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. Conflict Management Strategies and Organizational Performance of Selected Deposit Money Banks in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between conflict management strategies and organizational performance in selected Deposit Money Banks in Delta State, Nigeria. The study adopts a quantitative survey design and draws data from 92 employees across four banks using structured questionnaires. Conflict management strategies were operationalized using communication style, problem,solving, and negotiation, while organizational performance was measured through efficiency, productivity, and employee outcomes. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression techniques. The results indicate that conflict management strategies have a statistically significant and positive impact on organizational performance ($R^2 = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$). Among the predictors, problem,solving exerted the strongest influence, followed by communication style and negotiation. The study concludes that effective conflict management enhances organizational effectiveness and recommends that banking institutions institutionalize structured conflict resolution mechanisms, invest in continuous employee training, and promote a collaborative work environment.

Keywords: Conflict Management Strategies, Organization Performance, Deposit Money Banks, Nigeria

1.1 Introduction

Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon *in organizational settings due to differences in values, perceptions, interests, and resource allocation amo*ng individuals and groups. In highly structured and competitive industries such as banking, conflicts are more pronounced due to role interdependence, performance pressures, and regulatory demands. The Nigerian banking sector, particularly Deposit Money Banks, operates in an environment characterized by intense competition, technological disruption, and evolving customer expectations.

Within such a dynamic context, effective conflict management becomes critical for sustaining organizational performance. Conflict, when poorly managed, can lead to negative outcomes such as reduced employee morale, decreased productivity, high turnover, and weakened organizational cohesion. Conversely, when effectively managed, conflict can stimulate innovation, improve decision, making, and strengthen relationships among organizational members.

Conflict management strategies such as communication style, problem, solving, and

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negotiation are essential tools for addressing workplace disagreements. Communication facilitates understanding and reduces ambiguity; problem solving addresses root causes of disputes; while negotiation enables mutually beneficial outcomes. Despite their importance, many organizations, particularly in developing economies, lack structured approaches to managing conflict effectively.

This study, therefore, examines the extent to which these conflict management strategies influence organizational performance in selected Deposit Money Banks in Delta State, Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian banking sector continues to face significant operational and interpersonal challenges arising from ineffective conflict management. Workplace conflicts often emerge due to communication gaps, competing interests, unclear roles, and organizational pressures. In Deposit Money Banks within Delta State, these conflicts have manifested in reduced employee efficiency, low morale, strained relationships, and declining service quality.

Although conflict is a natural occurrence in organizations, the inability to manage it effectively has resulted in serious organizational consequences. Poor communication styles have led to misunderstandings and mistrust among employees. Inadequate problem,solving mechanisms have prevented the resolution of underlying issues, allowing conflicts to persist and escalate. Similarly, weak negotiation skills have limited the ability of managers and employees to reach mutually acceptable solutions.

Existing studies have highlighted the importance of conflict management; however, there is still limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on the combined effects of communication style, problem solving, and negotiation on organizational performance within Deposit Money Banks in Delta State. This gap necessitates a comprehensive investigation into how these strategies influence performance outcomes.

1.3 Study objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

i. evaluate the effect of communication style on organizational performance.

ii. determine the influence of problem solving on organizational performance.

iii. assess the impact of negotiation on organizational performance.

1.4 Research Questions

i. To what extent does communication style influence organizational performance?

ii. How does problem,solving affect organizational performance?

iii. What is the effect of negotiation on organizational performance?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

i. $H0_1$: Communication style has no significant impact on organizational performance.

ii. $H0_2$: Problem-solving has no significant impact on organizational performance.

iii. $H0_3$: Negotiation has no significant impact on organizational performance.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the role of conflict management strategies in enhancing organizational performance within the banking sector. It offers practical insights for managers, policymakers, and stakeholders on improving workplace harmony and productivity.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Review

Conflict management is widely recognized as a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness, particularly within service oriented sectors such as banking where interactions among employees, customers, and management are frequent and complex. In such environments, conflict arises naturally due to differences in values, perceptions, goals, and competition for scarce resources. However, the outcomes of conflict are largely dependent on how it is managed. Effective conflict management has been associated with improved employee satisfaction, enhanced productivity, and better organizational outcomes, whereas poorly managed conflict often results in inefficiency, reduced morale, and organizational instability.

Organizational performance, in this context, extends beyond financial indicators to include employee engagement, service quality, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. According to Armstrong (2019), performance reflects the extent to which organizations achieve their strategic objectives. Thus, conflict management serves as a mechanism through which organizations can align individual and group interests with overall organizational goals.

Central to conflict management are strategies such as communication style, problem solving, and negotiation. Communication plays a foundational role in conflict prevention and resolution by promoting clarity, transparency, and mutual understanding. Problem solving focuses on identifying and addressing the root causes of disputes, thereby providing sustainable solutions. Negotiation, on the other hand, facilitates agreement between conflicting parties by promoting compromise and mutual benefit. Together, these strategies form the basis for effective conflict resolution in organizations.

Theoretical foundations such as the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) and Rahim's Conflict Management Model further explain how individuals respond to conflict situations. The TKI identifies five styles—competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating—each varying in assertiveness and cooperativeness. Rahim's model emphasizes the balance between concern for self and concern for others, highlighting the importance of situational adaptability in conflict management.

Empirical evidence consistently supports the argument that effective conflict management contributes positively to organizational performance. Studies conducted in the Nigerian banking sector reveal that conflict management strategies significantly influence employee productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Consequently, conflict management is not merely a reactive process but a strategic tool for enhancing organizational performance.

2.1.1 The Concept of Conflict Management Strategy

Conflict management strategy refers to the systematic approaches adopted by individuals and organizations to handle disputes constructively. In contemporary organizations characterized by diversity and complexity, the ability to manage conflict effectively has become a key managerial competence. Conflict management involves not only resolving disagreements but also transforming conflict into opportunities for growth, innovation, and improved decision making.

Organizations employ various strategies such as collaboration, competition, avoidance,

accommodation, and compromise. Among these, collaboration is often considered the most effective as it encourages joint problem, solving and mutual benefit. It promotes inclusivity, active listening, and open communication, thereby fostering trust and teamwork. In contrast, competing emphasizes assertiveness and may be suitable in situations requiring quick decisions, although it may strain relationships if overused.

Avoidance, while sometimes useful in minimizing immediate tension, often leads to unresolved issues and long term conflict escalation. Accommodation prioritizes relationships over individual interests but may result in dissatisfaction if consistently applied. Compromise offers a middle ground solution but may not fully satisfy all parties involved (Irogbo, et. al. 2023).

Beyond these traditional approaches, modern conflict management emphasizes techniques such as active listening, emotional intelligence, problem solving, and negotiation. Emotional intelligence, in particular, enhances individuals' ability to manage their emotions and understand others, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict escalation. Overall, effective conflict management strategies contribute to improved organizational relationships, enhanced productivity, and better decision making outcomes.

2.1.2 Types of Conflict Management Strategy

Conflict management strategies can be broadly categorized based on behavioral approaches and situational applicability. Collaboration involves working jointly to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes and is particularly effective in addressing complex organizational issues. Competing, on the other hand, prioritizes individual goals and may be appropriate in situations requiring decisive action.

Avoiding represents a passive approach to conflict management, where individuals withdraw from conflict situations. Although this may provide temporary relief, it often leads to unresolved tensions. Accommodating focuses on maintaining relationships by yielding to others' demands, while compromising seeks a balanced solution through mutual concessions.

In addition to these strategies, problem solving and negotiation have gained prominence as effective conflict management techniques. Problem solving emphasizes identifying root causes and developing long term solutions, while negotiation facilitates agreement through dialogue and compromise. Effective conflict management also requires supporting skills such as communication, active listening, and emotional intelligence, which enhance the effectiveness of these strategies.

The choice of strategy often depends on the nature of the conflict, organizational context, and the desired outcomes. Therefore, organizations must adopt a flexible and situational approach to conflict management to achieve optimal results.

2.1.3 Types of Conflict Management Strategies in Deposit Money Banks

In Deposit Money Banks, conflict management assumes a more strategic role due to the high level of interaction among employees, customers, and management. The dynamic and high pressure nature of banking operations increases the likelihood of conflicts arising from role ambiguity, communication gaps, and performance expectations.

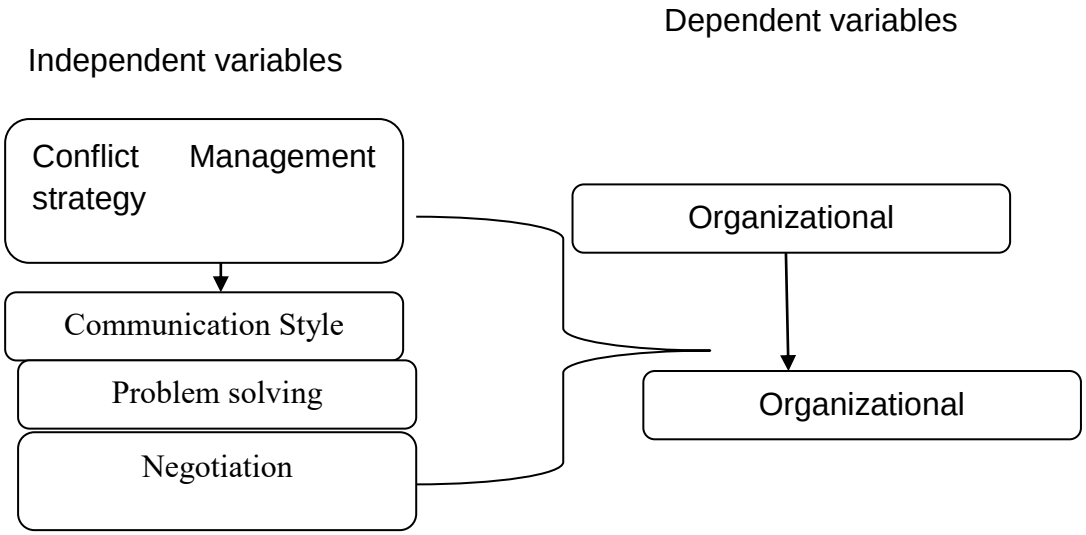
Banks commonly adopt strategies such as collaboration, compromise, accommodation, avoidance, and competition to manage conflicts. Collaboration is particularly valuable in fostering teamwork and innovation, while compromise

helps resolve disputes quickly without escalating tensions. Accommodation is useful in maintaining customer relationships, although it must be applied cautiously to avoid employee dissatisfaction.

Negotiation plays a central role in banking operations, especially in resolving disputes involving customers, staff, and management. Additionally, formal mechanisms such as mediation and arbitration are often employed to resolve complex or prolonged conflicts. These structured approaches ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency in conflict resolution.

Effective conflict management in banks yields several benefits, including improved productivity, enhanced customer satisfaction, increased employee retention, and stronger competitive advantage. Consequently, banks that institutionalize conflict management practices are better positioned to achieve sustainable organizational performance.

2.2 Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework of this study establishes a relationship between conflict management strategies (communication style, problem solving, and negotiation) as independent variables and organizational performance as the dependent variable. The framework assumes that effective application of these strategies enhances productivity, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational outcomes.

2.2.1 Communication Style and Organizational Performance

Communication style plays a fundamental role in shaping organizational performance. Effective communication ensures clarity, reduces misunderstandings, and enhances coordination among employees. Open and assertive communication fosters trust, promotes collaboration, and improves decision making processes.

Organizations that adopt transparent communication systems experience higher levels of employee engagement and productivity.

Conversely, poor communication leads to conflicts, inefficiencies, and reduced organizational effectiveness. Therefore, communication style is a critical determinant of organizational performance.

2.2.2 Problem-Solving and Organizational Performance

Problem-solving is a key driver of organizational success, enabling organizations to address challenges systematically and develop sustainable solutions. Effective problem solving enhances decision-making, improves efficiency, and fosters innovation.

Organizations that encourage collaborative and data driven problem solving approaches are better equipped to respond to dynamic business environments. As such, problem solving significantly contributes to improved organizational performance.

2.2.3 Negotiation and Organizational Performance

Negotiation is an essential tool for managing conflicts and achieving organizational objectives. Effective negotiation promotes mutual understanding, strengthens relationships, and facilitates agreement among stakeholders.

Organizations that develop strong negotiation capabilities are more likely to achieve better outcomes, reduce conflicts, and enhance overall performance. Thus, negotiation is a critical component of organizational success.

2.3 Theoretical Review

Theoretical frameworks provide a foundation for understanding conflict management and its impact on organizational performance. The Thomas Kilmann Conflict Model explains different conflict handling styles, while the Dual Concern Theory emphasizes balancing individual and collective interests.

Other theories, such as Social Exchange Theory and Attribution Theory, highlight the role of relationships, perceptions, and behavioral dynamics in conflict situations. These theories collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of conflict management processes.

2.3.1 Benefits of a Theoretical Review

A theoretical review provides a framework for understanding relationships between variables, guiding research design, and identifying gaps in existing knowledge. It enhances the rigor and relevance of research findings.

2.3.2 Theories of Conflict Management Strategy

Conflict management theories such as TKI, Dual Concern Theory, and Conflict Resolution Theory explain how individuals and organizations handle conflict. These theories emphasize communication, cooperation, and problem solving as key elements of effective conflict management.

2.4 Empirical Review

Empirical studies demonstrate that conflict management strategies significantly influence organizational performance. Research findings indicate that effective conflict management improves team performance, enhances employee satisfaction, and promotes organizational efficiency.

Studies across different contexts, including workplace, cross cultural, and virtual environments, highlight the importance of

communication, emotional intelligence, and negotiation in managing conflicts effectively.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research approach using a survey research design to examine the impact of conflict management strategies on organizational performance in selected Deposit Money Banks in Delta State, Nigeria. The quantitative approach is appropriate because it enables the measurement of relationships among variables using statistical techniques, thereby ensuring objectivity and generalizability of findings. The survey design facilitates the collection of primary data from respondents through structured instruments, allowing for the systematic analysis of perceptions and experiences related to conflict management practices.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of the study comprises 120 employees drawn from selected Deposit Money Banks in Delta State. These employees represent various departments within the banks and are considered suitable respondents due to their involvement in organizational processes and exposure to workplace conflicts.

To determine the appropriate sample size, the study employed the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for finite populations:

n=N1+N(e)2n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}n=1+N(e)2N

Where N=120N = 120N=120 and e=0.05e = 0.05e=0.05. The calculation yields a sample size of approximately 92 respondents, which is considered adequate for statistical analysis.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Selected Deposit Money Banks in Delta State

S/N	Bank Name	Staff Strength	Frequency (%)
1	Polaris Bank	30	25
2	Union Bank	30	25
3	Zenith Bank	30	25
4	UBA	30	25
	Total	**120**	**100**

Source: Human Resource Departments of Selected Deposit Money Banks (2025)

3.3 Sampling Technique

A combination of stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques was employed. Stratified sampling was used to divide the population into homogeneous groups based on the selected banks, ensuring adequate representation from each institution. Subsequently, simple random sampling was applied within each stratum to select respondents, thereby minimizing bias and ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being included.

Table 2: Sample Size Distribution Across Selected Banks

S/N	Bank Name	Sample Size
1	Polaris Bank	23
2	Union Bank	23
3	Zenith Bank	23
4	UBA	22
	Total	**92**

3.4 Data Collection Method

Primary data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was designed to capture information on key variables, including communication style, problem solving, negotiation, and organizational performance. The questionnaire consisted of closed ended items measured on a Likert scale, which facilitated quantitative analysis. This method was chosen due to its efficiency, uniformity, and suitability for large sample sizes.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from respondents were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and responses.

Inferential statistics, specifically correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis, were employed to examine the relationships between conflict management strategies and organizational performance, as well as to test the study's hypotheses. These techniques provide a robust framework for determining the strength, direction, and significance of relationships among variables.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

To ensure the credibility of the research instrument, both validity and reliability were established.

i. Validity: The questionnaire was subjected to expert review to ensure content validity, while a pilot test was conducted to establish face validity by confirming clarity and relevance of the items.

ii. Reliability: The internal consistency of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with a threshold value of 0.70 considered acceptable. Additionally, test–retest reliability was conducted by administering the instrument to a subset of respondents at two different intervals to ensure consistency of responses.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

Out of the 92 questionnaires distributed, **85 were returned and found usable**, representing a response rate of **92.39%**. This high response rate enhances the reliability of the data and suggests that the findings are representative of the study population. A response rate above 70% is generally considered adequate for quantitative studies, thereby indicating that the data collected are suitable for robust statistical analysis.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Org. Performance	Communication Style	Problem Solving	Negotiation
Org. Performance	1	0.65	0.72	0.58
Communication Style	0.65	1	0.55	0.42
Problem Solving	0.72	0.55	1	0.50
Negotiation	0.58	0.42	0.50	1

The correlation results indicate strong positive relationships between conflict management strategies and organizational performance. Specifically, **problem solving exhibits the strongest relationship with organizational performance (r = 0.72),** followed by **communication style (r = 0.65)** and **negotiation (r = 0.58).**

These findings suggest that organizations that prioritize effective problem,solving mechanisms are more likely to experience improved performance outcomes. Similarly, clear communication and effective negotiation processes contribute significantly to enhancing productivity and organizational efficiency.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Table 4: Regression Results

Variable	Coefficient (β)	p,value	Interpretation
Communication Style	0.30	< 0.01	Significant positive effect
Problem Solving	0.40	< 0.01	Strongest positive effect
Negotiation	0.25	< 0.01	Significant positive effect

Model Summary:

i. $R^2 = 0.72$
ii. $p < 0.01$

The regression results reveal that all three independent variables—communication style, problem, solving, and negotiation, have **positive and statistically significant effects** on organizational performance.

Problem solving has the **highest coefficient (β = 0.40),** indicating that it is the most influential predictor of organizational performance. Communication style (β = 0.30) and negotiation (β = 0.25) also contribute significantly to performance improvement.

The model's **R^2 value of 0.72** indicates that approximately **72% of the variation in organizational performance** is explained by the combined effect of the three conflict management strategies. This reflects a strong model fit and highlights the importance of conflict management practices in organizational success.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence that conflict management strategies play a critical role in enhancing organizational performance within Deposit Money Banks. The results from both correlation and regression analyses consistently demonstrate that communication style, problem solving, and negotiation significantly influence performance outcomes.

Notably, **problem solving emerged as the most significant predictor,** suggesting that organizations benefit more when they focus on identifying and addressing the root causes of conflict rather than merely managing its symptoms. This supports the argument that structured and analytical approaches to conflict resolution lead to sustainable organizational improvements.

The significant effect of **communication style** highlights the importance of clarity, openness, and feedback in organizational settings. Effective communication reduces misunderstandings, enhances collaboration, and fosters trust among employees, thereby improving productivity.

Similarly, **negotiation** was found to have a positive and significant impact on organizational performance. This implies that the ability to reach mutually beneficial agreements plays an essential role in maintaining workplace harmony and achieving organizational goals.

These findings are consistent with previous empirical studies, which emphasize that effective conflict management enhances employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall efficiency. The results therefore reinforce the need for organizations to adopt structured conflict management frameworks.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses of the study were tested using regression analysis based on the decision rule that a **p,value less than or equal to 0.05 indicates statistical significance**.

Since the results show that all variables have **p,values less than 0.01**, the null hypotheses ($H0_1$, $H0_2$, and $H0_3$) are rejected. This implies that:

i. Communication style has a significant impact on organizational performance
ii. Problem solving has a significant impact on organizational performance
iii. Negotiation has a significant impact on organizational performance

Therefore, the study concludes that **conflict management strategies have a statistically significant effect on organizational performance** in selected Deposit Money Banks.

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between conflict management strategies and organizational performance in selected Deposit Money Banks in Delta State, Nigeria. The findings provide strong empirical evidence that conflict management strategie, specifically communication style, problem-solving, and negotiation, have a significant and positive influence on organizational performance.

Among the variables examined, problem-solving emerged as the most influential predictor, indicating that organizations that adopt structured and proactive approaches to resolving conflicts are more likely to achieve improved performance outcomes. Communication style was also found to play a critical role, as clear, open, and effective communication enhances collaboration and reduces misunderstandings within the workplace.

Similarly, negotiation contributes to maintaining organizational harmony by facilitating mutually beneficial outcomes among stakeholders.

The study concludes that effective conflict management is not merely a reactive process but a strategic tool for enhancing productivity, employee satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. Organizations that institutionalize conflict management practices are better positioned to achieve sustainable performance and competitive advantage.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. **Investment in Conflict Management Training:** Organizations should implement regular training programs aimed at enhancing employees' skills in communication, problem-solving, and negotiation. Such initiatives will equip employees with the competencies required to manage conflicts effectively.

ii. **Promotion of Effective Communication Systems:** Management should foster open, transparent, and inclusive communication channels within the organization to minimize misunderstandings and improve collaboration among employees.

iii. **Encouragement of a Problem-Solving Culture:** Organizations should create an environment that empowers employees to identify, analyze, and resolve workplace issues proactively, thereby reducing the recurrence of conflicts.

iv. **Development of Negotiation Capabilities:** Employees and managers should be provided with the necessary tools and training to develop effective negotiation skills, enabling them to reach mutually beneficial agreements and maintain positive working relationships.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authenticity

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