



Mediating Roles of Negotiation on Strike Management in Nigerian Public Institutions

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Abstract

Strike causes setback to the development of Nigerian public institutions, however the role and place of negotiation in the management of strikes has been a subject of academic discussions. There is need for more investment in peaceful talks in order to improve workers' performance and productivity. This study examined the effects of negotiation, especially, arbitration resolution and legal resolution strategies on the management of strikes among Nigerian public institutions, with a focus on Federal University, Oye- Ekiti. The study randomly selected 150 academic and 120 non-academic staff of the University, this gives a total 270 respondents. Data was collected with questionnaire, with 255 copies retrieved and analysed using Chi-square. Results show that negotiation is often adopted in dispute resolutions, and it has significantly affect the management of strikes in the institution, hence, the need to encourage the use of negotiation as a primary strategy for resolving strikes in Nigerian public institutions. This can be done by adopting and streamlining the arbitration process to reduce costs and delays; consider alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods.

Keywords: Management; arbitration; institution;; negotiation, strike; legal.

1. Introduction

Strike is the refusal to work by staff and it is usually organised and staged by unions. Deliberate management of strike could curb a lot of industrial imbalance in organization. Normally, workers respond negatively to issues perceived as unjust, and over the time, the Nigerian labour system has been thoroughly destroyed by strike actions (Iregbemi and Uzonwanne, 2015). Many unions believe that the only way to get solutions to their problems is for them to embark on strike. Although, strike may create temporary difficulties for workers as there may be stoppage of salaries but in most cases, the employers and the employees would have explored all avenues for dialogue, and when strikes becomes the last option for the settlement of disputes, there is no other way than to embark on strike. The most significant aspect of industrial actions according to Adeyemi (2015) is strike. Strike usually takes place in response to employees' grievances and is exercised by pressure groups such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), and Academic Staff Union of College of Education (ASUCE) and National Association of Nigeria Students (NANS).

1.1 Statement of problem

Strike management remains a major challenge affecting institution of higher learning, most especially among public institution in Nigeria and this calls for necessary proactive solutions to address the negative drift. On this note The effects of strikes have been felt greatly by management and employees of both public and private sectors all over the world (Adeyemi, 2015). For example, strike actions has affected the performance of employees in many of the Nigerian business organisations, and to a large extent, it has been responsible for the backward economy of the nation (Carson, 2012; Lawal and Oluwatoyin, (2011). The role and place of negotiation in the management of strikes have been felt greatly by many business organisations in the western world. Despite the veracity of negotiation in building peaceful coexistence among management and staff of many business organisations, Nigerian tertiary institutions have nevertheless suffered serious consequences due to the neglect of negotiation while addressing critical issues. This paper hereby examines the effect of negotiation in management of strikes towards workers' performance, with focus on Federal University of Technology, Oye-Ekiti.



1.2 Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to examine the effects of negotiation on management of strike in Nigerian public institutions, while the specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the effectiveness of arbitration resolution strategy on strike management among Nigerian public institutions.
- ii. assess the effectiveness of legal intervention resolution strategy on strike management among Nigerian public institutions.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions are to be answered by the study.

- i. How does arbitration resolution strategy affect strike management among Nigeria public institutions?
- ii. Does legal intervention resolution strategy affect strike management among Nigeria public institutions?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this study are stated in their null forms as follow.

- i. Arbitration resolution strategy does not have significant effect on strike management among Nigeria public institutions.
- ii. Legal intervention resolution strategy does not have effect on strike management among Nigeria public institutions.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical review

According to Akeem (2010), strike generally could be seen as activities embarked upon by staff to show or express their grievances towards certain inadequacies on the job. There are many theories of strikes, and they follow after some known perspectives, such as the unitary perspective, the classical perspective, the interactions perspective, and the pluralistic perspective. A more recent view of conflict is the interactionism perspective which believes that conflict is a positive force and necessary for effective performance. This approach encourages a minimum level of conflict within the group in order to encourage self-prevent apathy or too great a tolerance for harmony and status quo (Ojo, 2007). Conflict parse is not necessarily good or bad but inevitable feature of organisational life and should be judged in

terms of its effects on performance. Even if organisation has taken great care to try and avoid conflict, it will still occur. Conflict must continue to emerge despite attempts to suppress it.

Egbere, (2004) asserts that business enterprise must build a true team through harmonising individual efforts into a common effort. The unitary perspective believes that each member of the enterprise must contribute towards a common goal. Their effort must all pull in the same direction, and their contributions must fit together to produce a whole without unnecessary duplication of efforts (Dim *et al* 2017).

Odunola, and Kolade, (2012). Negotiation is a process involving two or more parties discussing and attempting to reach an agreement on a particular issue. In the context of strike management, negotiation typically involves representatives from management and labor unions. Arbitration a formal process where a neutral third party, the arbitrator, makes a binding decision to resolve a dispute. Arbitration is often used as an alternative to legal intervention (Otto and Ukpere, 2012). Legal Intervention is use of legal remedies, such as injunctions or court orders, to resolve disputes. Legal intervention is typically used as a last resort when other methods fail. However, by examining the effectiveness of these different resolution strategies, the study aims to provide insights into the best practices for managing strikes in Nigerian public institutions and to identify areas for improvement (Joseph, O. 2014).

According to Ugwuanyi (2014), if one accepts the views of social writers and the idea of a pluralistic approach to work organisation, then, conflict among competing subgroups will be seen as an inherent feature of organization and induced in part by the very structure of the organisation. The pluralistic manger is more likely to accept that conflict in organisation requires careful handling and attempts to reconcile rival interests.

2.2 Empirical Review

Strike indicates a breakdown of cordial relationship between labour and management and is usually the one aspect of industrial relations that invites the most negative commentary (Carson, 2012) yet it performs useful functions for the two sides of industry. When a union calls out on its members to strike (Iregbenu, 2015), it is in the belief that strike will exert pressure on the employer (and



sometimes indirectly on government) to take a desired action, such as conceding a demand for improvement in terms of employment, or ameliorating an unsatisfactory work condition. All strikes, whether orthodox or political, fit into this description. According to Ezeudo (2013), most strikes involve attempts by either the union or management to change the bargaining position of the other party. When properly used, a strike can force management to concede the demand of the union, it can also impose exorbitant costs and thereby induce employees to reach agreement (Joseph, 2014).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is adjudged to be appropriate for this study because it provides an accurate account of the

behaviour, opinions, beliefs and knowledge of a particular individual or group through the use of questionnaire.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises of 150 academic staff and 120 non-academic staff to make a total 270 respondents from Federal University, Oye- Ekiti, out of 255 responses were recorded and analyzed.

3.3 Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using Chi-square with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences Software (SPSS) 27, for the purpose of analyzing the effects between the variables under investigation.

Hypothesis 1

Negotiation is not effective in dispute resolutions in the Nigerian public institutions.

Table1: Chi-Square testing the adoption of arbitration resolution strategy in the Nigerian public institutions. (n = 255)

ITEM	N	DF(V)	X ² C	X ² T	SIGNIFICANT
Strongly Agree	217	4	9.864	9.587	Significant
Strongly Disagree	30				
Undecided	8				
P<0.05	255				

Hypothesis 2

Legal intervention does not affect management of strikes in Nigerian public institutions.

Table 2: Chi-square testing the effects of legal intervention on strike management in Nigerian public institutions.(n = 255)

Items	N	DF(V)	X ² C	X ² t	Significance
Strongly Agree	193	4	10.125	9.488	Significant
Strongly Disagree	38				
Undecided	24				
P>0.05	255				

Findings

The study revealed that negotiation is the preferred strategy for managing strikes in the institution of study, and due to its potentials of finding mutually agreeable solutions, it is found to be effective in the management of strike actions in the organisation. Hence, arbitration has been seen to have positive effects and served as a good strategy for resolving complex disputes, as it provides a binding decision from a neutral third party. Secondly, legal intervention is found to be typically used as a last resort when other strategies have failed. Meanwhile, while it can provide a definitive resolution, legal intervention can be costly and

time-consuming, and it may not always address the underlying causes of the dispute.

Conclusion

The study hereby concluded that the choice of resolution strategy in strike management among Nigerian public institutions depends on a variety of factors, including the nature of the dispute, the power dynamics between parties, and the availability of resources. Negotiation, arbitration, and legal intervention each have been discovered to have effects on strike management in the public institution of study, nevertheless, these strategies have their own strengths and weaknesses, and the most effectively adopted strategy by any institution



can vary depending on the specific circumstances they face.

Recommendations

In order to effectively manage strike in public institutions, the promotion of negotiation is hereby recommended. Nigerian public institutions should encourage the use of negotiation as a primary strategy for resolving strikes, and engage professional negotiators in the process. Also, the need to improve the efficiency of arbitration is highly recommended, this can be done by streamlining the arbitration process to reduce costs and delays. Finally, it is recommended that alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods is adopted by exploring other ADR methods, such as mediation and conciliation, as potential alternatives to arbitration.

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