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Collective Bargaining Strategy and Industrial Harmony of Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Bayelsa State: The Issue of Compromise and Collaboration as Correlates

¹ John Mark

² Atasi, Doubara

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^{1,2} Faculty of Management Sciences,
Department Of Management, Rivers State
University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract: The study examined the relationship between collective bargaining strategies and industrial harmony in Bayelsa state civil service, Nigeria. Collaboration and compromise strategies were used as the empirical referent of collective bargaining while industrial democracy, joint consultation, absence of frequent grievance and absence of incessant strike were used as measures of industrial harmony. Organizational culture was used as the moderating variable for the study. The researchers collected data on micro level unit of analysis using a five point likert scale questionnaire titled: collective bargaining strategy and industrial harmony questionnaire". The questionnaire was validated via face validity, content validity and construct validity while cronbach alpha was used to test for reliability. The data collected was analyzed at different levels. For innate level data, descriptive analytical tools precisely frequency tables supported with charts were used for analyzing the demographic characteristics of the samples while for secondary data analysis, descriptive statistics was employed for univariate analyses of the data and for tertiary level data, inferential statistical tool, i.e. Pearson product moment coefficient of correlation was used to test the relationship between collective bargaining strategies and industrial harmony while partial correlation was used to test for the presence of moderating influence of organizational culture on the association between collective bargaining strategies and industrial harmony. These analyses were conducted using a computer software package, statistical package for social sciences version 22.0 and Microsoft excel.

Key words: Industrial Harmony, Collective Bargaining collaboration strategy, compromise strategy.

The result of the findings revealed that collaboration and compromise strategies significantly influenced industrial democracy, joint consultation and absence of frequent grievance and very highly influenced absence of incessant strike. Based on the empirical findings, the researchers then concluded that collective bargaining strategies strongly enhanced industrial democracy, moderately influenced joint consultation and absence of frequent grievance and very highly influenced absence of incidence of strike. The researchers then recommend that administrators of Bayelsa state civil service should, at some level, adopt compromise and collaboration as collective bargaining strategies in order to achieve harmony in their organizations.

Introduction

There has been a growing fear about strained labour-management relations in Nigeria in the recent times. This concern arises from the need to improve relations and particularly collective bargaining process in developing countries. Throughout the introduction of the subject matter, industry is taken to mean firms and organizations that are into the business of manufacturing, construction, and production and such organizations are primarily in operation for the purpose of making profit. However, civil service as used in this context means government owned organizations (agencies/parastatals), managed and financed by the government and are open to serve the public/citizens. Such organizations might not necessarily be in operation for the purpose of making profit. Also, majority of civil service organizations are service-oriented compared to production/manufacturing industry. Going by this, collective bargaining then is an aspect of industrial relations concerned with the management tools applied to eradicate or remove industrial conflict thus ensuring industrial peace and harmony. This is done through bridging the relationship gap between management and workers. When management establishes good collective bargaining strategies within an organization, issues of organizational conflict and misunderstanding would be neutralized and peace is enthroned and enhanced (Fashoyin, 2012).

It is then a known fact that no social system such as industrial organizations can function optimally without some degree of harmonious relationships among its members. This is perhaps why humans have always made conscious efforts at guaranteeing some level of harmonious co-existence over the years. However, this became more necessary with the emergence of the industrial age and the growing reliance on paid employment which gave rise to the capitalist economy. As Onusnya (2015) points out "in the wake of capitalism and the spread of industry and negotiation took a new turn more than two persons are gathered for the purpose of mutual benefit, the next possible party is or should be bargaining. The validation for collective bargaining in society literally stands on the clear fact that conflict is an inevitable part of human existence and whenever it occurs, people need to find the best possible instrument or technique of settling such conflict.

In view of the adverse effect experienced by organizations, as a result of dispute, the study identified the following problems as they practically and theoretically manifest: Thus, arguing that the strained labour and management relations in Nigeria have been attributed to low income of the workers. This has restrained industrial peace, a situation where an employee perceives that he is paid less for the services rendered to the organization, it becomes overbearing for such an employee to continue giving out his/her best for the organization.

In other words, also most of the industries in West Africa, especially in Nigeria have poor welfare packages for employees, and pay little or no attention to appreciate their employees working condition. The unfavourable working condition has put many out of job, caused industrial unrest and this is not good for industrial harmony. Furthermore, in many organizations where narrow-minded sentiment applies to their terms of employment, employees under this influence may be perceived as an enemy in achieving their collective goal by other members of the organization. This issue of perceiving the other party as an enemy

goes a long way in bringing about division in labour unions. Also, many organizations have been battling with many problems which are not unconnected with their leadership style, and have brought about poor organization performance, and lack of confidence in relating with such a manager, that failed to associate himself with the employees in bringing out the best in them. However, the state as the policy maker contributes in various industrial unrest, having restrained industrial harmony. Government policy to be active participant in some industry has generated more confusion than meeting the demands of labour. Thus then, the inconsistency in various governments has made so many organizations to fold up.

Statement of Problem

It is observed by the researchers that most civil service institutions in Bayelsa State suffer from conflict at different levels between representatives of the employer and the employees. These challenges identified were traced to be caused by lack of democracy in the civil service, weak joint consultations, presence of frequent grievance and presence of incessant strike actions. In a bid to solve the problem of industrial disharmony identified in civil service organizations in Bayelsa, the researchers then tentatively proposed some strategies of collective bargaining to quell the negative issues of industrial harmony. The strategies include collaboration and compromise. Why must labor threaten to go on strike and subsequently indefinite strike before the government decides to call for around table discussion? Why must labor threaten to go on strike again before the minimum wage increase was finally accepted by the federal government but most state governments were not cut out to accept the new minimum wage proposed by the federal government to be paid by all employees which is the metrics used in deriving the new minimum wage? Why did the government after accepting to pay the new minimum wage, go further to increase the VAT rate from 5% to 7.5%? Why must state government tertiary institutions employees be asked to compulsorily register with the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS)? These many questions among others are begging for answers. The purpose of this study therefore is to examine the impact of collaboration and compromise as bargaining strategy.

Purpose

- i. To examine the extent collaboration strategy influence industrial harmony in Bayelsa State Civil Service.
- ii. To ascertain the impact of compromise strategy on industrial harmony in Bayelsa Civil service.
- iii. To determine the moderating influence of the organizations' culture on the association between collaborative bargaining strategies and industrial harmony in Bayelsa Civil Service.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent does collaboration strategy influence industrial democracy in Bayelsa state civil service?
- ii. To what extent does compromise strategy influence industrial democracy in Bayelsa State Civil Service?
- iii. How does the culture of the organization moderate the association between collective bargaining strategies and industrial harmony in Bayelsa State Civil Service?

Theoretical Foundation

Theoretical framework of this research is the conflict management theory propounded by Mary Parker Follett (1993). She holds the view that conflict is inevitable in all organizations or societies where two or more people are brought together to achieve a pre-determined end. She explains that conflict is simply an exhibition of differences in ideas or opinions on given situations. Conflict could also be a display of different methodologies of interpreting phenomena. According to Follett, conflict arises as a result of

different approaches to issues or different approaches to resolving existing conflict resolutions. She opined that conflict could be good or bad or neither good or nor bad depending on the situation. Conflict also provides good or bad results or outcome depending on the manners it is interpreted, understood and resolved by the affected parties. In an article entitled “constructive conflict,” she noted that there are three different ways or methods of conflict resolution; domination, compromise, and integration.

Concept of Industrial Harmony

Industrial harmony refers to a friendly and cooperative agreement on working relationships between employers and employees for their mutual benefit. According to Puttapalli and Vuram (2012), it is concerned with the relationship between management and employees with respect to the terms and conditions of employment and the work place. In effect, it is a situation where employees and management cooperate willingly in pursuit of the organization's aims and objectives.

Industrial amicability alludes to a situation of peace in relative sense in any industrial organization, which includes; nonappearance of strikes, and doubt among work gatherings or unions, tranquil relationship amongst unions and administration of the organization, and additionally representative (positive) view of his or her commitment as member and not as subject inside the organization. Industrial harmony is an exceptionally basic element of organizational profitability and execution. Industrial harmony in its ideal form, presupposes an industry in a condition of relative equilibrium where relationship between individuals and or groups are cordial and productive.

This type of conflict then prevents the existence of industrial harmony which reflects a state of organizational instability. Adewole (2010) opines that industrial harmony represents absence of strike by industrial unions in organization which is bound to result in effective and efficient organization. Industrial harmony thus covers four broad area of cooperation: responsibilities, employment policy, collective bargaining, communication and industrial Democracy known as a situation where, to a larger extent, the participation of workers in the organization is adequately sought in the process of making decisions that will determine the conditions of their working lives. It involves joint participation in decision making process between the two major actors to labor relations. It encompasses such concepts as joint consultation, co-ownership or co-partnership, co-determination. Industrial harmony then enhances labour productivity and in turn improves performance in organizations, achieving economic growth, and enhancing living standards and quality of life. It creates a peaceful working environment conducive to tolerance, dialogue and other alternative (to strike) means of resolving industrial or labour disputes in Nigeria (such as negotiation, employee satisfaction. mediation, arbitration, conciliation and litigation or court adjudication). This creates a high level of employee satisfaction.

Industrial Democracy

Industrial democracy is a term generally used to argue that, by analogy with political democracy, workers are entitled to a significant voice in the decisions affecting the organizations in which they work. The term is not used in a consistent manner as it is also used by some workers to argue that any system short of full worker “control is a denial of industrial democracy and this was the standpoint adopted by union activists in the early decade of the century who advocated a form of guild socialism which was a form of workers” control of industrial organization. In any human society, there must be leaders and followers. In work organization however, it is the management and labour and as related to power distribution and structures between the levels. Max Weber (1947) in his classical theory said that power flow from the superordinates to the subordinates. Adewole (2010) said “all”, as being used to refer to both employers and employees never means equality in status and power but simply in formulation and designing cum execution of policies which have been jointly agreed upon.

Industrial democracy is accepted as the same as workers participation in management and it is a form of labour-management relations. Chidi (2014) confronted us with a radically reductive new approach to industrial democracy. He defines industrial democracy as a mechanism that provides the protecting of the rights and safeguarding the interests of industrial workers. Advocating a model of pure and simple trade unionism, he asserted that there is no effective alternative to collective bargaining as means of protecting the interest and rights of worker. While expatiating on the level and forms of workers participation in management, Anyim (2011) submitted that workers participation is possible at all levels of management. He however added that the only difference is that of degree and nature of application which may be rigorous at lower and faint at top level.

Concept of Collective Bargaining Strategies

The history of collective bargaining as a tool for organizational conflict mitigation has been well documented. Collective bargaining is both a tool and a methodology for dealing with some of the social problems that emerge in the course of work between labor and management. As Fagade (2013) puts it, collective bargaining is useful for the setting of industrial jurisprudence. What this means, is that collective bargaining represents a unique instrument for the management of conflicts in the workplace. However, it is necessary to state that as an instrument, collective bargaining is a process consisting essentially of, advancing proposals, discussion of such proposal, receiving counter proposals and resolving differences.

Like conflict, collective bargaining requires at least two socially distinct groups to make concerted effort to resolve their differences by agreeing to negotiate their terms. Perhaps, Makinde (2013) captures this scenario much better when he stated that, collective bargaining is equal to negotiation plus agreement. Otherwise, Fajana (2000) corroborates the above point of view by pointing out that endless negotiations without necessarily reaching agreements does not in any way suggest that a bargain has been reached, it becomes easy to see that the outcome of collective bargaining is the collective agreement which must be enforced by both parties.

The origin of collective bargaining in Nigeria is traceable to the public sector, and as Fashoyin (2002) recorded, this was as a result of the near absence of a private sector at the turn of the 19th century. However, despite its long history in the country, collective bargaining has not been effectively deployed to address the many problems plaguing management and union relationships in the workplace. This is perhaps the reason why there has been incessant industrial conflicts leading to strike actions in Nigeria. Fashoyin (2002) attributes this relatively poor performance of the machinery and practice of collective bargaining in Nigeria's public sector to the uniqueness of the employer. The government of Nigeria has been described as out-rightly insensitive to the plight of labor and as such, has remained socially deaf to the need for proactive collective bargaining as a way of fostering a healthy or harmonious work environment in the country.

The literature on collective bargaining and industrial harmony converge on the notion that the former creates the necessary conditions that enable the latter especially in the Nigeria work environment. As a process, collective bargaining is known to be very dynamic in terms of providing the required pathways to conflict resolution and harmony in the workplace. Makinde (2013) for instance, views collective bargaining as a kind of industrial democracy believing that democratic processes provide the best possible window for social inclusion and harmony in any system including the industrial setting. Makinde further argued that the long-term interest of government, employers and trade unions alike would seem to rest on the process of consultation and discussion which is the foundation of democracy in industry. However, Makinde left a question unanswered which is the objective of collective bargaining. Thus, can agreement be reached by bargain, why does conflict arise in work relations?

The answer is not farfetched, for one since in the Nigerian work environment especially in the public sector, collective bargaining has not been proactively deployed and in most cases, the social discord between management and labor would have festered before its deployment making it rather otiose in terms of the expected positive result. Lending his argument to the collective bargaining and industrial harmony relationship, Fajana (2000) opines that collective bargaining is the foundation for peace in any organization. However, the scholar further argued that unilateral regulation or primacy of wage commissions which has become a norm in the Nigerian Public Sector vitiates the idea of collective bargaining. Indeed, that the process cannot take firm root in the Nigerian management/labour relations, especially when the larger democratic system in the country is anti-people. The point is that no subsystem can grow above the larger society in which it is situated. As a result, collective bargaining as industrial democracy is subject to the dysfunctional character of the larger democratic system of governance in Nigeria.

Collaboration Strategy

Most people have an intuitive understanding of what it means to collaborate. As its Latin roots suggest collaboration implies the idea of working together. Fajana [2000] interpreted this meaning as working together synergistically. Some scholars defined collaboration as a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain about the future of that domain. In Fashion [2002] called collaboration is interactive process having a shared trans- mutation purpose. People use the word collaboration in various contexts and interchangeably with terms such as coordination and cooperation. It is important therefore to define collaboration here. Onusanya (2005) said that coordination and cooperation are weaker forms of working together, yet all these activities require sharing information with others.

Chidi (2004) added another component-contribution-and concluded that for effective collaboration, each member of the group has to make a contribution to the collaborative process, using communication, contribution, coordination and cooperation as essential steps toward collaboration.

Compromise strategy

The use of compromise is a common solution to resolving disagreements in negotiation and mediation process. While it may produce an agreement, compromise does not always resolve problems that contain underlying interpersonal agreement. This is because compromise is frequently a 'settled' resolution to a problem and not typically the optional solution sought by either party (Makinde, 2013). He further describes compromise as highlighted in mouton - Blake's Managerial Grid as being a win and loses agreement in which both parties get something of what they want but not all of what they want. According to him, most disputes typically start with a competitive or collaborative strategy where the best possible outcome is the goal for both sides. But it is instructive to point out that, in using compromise strategy to settle conflict and achieve industrial harmony, it requires the parties involved to be consciously aware that the outcome might be less than what they had originally hoped for. That is to say, the final decision may be one that is acceptable but not optimal. As such "a compromise choice can reduce the conflict associated with giving up one attribute for another and can be justified by arguing that it combines both attribute for another and can be justified by arguing that it combines both attribute (Yonder and Staudohar, 2002; Odiagbe,2012; Nkiinebari,2014).

Data Presentation and Analysis

The research adopted the survey method which is a process of eliciting data from a target population either through questionnaire or interview sheet. Thereafter, the research is statistical analyzed for the purpose of drawing conclusion. Hence the data of the research were conducted using a computer software package, statistical package for social sciences version 22.0 and Microsoft excel. A total of two hundred

and two (202) sample respondents were drawn from a population of four hundred and nine (409) respondents of Bayelsa State Civil Service using Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination for a given population. The researcher collected data on a micro level unit of analyses using a five-point Likert Scale questionnaire titled: "Collective Bargaining Strategies and Industrial Harmony Questionnaire. Hence the table below;

Table 1.1: Descriptive Statistics of Response to Collective Bargaining Strategies

Dimension of industrial harmony		Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.dev	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std.	Error
Collaboration Strategy	192	1.00	5.00	3.9750	1.18769	-.730	.446
Compromise Strategy	192	1.00	5.00	3.5800	1.32187	-.933	.446
Valid N (listwise)	192						

The table 1.1 shows 192 cases with no missing cases in all the dimensions of collective bargaining strategies as the independent variable in the study, the mean scores which signify the measure of, central tendencies are also displayed in addition, the standard deviation indicates the spread of the distribution as a measure of dispersion. To determine the asymmetry in the distribution, skewness is also computed. From table 4.8 none of the skewness value is above +1. This means that, the data assumes a normal distribution that depicts perfect symmetry. As such, the researchers did not log transformation of data. In addition to the above interpretation, the data in table 4.8 displays the response configuration for collective bargaining strategies measured on a four-item questionnaire and, scaled on a 5-point scale.

From the data above, collaboration strategy as a dimension of collective bargaining strategies revealed an average mean score of 3.9750. This means the respondents affirmed that the adoption of collaboration strategy in their organizations high.

From then above, compromise strategy as a dimension of collective bargaining strategies revealed an average mean score of 3.5800. This means the respondents affirmed that the adoption of compromise strategy in their organization high.

Table 1.2: Descriptive Statistics of response to industrial harmony

Dimension of industrial harmony		Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.dev	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std.	Error
Industrial Democracy	192	1.00	5.00	3.9750	1.18769	-.730	.446
Joint consultation	192	1.00	5.00	3.5800	1.32187	-.933	.446
Absence of Frequent Grievance	192	1.00	5.00	2.9175	1.25909	-1.434	.446
Absence of incidence strike	192	1.00	5.00	3.8600	1.10675	-.653	..337
Valid N (liswise)	192						

Table 1.2 shows 192 cases with no missing cases in all the four methods of Industrial Harmony as the dependent variable in the study. The meanings which signify the measure of central tendencies are also displayed. In addition, then standard deviation indicates the spread of the distribution as a measure of dispersion. To determine deviation indicates the spread of the distribution skewness is also computed. From table 4.9, none of the skewness value is above +1. This means that the data assumes a normal distribution that depicts perfect symmetry, as such; the researchers did not log transformation of data. In

addition to the above interpretation, the data in table 4.9 displays the response configuration for industrial harmony measured on a four item questionnaire scaled on a 5-point likert scale.

From the data above, industrial democracy as a measure of industrial harmony revealed an average mean score of 3.9750. This means the respondents affirmed that the adoption of industrial democracy in their organization is high.

From the data above, absence of frequent grievance as a measure of industrial harmony revealed an average mean score of 2.9175. This means the respondents affirmed that absence of frequent grievance in their organization is low.

From the data above, industrial democracy as a measure of industrial harmony revealed that an average mean score of industrial democracy in their organization is high.

From the data above, absence of incidence strike as a measure of industrial harmony revealed an average mean score of 3.8600. This means the respondents affirmed that absence of incidence strike in their organization is high.

Table 1.3 Descriptive Statistics of Response to the Moderating variable

Dimension of industrial harmony		Min.	Max.	Mean	Std.dev	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std.	Error
Organizational Culture	192	1.00	5.00	4.9750	1.18769	-.730	.446
Valid N (listwise)	192						

The table 1.3 shows 192 cases with no missing cases for organizational culture as the moderating variable in the study. The mean scores which signify the measure of central tendencies are also displayed. In addition, the standard deviation indicates the spread of the distribution as a measure of dispersion. To determine the asymmetry in the distribution skewness is also computed. From table 4.10 none of the skewness value is above +1. This means that the data assumes a normal distribution that depicts perfect symmetry. As such, the researchers did not log transformation of data in addition to the above interpretation, the data in table 4.10 displays the response configuration for organizational culture measured on a four-item questionnaire and scaled on a 5-point likert scale.

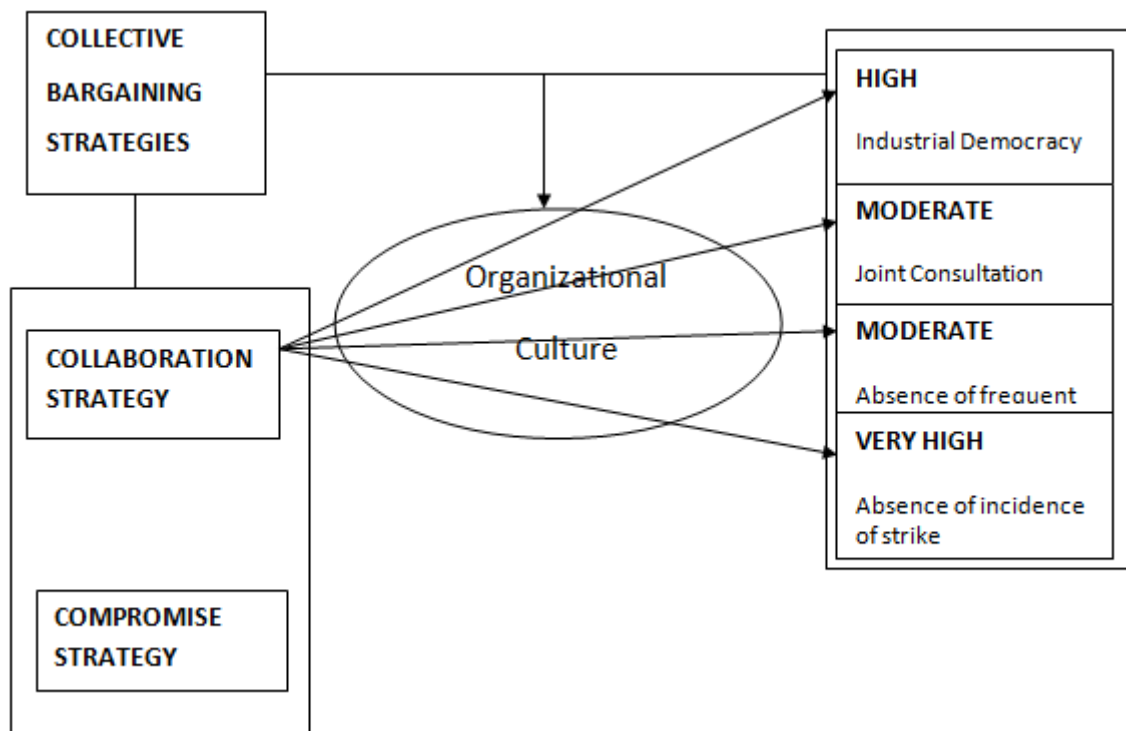
From the data above, organizational culture as the moderating variable between collective bargaining and strategies and industrial harmony revealed an average mean score of 4.9750. This means the respondents affirmed that the adoption of organizational culture in their organization is very high.

Conclusion

In conclusion, collaboration strategy and compromise have a significant influence on industrial democracy, joint consultation, absence of frequent grievance and absence of incidence strikes which leads to industrial harmony. The discussion on each of the hypothesized relationship leads to specific conclusions and the conclusion which is concise suggests how the study outcome affects theory and practice. Since it is required by the researchers to list the conclusions along the broad categories in the conceptual framework, therefore the researchers proceed to the recommendation below

Recommendation

This study has contributed to knowledge in the area of management on how these similar but inexact blend of dimensions and measures used in this study differ from the combinations used in other studies with an empirical proof of the degree of relationship among the study variables which then lead the researchers to formulate a heuristic model with a new relationship different from that of the conceptual and empirical frameworks respectively. As such, below is the heuristic model showing the empirical relationships between the study variables as shown in the result below.



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