

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT APPROACHES: A TOOL FOR PRODUCTIVE
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS (A STUDY OF
DANGOTE CEMENT PLC, GBOKO PLANT)**

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ABSTRACT: *This paper is a critical analysis of conflict management approaches as a tool for productive performance in business organizations, a survey of Dangote Cement Plc, Gboko plant. The study adopted simple empirical survey methods with a view of eliciting relevant data for analytical purpose so as to answer several questions and attain the objectives of the study. Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were utilized in a bid to attain the necessary result. Five point likert rating scale questionnaire were used in obtaining the opinions and views from respondents (i.e Strongly agree, SA (5), Agree, A (4), Undecided, U (3), Disagree, D (2), Strongly Disagree, SD (1)). The sample size for the study is 269 derived from the population of 825 employee of Dangote Cement Plc, Gboko plant. This was determined using Yaro-Yamane's formulae. Bartlett's test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, construct validity determination and Cronbach alpha for reliability determination was applied too. Multiple regression test was adopted for testing two formulated hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that conflict management have positive impacts in enhancing productivity of employees of Dangote Cement Plc, Gboko plant. Another finding reveals that strategies and techniques for management of conflict have significantly impacted on the performance of Dangote Cement Plc, Gboko plant. The study recommended that the circumstance of conflict occurrence should be X-rayed, evaluated before deciding to adopt a suitable method, strategy and technique for conflict resolution and management. Secondly, the management of Dangote Cement Plc, Gboko plant should ensure that causes and varying forces that may cause conflict in organization are checkmated to ensure organizational success. These causes may include; limited resources, overlapping authority, inadequate treatment, differences in perception, role conflict, leadership styles and diversity differences amongst others.*

KEYWORDS: Conflict, Conflict Management Approaches, Employee Performance, Business Organizations, Productivity, Strategies and Techniques, Functional Conflict, Dysfunctional Conflict.

INTRODUCTION

It might be expected that a healthy organizational climate would be reflected by complete harmony in working relationships, and loyalty and common commitment to the goals and objectives of the organization. This view of work organizations as “happy families” is perhaps a worthwhile and creditable ideal and as such appears to be implied by a number of management writers.

Drucker (1989) makes the following contribution;

“Any business enterprise must build a true team and weld individual efforts into a common effort. Each member of the enterprise contributes something different, but they must all contribute towards a common goal. Their efforts must all pull in the same direction, and their contributions must fit together to produce a whole without gap, without friction, without unnecessary duplication of effort... the manager must know and understand what the business goals demand of him in terms of performance and his superior must know what contribution to demand and expect of him – and must judge him accordingly. If these requirements are not met, managers are misdirected. Their efforts are wasted. Instead of team work, there is friction, frustration and conflict”.

According to Jones and George (2006), organizational conflict is the discord that arises when the goals, interests, or values of different individuals or groups are incompatible and those of individuals or groups block or thwart one another attempts to achieve their objectives. Conflict is an evitable part of organizational life because the goals of different stakeholders such as managers and workers are often incompatible. Organizational conflict also can exist between department and divisions that compete for resources or even between managers who may be competing for promotion to the next level in the organizational hierarchy. It is important for managers to develop the skills necessary to manage conflict effectively.

As noted by Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2006), conflict occurs whenever disagreements exist in a social situation over issues of substance or whenever emotional antagonisms create frictions between individuals or groups. Managers and team leaders can spend considerable time dealing with conflicts including conflicts in which the manager or leader is directly involved as one of the principal actor. In other situations, the manager or leader may act as a mediator or third party, whose job it is to resolve conflicts between other people.

In all cases, a manager and team leader must be comfortable with the interpersonal conflict. This includes being able to recognize situations that have the potential for conflict and to deal with these situations in ways that will best serve the needs of both the organization and the people involved.

Griffins (1997) observed that conflict is a disagreement among two or more individual groups, or organizations. This disagreement may be relatively superficial or very strong. It may be short-lived or exist for months or even years, and it may be work-related or personal. Conflict may manifest itself in a variety of ways. People may compete with one another, glare at one another, shout, or withdraw. Groups may band together to protect popular member or oust unpopular members. Organization may seek legal remedy.

Robbins (1998) noted that, conflict as it is experienced in the daily work place involves at least two basic forms. These are;

The substantive conflict: which is a fundamental disagreement over ends or goals to be pursued and the means for their accomplishment? A dispute with one's boss over a plan of action to be followed; such as the marketing strategy for a new product, is an example of substantive conflict.

When people work together day in and day out, it is only normal that different viewpoints on a variety of substantive workplace issues will arise. At times people will disagree over such things as group and organizational goals, the allocation of resources, the distribution of

rewards, policies and procedures, and task assignments. Dealing with such conflicts successfully is an everyday challenge for most managers.

By contrast, **emotional conflict** involves interpersonal difficulties that arise over feelings of anger, mistrust, dislike, fear, resentment and the like. This conflict is commonly known as a “clash of personalities.” Emotional conflict can drain the energies of people and distract them from important work priorities. They can emerge from a wide variety of settings and are common among coworkers as well as in superior – subordinate relationships.

Another form of emotional conflict is perhaps the most upsetting organizational conflict for any person to experience. Unfortunately, competitive pressures in today’s business environments and the resulting emphasis on downsizing and restructuring have created more situations in which decisions of a “tough” boss can create emotional conflict.

Mullins (1996) maintains that conflict is not necessarily a bad thing; however properly managed, it can have potentially positive outcomes. It can be an energizing and vitalizing force in groups and in the organization conflict can be seen as a “constructive” force and in certain circumstances it can be welcomed or even encouraged. It can be seen as an aid to incremental, improvements in organizational design and functioning and the decision –making process. Conflict can be an agent for evolution, and for internal and external change. Properly identified and handled, it can help to minimize the destructive influences of the win-lose situation.

Schmidt (1974) in his empirical investigation recorded a number of positive and negative outcomes of conflict from a survey of practicing manager who reported that they spend approximately 20 percent of their time dealing with conflict situations.

The positive outcomes include;

- a. Better ideas produced
- b. People forced to search for new approaches
- c. Long-standing problems brought to the surface and resolved
- d. Clarification of individual views
- e. Stimulation of interest and creativity
- f. A chance for people to test their capacities.

The negative outcomes include;

- a. Some people felt defeated and demeaned
- b. The distance between people increased
- c. A climate of mistrust and suspicion developed
- d. Individuals and groups concentrated on their narrow interest
- e. Resistance developed rather than teamwork
- f. An increase in employee turnover

It is pertinent to emphasize that, in realizing the desired change at Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant, conflict situations needs to be properly handled by the managers. Equitable strategies that will yield goal attainment should be put in place in order to suppress the conflict scenario in order to have a productive organization such as adequate resource allocation to organizational members, equitable personnel policies and procedures, good leadership and management, clarification of goals and objectives, good authority structure, work organization,

pattern of communication, and sharing of information, better understanding of employees behavior for problem solving is necessary.

Research Problem

In a bid to carryout organizational tasks and responsibilities on a day to day basis, there have been several challenges emanating in organizations ranging from disagreements based on behavioral expectations, differences in our perceptions and interpretations of facts, incompatibility of goals, role conflict, overlapping of authority, variations of leadership styles and workforce diversity issues among groups etc which usually constitute some tensions and bottlenecks in the organizations leading to diagnosing the organization to establish why such differences are manifest. This at times may result to positive or negative elements associated with organizations management which may either increase or decrease performance. Therefore, the researcher wants to establish the causes, sources, types and possible ways to manage conflict in order to facilitate organizational goal attainment.

Research Objective

1. To determine whether there are positive impacts derived from conflict management in enhancing productivity of employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.
2. To determine if the strategies and techniques for management of conflict in organization have significant impact on performance.

Research Questions

1. What are the positive impacts derived from conflict management in enhancing productivity of employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant?
2. To what extent have the strategies and techniques for management of conflict in organization have impacted on performance?

Research Hypothesis

- H₀₁:** *There are no significant positive impacts of conflict management in enhancing productivity of employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.*
- H₀₂:** *The strategies and techniques for management of conflict have not significantly impacted on the performance of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.*

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As noted by Langton, Robbins and Judge (2010) conflict is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affects, something that the first party cares about.

Not all conflict is bad. Some conflicts support the goals of the group and improve its performance. These are *functional* or *constructive* forms of conflict.

Buchanan and Huezyski (2004) maintains that the benefits of functional conflict are;

- a. Maintaining energy to deal with underlying problems

- b. Making underlying issues explicit
- c. Sharpening peoples understanding between different groups of employees.
- d. Stimulating a sense of urgency
- e. Discouraging engagement in avoidance behavior
- f. Preventing premature and often dangerous resolution problems.

This form of conflict result to positive benefit to individuals, the group they maintain too that, there are conflicts that hinder group or organizational performance. These are *dysfunctional* or *destructive* forms of conflict. If a group is unable to achieve its goals because of conflict, then the conflict is dysfunctional in nature.

Scherimerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2005) maintain that, destructive conflict works to the disadvantage of an individual or a group. It diverts energies, hurts group cohesion, promote interpersonal hostilities, and overall create a negative environment for workers.

For example, this occurs when two employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant are unable to work together because of interpersonal differences (a destructive emotional conflict) or when the member of a committee fail to act because they cannot agree on group goals (a destructive substantive conflict).

Destructive conflicts of these types can decrease work productivity and job satisfaction and contribute to absenteeism and job turnover. Managers of organization must be alert to destructive conflicts and be quick to take actions to prevent or eliminate them or at least minimize their disadvantages.

Luthans (2001) maintains that people at work may encounter conflict at the intrapersonal level (conflict among individual), the interpersonal level (individual to individual conflict), the intergroup level (conflicts among groups or team), or the inter-organizational level (conflict among organization).

Understanding how these types differ can help managers to deal with conflicts.

- i. Intrapersonal conflicts often involve actual or perceived pressures from incompatible goals or expectations of the following types.

Approach – approach conflict occurs when a person must choose between two positive and equally attractive alternatives. An example is when someone has to choose between a valued promotion in the organization or a desirable new job with another firm.

Avoidance – avoidance conflict occurs when a person must choose between two negative and equally unattractive alternatives. An example is being asked either to accept a job transfer to another town in an undesirable location or to have one's employment with an organization terminated.

Approach – avoidance conflict occurs when a person must decide to do something that has both positive and negative consequences. An example is being offered a higher paying job whose responsibilities entail unwanted demands on one's personal time.

- ii. **Interpersonal conflict:** This occurs between two or more individuals who are in opposition to one another. It may be substantive or emotional or both. Two persons debating each other aggressively on the merit of hiring a job applicant is an example of

substantive interpersonal conflict. Two persons continually in disagreement over each other's choice of work attire is an example of an emotional interpersonal conflict.

In business organizations like Dangote Cement Plc interpersonal conflict often arises in performance evaluation process.

- iii. **Intergroup conflict:** This type occurs among members of different teams or groups can also have substantive and/or emotional underpinning. Intergroup conflict is quite common in organizations and it can make the coordination and integration of task activities very difficult.

R & D departments for example, sometimes experience intergroup conflict with the production department. Members of the R & D department may develop a new product that they think production can make inexpensively by using existing manufacturing capabilities. Members of production department, however, may disagree and believe that the cost of making the product will be much higher. Managers of departments usually play a key role in managing intergroup conflicts such as this.

- iv. **Inter-organizational conflict:** This conflict arises across organization. Sometimes inter-organizational conflict arises when managers in one organization feel that another organization is not behaving ethically and is threatening the well-being of certain stakeholder groups.

Sources of Conflict

As noted by Mullins (1996), Jones and George (2006) and McShane and Glinow (2000) conflict in organizations spring from a variety of sources. These may include;

- a. **Overlapping Authority:** This occurs when two or more managers, departments or functions claim authority for the same activities or tasks, conflict is likely.
- b. **Different evaluation or reward systems:** The way in which interdependent groups, teams or departments are evaluated and rewarded can be another source of conflict. Production managers, for example, are evaluated and rewarded for their success in staying within budget or lowering cost while maintaining quality. So they are reluctant to take any steps that will increase costs such as paying workers high overtime rates to finish a late order for an important customer.

Marketing managers, in contrast, are evaluated and rewarded for their success in generating sales and satisfying customers. So they often think that overtime pay is a small price to pay for responsiveness to customers. Thus, conflict between production and marketing is rarely unexpected.

- c. **Limited resources:** Most organizational resources are limited and individuals and groups have to fight for their share; for example, at the time of the allocation of the next year's budget or when cutbacks have to be made. The greater the limitation of resources, then usually the greater the potential for conflict. In an organization with reducing profits or revenues the potential for conflicts is likely to be intensified.
- d. **Differences in Perception:** We all see things in different ways. We all have our own, unique picture or image of how we see the "real" world. Differences in perception result

in different people attaching different meanings to the same stimuli. As perception becomes a person's reality, value judgments can be a potential major source of conflict.

- e. **Role conflict:** A role is the expected pattern of behavior associated with members occupying a particular position within the structure of the organization. In practice, the manner in which people actually behave may not be consistent with their expected pattern of behavior, problems of role incompatibility and role ambiguity arise from inadequate or inappropriate role definition and can be a significant source of conflict (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2004).
- f. **Inequitable treatment:** A person's perception of unjust treatment, such as in the operation of personnel policies and practices, or in reward and punishment systems, can lead to tension and conflict. For example, according to the equity theory of motivation, the perception of inequity will motivate a person to take action to restore equity, including changes to inputs or outputs or through acting on others (Dugguh, 2008).
- g. **Nature of work activities:** where the task of one person is dependent upon the work of others there is potential for conflict for example, if a worker is expected to complete the assembly of a given number of components in week but the person forwarding the part – assembled components does not supply a sufficient number on time. If reward and punishment systems are perceived to be based on keeping up with performance level, then the potential for conflict is even greater.

If the work of a department is dependent upon the output of another department a similar situation could arise, especially if this situation is coupled with limited resources.
- h. **Environmental change:** Nwachukwu (2007) maintains that change in organization external environment, such as shift in demand, increase competition, government intervention, new technology or changing social values, can cause major areas of conflict. For example, a fall in demand for, or government financial restrictions on, enrolments for a certain discipline in higher education can result in conflict for the allocation of resources. If the department concerned is a large and important one, and led by a powerful head then there could be even greater potential for conflict.
- i. **Leadership styles:** This can create conflict if managers tightly control and oversee the work of employee, allowing employees little discretion in how they carryout tasks.
- j. **The diversity of goals among groups is a major source of conflict:** When groups within an organization seek diverse ends, some of which are inherently at odds – such as when the sales team promises products that the development team has not yet finalized – opportunities for conflict increases (Langton, Robbins and Judge, 2010).
- k. **Size, specialization and composition of the group act as forces to stimulate conflict:** The larger the group and the more specialized its activities, the greater the likelihood of conflict. The potential for conflict tends to be greatest where group members are younger and where turnover is high.

Conflict Management Styles and Techniques

Various methods and techniques of managing conflict can be adopted by organizations. According to Griffins (1997) these ranges from conflict resolution techniques, conflict stimulation techniques, and controlling conflict methods.

Kenneth Thomas (1976) have developed five interpersonal conflict resolution approaches for organization based upon two dimensions of;

- a. How assertive or unassertive each party is in pursuing its own concerns.
- b. How cooperative or uncooperative each is in satisfying the concerns of the other.

He emphasized that conflict is an interpersonal process, so we also need to consider the perceptions, expectations, and values that people bring to the relationship. Some people enter a conflict with: -

- a. **A WIN – WIN orientation** – This is the perception that the parties will find a mutually beneficial solution to their disagreement. They believe that the resources at stake are expandable rather than fixed if the parties work together to find a creative solution.
- b. **A WIN – LOSE Orientation** - They adopt the belief that the parties are drawing from a fixed pie, so the more one party receives, the more the other party forfeits.

McShane and Glinow (2000) maintain that, conflicts tend to escalate when the parties develop a WIN-LOSE orientation because they rely on powers and politics to gain advantage. A WIN – LOSE orientation may occasionally be appropriate when the conflict really is over a fixed resources. To varying degree the opposing groups can gain by believing that their positions aren't perfectly opposing and that creative solutions are possible.

Adopting a WIN-WIN or WIN – LOSE orientation influences the way we approach the conflict, including our actions towards the other person. The five (5) styles approaches of conflict resolution as noted by Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) are:-

- a. **Collaborating** – Collaboration is trying to find a mutually beneficial solution for both parties through problem solving. An important feature of collaboration is information sharing so that both parties can identify common ground and potential solutions that satisfy both (or all) of them. Collaboration is the only style that represents purely WIN – WIN orientation.

This approach style is appropriate for application in the following situations;

- i. To find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised.
 - ii. When your objective is to learn.
 - iii. To merge insights from people with different perspectives.
 - iv. To gain commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus.
 - v. To work through feelings that have interfered with a relationship.
- b. **Avoiding** – Avoidance is trying to smooth over or avoid conflict situations altogether. For example; some employees will rearrange their work area or tasks to minimize interaction with certain coworkers. This approach / style is appropriate for application in the following situations;

- i. When an issue is trivial, or more important issues are pressing.
- ii. When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns.
- iii. When potential disruption outweighs the benefits of resolution.
- iv. To let people, cool down and regain perspective.
- v. When gathering information supersedes immediate decisions.
- vi. When others can resolve the conflict more effectively.
- vii. When issues seem tangential or symptomatic of other issues.

- c. **Competing-** Competition is trying to win the conflict at the other's expense. This style has the strongest win-lose orientation because it has the highest level of assertiveness and lowest level of cooperativeness. The party makes threats and bluffs, he also makes persuasive arguments and positional commitments.

This style / approach is appropriate for application in the following situations: -

- i. When quick, decisive action is vital (e.g. in contingencies)
- ii. On important issues where unpopular actions need implementing (e.g. in cost-cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline).
- iii. On issues vital to an organizational welfare when you know you're right.
- iv. Against people who take advantage of non-competitive behavior.

- d. **Accommodating** – Accommodation involves giving in completely to the other side's wishes, or at least cooperating with little or no attention to your own interest. Here the party makes unilateral concessions, make unconditional promises and offer help.

This style / approach is appropriate for application in situation such as:-

- i. When you find you are wrong to allow a better position to be heard, to learn, and to show your reasonableness.
- ii. When issues are more important to others than yourself to satisfy others and maintain cooperation.
- iii. To build social credits for later issues.
- iv. To minimize loss when you are outmatched and losing.
- v. When harmony and stability are especially important.
- vi. To allow subordinates to develop by learning from mistakes.

- e. **Compromising** – Compromise is trying to reach a middle ground with the other party. You look for a position in which your losses are offset by equally valued gains.

This style approach is appropriate for application in situation such as: -

- i. When goals are important, but not worth the effort of potential disruption of more assertive modes.
- ii. When opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals.
- iii. To achieve temporary settlements to complex issues.
- iv. To arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure.
- v. As a backup when collaboration or competition is unsuccessful

Mullins (1996) and Sev (2006) noted that number of ways in which harmful effects of conflict can be avoided. The strategies adopted will vary according to the nature and sources of conflict. These include;

- i. **Clarification of goals and objectives** – This required the clarification and continual refinement of goals and objectives, role definition and performance standards will help to avoid misunderstanding and conflicts focusing attention on super ordinate goals that are shared by the parties in conflict, may help to defuse hostility and lead to more cooperative behavior.
- ii. **Resource distribution** – Managers may increase their allocated share of resources, they may be able to use imagination and initiative to help overcome conflict situations, e.g making a special case to higher management, applying flexibility, delaying staff appointments in one area to provide more money for another area.
- iii. **Personnel policies and procedures** – careful and detailed attention to just and equitable personnel policies and procedures may help to reduce areas of conflicts. Examples are job analysis, recruitment and selection, job evaluation, systems of rewards and punishment, appeals, grievance and disciplinary procedures, arbitration and mediation, recognition of trade union and their officials.
- iv. **Non – monetary Rewards** – Where financial resources are limited, it may be possible to pay greater attention to non – monetary rewards. Examples are job designs, more challenging, interesting or responsible works; increased delegation or empowerment, flexible working hours, attendance at courses or conferences, unofficial perks of more relaxed working conditions.
- v. **Development of interpersonal group process skills-** This may help to encourage a better understanding of one's own behavior, the other persons point of view, communication processes and problem – solving. It may also encourage people to work through conflict situations in a constructive manner.
- vi. **Group Activities** – Attention to the composition of groups and to factors which affect group cohesiveness may reduce dysfunctional conflict. Overlapping group membership with a “linking – pin” process and the careful selection of project team or task forces for problems affecting more than one group may also be beneficial.
- vii. **Leadership and Management** - A more participative and supportive styles of leadership and managerial behavior is likely to assist in conflict management for example, showing an attitude of respect and trust, encouraging personal self – development, creating a work environment in which staff can work cooperatively together.

A participative approach to leadership and management may also help to create greater employee commitment (Newstrom and Davis, 1993).
- viii. **Organizational Processes** – Conflict situation may be reduced by attention to such features as: - the nature of the authority structure work organization, pattern of communication, and sharing of information, democratic functioning of the organization; unnecessary adherence to bureaucratic procedures, and official rules and regulations.
- ix. **Socio- technical approach** - Viewing organization as a socio-technical system in which psychological and socio factors are developed in keeping with structural and technical requirements, will help in reducing dysfunctional conflict.

- x. **Negotiation** – This occurs whenever two or more conflicting parties attempt to resolve their divergent goals by redefining the terms of their interdependence. In other words, people negotiate when they think that discussion can produce a more satisfactory arrangement (at least for them) in their exchange of goods and services.

Conflict Stimulation Techniques:

According to Robbins (1998) these may include;

1. **Communication** – Using ambiguous or threatening messages to increase conflict levels.
2. **Bringing in outsiders** – Adding employee to a group whose backgrounds, values, attitudes, or managerial styles differ from those of present members.
3. **Restructuring the organizations** – Realigning work groups, altering rules and regulations, increasing inter-dependence and making similar structural changes to disrupt the status quo.
4. **Appointing a devil's advocate** – Designating a critic to purposely argue against the majority positions held by the group.

Third Party Conflict Resolution:

Mcshane and Glinow (2000) noted that a third-party conflict resolution is any attempt by a relatively neutral person to help the parties resolve their differences. The general types of third party dispute resolution activities include mediation, arbitration, conciliation, consultant among others.

- a. A Mediator is a neutral third party who facilitates a negotiated solution by using reasoning and persuasion, suggesting alternatives and the like. Mediators are widely used in labour – management negotiations and in civil court disputes.
- b. An Arbitrator is a third party with the authority to dictate an agreement. Arbitration can be voluntary (requested) or compulsory (forced on the parties by law or contract).

The authority of the arbitrator varies according to the rules set by the negotiators. For instance, the arbitrator might be limited to choosing one of the negotiators last offer or to suggesting an agreement point that is non-binding or free to choose and make any judgment he or she wishes.

- c. A conciliator is a trusted third party who provides an informal communication link between the negotiator and the opponent. Conciliation is used extensively in international, labour, family and community disputes.
- d. A consultant is a skilled and impartial third party who attempts to facilitate problem solving through communication and analysis, aided by his or her knowledge of conflict management. The role of consultant is to improve relations between the conflicting parties so that they can reach a settlement by themselves. Instead of putting forward specific solutions, the consultant tries to help the parties learn to understand and work with each other.

Therefore, this approach has a longer – term focus to build new and positive perceptions and attitudes between the conflicting parties.

Methodological Framework

Survey research design is adopted in collecting data from the sampled respondents using likert rating scale questionnaire of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The population for the study comprises of top, middle and lower level employee of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant totaled at 825 as at 31st December, 2015. Taro Yamane's (1964) formula was used in determining the sample size for the study because of the homogenous nature of the population. This was done at 0.05 level of significance and 95% level of confidence. Multiple regression analysis is used in the test of the formulated hypotheses.

The Yamane's formula is stated below;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad \text{where } n = \text{sample size}$$

1 = constant value
N = population size
e = margin of error

$$n = \frac{825}{1 + 825 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{825}{1 + 2.0625}$$

$$n = \frac{825}{3.0625}$$

$$n = 269.387$$

In ascertaining the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument for the research, factor analysis was applied in determining the construct validity while Cronbach Alpha is used for determining the reliability of instruments.

Pilot test was conducted and the input variable factors used for this study were subjected to exploratory factor analysis to investigate whether the construct as described fits the factors from the factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser – Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is applied in determining the construct validity.

For reliability of research instrument measures the consistency or precision of the measure. Gay (1996), states that reliability of research means dependability or trustworthiness and that any reliable measure yields the same results anytime it is administered. Cronbach Alpha was used in determining the reliability of the instrument in the pilot test as shown below:

Table 1.0: Factor and Reliability Analysis for Methods of managing conflict:

S/NO	Common Methods of Managing Conflict in Organization.	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
	Stimulating Conflict:		0.830	3
1.	Increase competition among individuals and teams.	0.902		
2.	Hire outsiders to shape thing up.	0.844		
3.	Change established procedures.	0.797		
	Controlling Conflict:		0.907	4
1.	Expand resources base.	0.830		
2.	Enhance coordination of interdependence.	0.865		
3.	Set superordinate goals.	0.930		
4.	Match personalities and work habits of employees.	0.805		
	Resolving and Eliminating Conflict:		0.890	3
1.	Avoiding conflict by withdrawing from it or suppression of conflict.	0.835		
2.	Convince conflicting parties to compromise (i.e each party to the conflict gives up something of value).	0.842		
3.	Bringing conflicting parties together to confront and negotiate conflict.	0.920		

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.664
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	18.334
	Df	3
	Sig.	.000
Overall Reliability Statistics : Cronbach's Alpha		0.876

KMO & Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is a measure of sampling adequacy that is recommended to check the case to variable ratio for the analysis being conducted. Also, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity relates to the significance of the study and thereby shows the validity and suitability

of the responses collected to the problem being addressed through the study. We can see that we have good values for all variables for the MSA but the overall value is a bit low at 0.664, however Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has an associated P value (sig in the table) of < 0.001 as by default SPSS reports p values of less than 0.001 as 0.000, So from the above results we know that we can now continue and perform a valid factor analysis.

The SPSS analysis gives us Cronbach's Alpha values for reliability measure values for methods of stimulating conflict as 0.830, controlling conflict as 0.907 and resolving and eliminating conflict as 0.890. The overall reliability statistics Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.876 from the KMO & Bartlett's Test. According to Everitte (2006), an alpha value of less than 0.60 is unacceptable; 0.60-0.65 is undesirable, 0.65-0.70 is minimally acceptable; 0.70-0.80 is respectable; 0.80-0.90 is very good and more than 0.90 means consider shortening the scale by reducing the number of items. At it is for the methods of managing conflict, the instrument is very reliable, hence our overall reliability statistics: Cronbach Alpha is 0.876.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section deals with the descriptive statistics where the presentation of data and analysis is carried out with the testing of formulated hypotheses. A total of 269 questionnaires were distributed to the top level, middle level and lower level employees of the Dangote Cement Plc, Gboko Plant. All the questionnaires were filled and returned by the respondents, multiple regression tests is used in the test of the two formulated hypotheses.

Table 4.1: Respondent view concerning positive impact derived from conflict management in enhancing productivity of employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant

Statement	Respondent category	Degree of Response					
		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
The most common positive impact and outcomes derived from conflict management in enhancing productivity of employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant are better ideas are produced, people are forced to search for new approaches, long-standing problems are brought to the surface and resolved, clarification of individual views, stimulation of interest and creativity and a chance for people to test their capacities amongst others	Top – level managers	28	19	0	1	1	49
	Middle – level managers	52	31	2	3	2	90
	Lower – level managers	71	50	2	4	3	130
Total		151	100	4	8	6	269

Source: Field Survey at Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant (2016)

There has been an overwhelming view among the respondents as indicated in table 4.1 above pertaining the positive impact and outcomes derived from conflict management in enhancing

productivity of employees in Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant. Infact 151 of 269 or (56.13%) strongly agree on the assertion that positive impact and outcomes ranging from better ideas are produced, people are forced to search for new approaches, long standing problems are brought to the surface and resolved, clarification of individual views, stimulation of interest and creativity and a chance for people to test their capabilities amongst others were adopted by employees' viewpoints at Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant. 100 out of 269 (37.17%) also agree on this position. only 18 out of 269 (6.69%) exhibited a contrary opinion on this subject matter.

Hypothesis One (1) Testing

H₀₁: *There are no significant positive impacts of conflict management in enhancing productivity of employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.*

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.759 ^a	.576	.380	14.652

The value of 0.759 indicates that impacts of Conflict Management has a significantly effect on the Productivity of Employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant. The R square is the coefficient of determination which is 0.576 with 57.6% proportion of variance in the dependent variable.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3785.410	6	630.902	2.939	.049 ^b
	Residual	2790.790	13	214.676		
	Total	6576.200	19			

The table shows that the independent variables are statistically significantly, $F(6, 13) = 2.939$, $P < 0.05$. We reject the null hypothesis which states that there are no significant positive impacts of Conflict Management in enhancing Productivity of Employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	96.270	47.064		2.046	.042
Better ideas are produces.	.940	.725	.284	1.296	.047
Search for new approaches.	.436	.761	.122	.574	.016
Long-Standing problems brought to surface.	3.101	1.428	.476	2.172	.049
Clarification of Individual views.	2.714	1.324	.443	2.050	.041
Stimulation of interest and creativity.	.052	.107	.104	.488	.034
Chance for People to test their capacities.	.339	.507	.142	.668	.036

Interpretation.

$y = X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + X_5 + X_6 + C$ where C is the constant.

Predicted $y = 0.339X_1 + 0.052X_2 + 2.714X_3 + 3.101X_4 + 0.436X_5 + 0.940X_6 + 96.270$

Impacts of Conflict Management have a positive relationship on the Productivity of Employees of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.

Table 4.2: Respondent views on the strategies and techniques adopted for management of conflict as impacting on the performance of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.

Statement	Respondent category	Degree of Response					
		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
The common strategies and techniques for management of conflict that can impact on performance of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant include methods of stimulating conflict, controlling conflict and resolving and eliminating conflict in the organization	Top – level managers	27	19	0	2	1	49
	Middle – level managers	58	30	1	0	2	64
	Lower – level managers	75	49	1	2	2	129
Total		160	98	2	4	5	269

Source: Field Survey at Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant (2016)

With regards to the opinion of respondents on the strategies and techniques for management of conflict as to whether it can impact on performance of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant such as methods of stimulating conflict (i.e increase competition among individuals and teams, hire outsiders to shape things up and change establish procedures), controlling conflict methods (e.g expanding resource base, enhance coordination of inter-dependence, set supraordinate goals and match personalities and work habits of employees) and resolving and eliminating conflict methods (e.g avoidance of conflict, convincing conflicting parties to compromise and bringing

conflicting parties together to confront and negotiate conflict amongst others, about 160 of 269 (or 59.48%) respondents strongly agree on the subject matter in question. 98 out of 269 (36.43%) also agree on this notion. Only 11 out of 269 respondents (or 4.09%) felt otherwise.

Hypothesis two (2) testing

H₀₂: *The strategies and techniques for management of conflict have not significantly impacted on the performance of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.*

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.721 ^a	.520	.392	27.287

The value of 0.721 indicates the strategies and techniques for management of conflict have a significantly impacted on the performance of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant. The R square is the coefficient of determination which is 0.520 with 52.0% proportion of variance in the dependent variable.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12113.766	4	3028.442	4.067	.020 ^b
	Residual	11168.434	15	744.562		
	Total	23282.200	19			

The table shows that the independent variables are statistically significantly, $F(4, 15) = 4.067$, $P < 0.05$. We reject the null hypothesis which states that the strategies and techniques for management of conflict have not significantly impacted on the performance of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	46.336	41.956		.946	.009
	Stimulating Conflict	4.552	4.271	.209	1.066	.003
	Controlling Conflict	2.303	.816	.578	2.822	.013
	Resolving Conflict	2.697	2.474	.258	1.090	.029
	Eliminating Conflict	.519	1.024	.116	.507	.020

Interpretation.

$y = X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + C$ where C is the constant.

Predicted $y = 0.519X_1 + 2.697X_2 + 2.303X_3 + 4.552X_4 + 46.336$

The strategies and techniques for management of conflict have a positive relationship on the performance of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study has produced interesting discoveries as shown from the data presentation and analysis above.

Firstly, the study found out that conflict is constructive when it improves the quality of decisions, stimulates creativity and innovations, encourages interest and curiosity among group members, provides the medium through which problems can be aired and tension released and fosters an environment of self-evaluation and change. This evidence suggests that conflict can improve the quality of decision making by allowing all points, particularly the ones that are unusual or held by a minority, to be weighted in important decisions. Conflict is an antidote for group think. It doesn't allow the group passively to "rubber-stamp" decisions that may be based on weak assumptions, inadequate considerations of relevant alternatives or other debilities. This agrees with the finding of Robbins (1989), Luthans (2001) Wright and Noe (1995), Mullins (1996), who in their respective research findings upheld that conflict challenges the status quo and therefore furthers the creation of new ideas, promotes reassessment of group goals and activities, increase the probability that the group will respond to change, clarification of individual views, long standing problems brought to the surface and resolved and stimulation of interest and creativity.

Organization that have hired and promoted individuals who are "yes men" loyal to the organization to the point of never questioning company action will suffer silently unless they are bold enough to open up. They will not stimulate change unless their action will exposed the ugly behavioral tendencies manifested by the ailing managers of their organization to guarantee correction as much as possible. The trade union actions by Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), amongst other have aided progress in terms of enhancement of condition of services in Nigeria civil service wages and welfare service and that of the Nigerian Universities to a large extent. The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes their yearnings and they are always called upon for negotiation and proper decision-making.

There is indicating evidence that conflict can be positively related to productivity. For instance, it was demonstrated that among established group performance tended to improve more when these was conflict among members than when there was fairly close agreement. The investigation observed that when group's analyses decisions that had been made by the individual members of that group; the average improvement among the high-conflict group member was 73 percent greater than was that of those groups characterized by low-conflict.

The preceding leads us to predict that the increasing cultural diversity of the workforce should provide benefits to organization. And that what the evidence indicates. Research demonstrates

that heterogeneity among group and organization members can increase creativity, improve the quality of decision making and facilitate change by enhancing members' flexibility. Robbins (1998) and Bachanan and Huczynski (2004), confirms that researchers comprises decision-making groups composed of all-Anglo individuals with groups that also contained members from Asian, Hispanic and black ethnic groups for United State of American based companies. The ethnically diverse groups produced more effective and more feasible ideas and the unique ideas they generate tended to be of higher quality than the unique ideas produced by the all-Anglo groups.

Similarity studies of professionals' system analysts and research and development scientist support the constructive value of conflict. An investigation of 22 teams of system analysts found that the more incompatible groups were likely to be more productive. Research and development scientist have been found to be most productive where there is a certain amount of intellectual conflict.

Robbins (1998) also emphasized that conflict can even be constructive on sport teams and in unions. Studies in Sport teams indicate that moderate level of group conflict contribute to team effectiveness and provide an additional stimulus for high achievement. An examination of local unions found that conflict between members of the local was positively related to the unions' power and to members' loyalty and participation in union affairs. These findings might suggest that conflict within a group indicate strength rather than, as in the traditional view, weakness.

It is confirmed from the finding of Mcshane and Glinow (2000) and Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) that the dysfunctional outcomes of conflict i.e. the destructive consequence of conflict upon a group or organizations performance such as Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant are generally well knowing. A reasonable summary might state: uncontrolled opposition breeds discontent, which acts to dissolve common ties, and eventually leads to destruction of the group.

And of course, there is a substantial body of literature to documents how conflict. The dysfunctional varieties can reduce group effectiveness. Among the more undesirable consequences are a retarding of communication, reduction in group cohesiveness, and subordination of group goals to the primacy of infighting between members. At the extreme, conflict can bring group functioning to a halt and potentially threaten the group and organizational survival. In all these, the Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant is not an exception.

Secondly, it is pertinent to state that judicious application to strategies and techniques for conflict management can facilitate organizations performance that will lead to attainment of goals and objectives. These confirms the views of Mullins (1996), Robbins (1998) and Mcshane and Glinow (2000) who confirms that application of techniques for conflict management and resolution such as expansion of resources, problem solving through open discussion, avoidance (withdrawal from or suppressing) the conflict, smoothing (i.e playing down differences while emphasizing common interest between conflicting parties, compromise giving up something of value by both parties), using human relations training to alter attitudes and behaviours that cause conflict, changing formal organization structure and the interaction patterns of conflicting parties through job redesign, transfers, creation of coordinating positions and the like can enhance proper management of conflict. At the same time application of conflict simulation techniques such as communication (using ambiguous or threatening message to increase conflict levels), bringing in outsiders (adding employees to a group whose backgrounds, values, attitudes or management styles differ from those of present numbers),

appointing devils advocates (designating a critic to purposely argue against the majority position held by the group) and restructuring the organization by realigning work groups, altering rules and regulations, increasing interdependence and making similar structural changes to disrupt the status quo are important for Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant if there should be positive performance status attainment by them.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The management of organizations should understand that there is both functional and dysfunctional forms of conflict. The *functional form* of conflict is the constructive type that result in the positive benefits of individuals have it deals with underlying problems and make underlying issues explicit by arriving at concrete resolution. This type increases productivity, job satisfaction and quality performance. The *dysfunctional form* of conflict is the destructive form of conflict. Here groups are unable to achieve its goals because of conflict. It diverts energies, hurts group cohesion, promote interpersonal hostilities and overall create a negative environment for workers. This type decrease work productivity and job satisfaction, contribute to absenteeism and job turnover. This is revealing that conflict has both positive and negative components associated with it and management of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant should be careful in analysis conflict situation as confronted by them.

The following suggestions may be considered important by Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant in managing conflict occurrences;

1. The management of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant should consider and set up a unit within the Human Resource Management department principally for handling and addressing conflict situations/occurrences of the organization be it functional and dysfunctional conflicts to pave way for high performance and productivity of employees of the organization.
2. Conflict phenomenon should not be looked upon as an ugly or negative incidence since positive outcome are derived from it such as better ideas produced, people are forced to search for new approaches of doing things in the organizations, long studying problems are brought to the surface amongst others.
3. Functional or constructive conflict by organizational employee be encouraged hence it support organizational goals and improves performance of organization and it is a motivating energy to deal with underlying problems of the organization.
4. The organizations management should ensure that on periodic basis issue that will lead to dysfunctional or destructive conflict that may hinder the attainment of organizational goals are reviewed, X-rayed to pave way for organizations growth and development.
5. The management of Dangote Cement Plc Gboko Plant should ensure that causes of and varying forces that may cause conflict in organization are checkmated to ensure organizational success. These causes may include; limited resources, overlapping authority, inadequate treatment, differences in perceptions, role conflict, leadership style and diversity issues amongst others.

6. Organization should make available adequate financial resources to acquire competence resource persona and consultants who should evaluate periodically and give firm feedback to the organization management on issues of conflict management of the organization in order to attain quality performance and high productivity of the organization.
7. Organizations executive management should consider the circumstance in which conflict have occurred before deciding on the strategy and technique of conflict management to adopt possible solution in order to attain organizational goals and objectives.

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APPENDIX

Here is a questionnaire on conflict management approaches: A tool for productive employee performance in Business Organizations: A study of Dangote Cement Plc, Gboko Plant. You have been chosen as one of the respondents in this study. You are therefore humbly requested to supply honest and sincere answers and responses to questions by tick as appropriately as you can in the boxes/spaces provided.

1. There are several positive impact and outcomes derived from conflict management in enhancing productivity of employees of Dangote Cement Company Plc Gboko Plant?
 - a. Strongly Agree (SA)
 - b. Agree (A)
 - c. Undecided (U)
 - d. Disagree (D)
 - e. Strongly Disagree (SD)
2. There are several strategies and techniques adopted for management of conflict as impacting on the performance of Dangote Cement Company Plc Gboko Plant?
 - a. Strongly Agree (SA)
 - b. Agree (A)
 - c. Undecided (U)
 - d. Disagree (D)
 - e. Strongly Disagree (SD)