactions of the other party. Collective bargaining creates what is commonly known as industrial legal doctrine in the workplace. The basis of collective bargaining is shared responsibility of work roles by the union and management, which results in a collective agreement. The collective agreement specifies the rights and obligations of workers individually and management against the arbitrary treatment/ regimentation of the union leadership (Badom et al., 2018).

It is worthy of note that collective agreement has a built-in flexibility to provide for issues not covered by the collective agreement. Another way the collective bargaining introduces industrial harmony in the workplace is that through their union made up of their elected representatives, the individual worker makes contributions to the union relations with the management. In effect, the point being made is that collective bargaining therefore provides the means by which workers influence the industrial relations policy of management through logical and informed ideas when dialoguing collectively (Badom, 2019). Collective bargaining has really helped the employers to gain insight into the problems and aspirations of the workers, while the workers on their own come to know more about the economic and technical problems of management (Mojalefa, 2021). It is also wise to note that, through the time consuming and tortuous process of collective bargaining, the emotionally charged

workers or their representatives (Trade union) and employers or their representatives have time to cool-off and soften their problems. Thus, this has paved way for industrial democracy and peaceful coexistence (Albert & Yahaya, 2013; Adele, 2022).

According to Makinde (2013), collective bargaining is based on the principle that workers have a right to contract with their employers as to ways and conditions of work and that the employer recognize that right. In effect, it serves as a system of wage and condition of service determination in which the employer shares administrative decision-making responsibilities with the union. The collective bargaining process manifests the power relationship between unions and employers on issues directly affecting conditions of employment. It is also a means of limiting unilateral decisions and actions by employers and government. Strong, stable, and well-focused and democratic unions expand the scope of collective bargaining and thereby strengthen industrial democracy and harmony. Badom (2019) posits that collective bargaining is in fact a multifaceted institution which internationally has diverse meanings and functions. In addition to rulemaking, which reduces the degree of uncertainty confronting workers and management, it can also be a vehicle for resolving disputes, a power relationship, a form of joint industrial government and channel to addressing conflict. A central integrating mechanism viewed as medium that provides industrial harmony and peaceful industrial atmosphere at resolving conflicting matters at workplace between trade unions i.e. workers' representatives and management which represent employers' interests (Abolo & Oguntoye, 2020).

Barinem and Porbari (2021) remarked that collective bargaining is a process that replaces the individual worker's usually feeble attempt to gain improvements for himself, and is rather based upon the cumulative and pooled experience of many workers, thrashed out through their union, co-ordinate into a single programme, and backed by their collective strength; and it is bargaining; because at any one time the programme is adoptable to the practical situation, and because there is a constant process of give and take of experience and of views, and positions. The knowledge of both trade unions and management in collective bargaining issues being that of complementary, where 'each side yielding in and gaining at a point then the end result has the more practical strength of both point of views; richer and more pointed to the collective issues that informed the bargaining between parties (Mayowa, 2015).

Again, collective bargaining presumes mutual consent and recognition by parties concerned through their representatives of each party interest. In the instance, a measure of autonomy and the right of such interests are certainly to be protected against trespassing each other's rights. The

protection of interest assumes a capacity to do so, namely, an element of power, which is assumed to be fairly distributed, hence making possible a bargaining situation (Osamwonyi & Ugiagbe, 2013). The above point to the fact that the matters were collectively discussed, analyzed and finally agreed upon and it will be binding on all parties. No individual workers can at any point be punished and/or on his/her own challenge management on issues covered in the bargaining except management acting counter wise with a sinister motive to undermine the collective but agreeable decision reached.

Conflict Management through Arbitration

Arbitration is an alternative method to resolve conflicts with one or more arbitrators. It is a more agile way than a judicial process and it is common in commercial contracts which include a clause that states that any problems that may arise between parties in a contract may be solved by arbitration. An arbitration process is a quicker process than a trial. The law provides that the arbitration may be in law, equity or technical. The referees dictate their decision on the basis of their specific knowledge of a particular issue, trade or science (Ogochukwu & Eberinwa, 2014). They further added that the parties may agree who will be in charge of the arbitration procedure. Also, the parties may freely determine the place of arbitration but usually the arbitration institution decides which will take place.

The arbitration process shall not exceed five months duration unless the parties or the arbitrator decide to prolong it. The active role of arbitrators is very important in the arbitration process because they are the ones who carry out the process, determine what evidence will be accepted and valued and at the end they dictate the arbitration award which will end the conflict. The award has the force equivalent to a court order and the parties must comply with it (Osamwonyi & Ugiagbe, 2013). Arbitrators must meet certain requirements to serve as arbitrators and when they accept their position, they assume the obligation to fulfill its function with "dedication and commitment" and as well the responsibility to repair damages caused to third parties by their fault or negligence (Obianuju, Emmanuel & Anzor, 2016).

Before going under an arbitration process, it is essential that the parties know about the arbitration clause and also about the arbitration law which will govern the whole process. The arbitration procedure is generally, time consuming but it has the advantage of encouraging parties. In the interim, the Head of State or the Minister of labour can make the arbitration obligatory and binding if the possibility of a strike action is considered familial to public order or against the general interest, as in cases involving essential service (Osamwonyi & Ugiagbe, 2013).

However, according to Barinem & Porbari, 2021), a positive approach to organizational conflict is that it is absolutely necessary. Accordingly, opposition to ideas should be explicitly encouraged and both the stimulation and resolution of conflict should be encouraged. Even if this view is not hold by, management conflict in organizations is inevitable. This inevitability of conflict is caused by forces residing both inside and outside the organization. The external environments of the organization sometime change in ways that necessitate a reshuffling of priorities and resources allocation among internal subunits and stimulate shifts in the balance of power and patterns of influence between them. Therefore, instead of avoiding conflict, organizations should endeavour to manage or reduce them to the benefit of the organization (Dickson & Biriowu, 2020). There are several managerial strategies used in managing conflict, and essentially, they are directed at its cause, these include:

- i. **Controlling the Issue in Dispute:** The attempt here is to control the issue in an attempt to resolve the dispute. This involves separating issues into their smallest components and dealing with them separately in attempt to make it easier to resolve major disputes. Fractioning conflict issues help to avoid stalemate by making it possible for one party to concede on one issue without feeling it has lost the contest.
- ii. **Controlling the Context:** To minimize conflict that arises out of organizational design and layout strategies, management must formulate sound procedural strategies to institutionalize and channel conflict. If conflicts are inevitable and normal in organizational life, then proper procedures for solving them must be established.
- iii. **Controlling the Relationship Directly:** In adapting this strategy, management hopes to change the attitudes of the group members or individuals toward each other. This approach is more functional in inter-group conflict. Management directly intervenes in the dispute by physically separating the unit involved on holding direct negotiations between the units or individual or formally requiring intense interaction.
- iv. **Altering the Individual Involved:** Because altering the individual personality is much more difficult than altering his position in the organization, it may be feasible to swap the individuals in dispute.
- v. **Develop a Common Set of Goal:** Much of the conflict between groups in any social organization arises because the subsystems have different goals. Most managers are rewarded through pay increases, promotions etc to the extent that they accomplish the

goals and the objectives of their particular subsystem which is concerned about making itself look good and is also concerned about working with other subsystems towards common goals and objectives. An approach known as the “the organizational confrontation meeting” is developed by Beckhard to encourage organizational subsystems to work towards establishing and striving for common goals (Abba & Mugizi, 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Disharmony within Nigerian tertiary institutions continue to impede their ability to fulfill their mandate of producing skilled manpower and contributing to national development. From frequent strikes and poor communication between institutional management and staff to political interference and ethnic divisions, the challenges are multifaceted. The impact on academic performance, student life, and institutional reputation is profound, creating a ripple effect on society at large. Without concerted efforts to tackle the root causes, disharmony will persist, threatening the future of higher education in Nigeria. The study recommended that addressing disharmony requires collaborative efforts between government, management of institutions, staff unions, and students. By promoting inclusivity, strengthening institutional autonomy, and ensuring effective conflict management mechanisms, Nigerian tertiary institutions can foster a more harmonious and productive academic environment:

1. **Strengthening Institutional Autonomy:** The federal and state governments should grant more autonomy to tertiary institutions to reduce political interference in decision-making processes, thereby fostering more stable environments.
2. **Improved Communication Channels:** Universities should establish effective communication frameworks that allow for transparent and consistent dialogue between management, staff, and students to address grievances promptly before they escalate into full-blown crises.
3. **Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Institutions should establish permanent conflict resolution bodies with representatives from management, staff, and students to mediate disputes in a timely and fair manner.
4. **Enhancement of Funding:** Increased and timely funding from the government is critical to ensuring that institutions can maintain their infrastructure, provide competitive salaries, and reduce the need for strikes over unmet financial demands.

5. **Promotion of Inclusivity and Diversity:** Policies aimed at fostering inclusivity and unity within the institutions should be strengthened to reduce the influence of ethnic and religious divisions among staff and students.
6. **Capacity Building for Leadership:** Regular leadership training for university administrators should be encouraged, equipping them with the skills to manage conflicts effectively and create harmonious work and learning environments.

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