Assessment of the Contributions of Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees (Nulge) to Conflict Resolution in Ibaji Local Government Area, Kogi State. Nigeria

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Abstract:- This study "This study was on the assessment of the contribution of Nigerian Union of Local Employees (NULGE) to conflict resolution In Ibaji Local Government Area, Kogi State", is designed to examine the nature of conflicts in Ibaji Local Government and also determine the factors responsible for conflicts between Nigeria Union Of Local Government Employees and the Management. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprise of all employees of Ibaji LGA., totaling one thousand one hundred and sixty five (1,165). A sample size of 285, was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. The instruments used for data collection was self structured questionnaire titled; Assessment of the contributions of Nigerian Union of Local government Employees (NULGE) to conflict resolution. questionnaire (ACNULGECRQ). The instrument was validated by three experts and Pearsons correlation coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. Four research questions and two hypothesis guided the study. The statistical tool used the frequency distribution and percentage was calculations, while the hypothesis involved the use of SPSS 2020. The findings of the study revealed that conflict in Ibaji LGA has lead to tremendous looses as well as continuous strike action which has hampered the development of the area. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made; (a) Conflict can be avoided in the local government via effective dialogue. Hence, NULGE executive should strive to justify its establishment by ensuring fair representation in terms of the demand of the workers as regards training, remuneration, poor leadership, poor motivation and political. (b) There should be prompt remittance of check off dues to NULGE to enable the union carryout her activities toward the resolution of conflict in the Local Government area. (c) Institutional mechanisms and procedure should be in place and effectively utilized in the course of impasse to ensure quick and amicable resolution of conflict in the local government.

Keywords:- Conflict, Labour, Performance, NULGE, Strike, Industrial action.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Labour management relationships in Nigeria are characterized by suspicion. Both labour and management, especially in the local government service system, struggle to undermine each other's effort (Nwankwo, 2013). This view is strengthened when one considers the union's belief that the government with its enormous power is constantly seeking for ways to suppress employees in an organization. This fear is founded considering the number of unions that have either been proscribed or rendered impotent by the government in the past. It is also supported by the recent anti-labour law, which the federal government recently sponsored and secured approval from the National Assembly (Ocheni, 2013).

Conflict is a phenomenon that is an important part of human existence and a natural part of our daily lives. Karl Marx (1818) posit the inevitability of violent, conflict for the progressive transformation of the society. Otite and Alber (2004) contends that the pursuit of divergent interests, goals and aspirations, by individuals and or groups defined social and physical environment.

Conflict is also observed by William (1999) as an inevitable aspect in human interaction. This implication refers to unavoidable situation in which conflict arise from social human relation in order to meet their basic needs. In the same vein, Etannibi (2004) view conflict as a product of antagonistic interest between two or more opposing forces or group within the society. Conflict may manifest itself in a continuous raging from avoidance to warfare between groups at extreme end. He further stated that, within expression of conflict, those others are found such as criminality, civil disobedience, riot military takeover, coup, succession and terrorism. Tamuno (1991) explains conflict from the perspective of resources and its allocation and distribution in the society, which may be tangible in nature. Explaining further, he noted that, at any given time, there exist a distribution of scarce resources and of rewards the individuals or groups in the society, the inevitability of the competition among scarce resources gives rise to a clash of opposing interest which in turn result to conflict in the society.

In another discuss on conflict, International alert (1996) noted that, conflict is mostly depicted as if it is totally negative. This is not always the case, depending on how it is handled. It can either be constructive (positive) or destructive (negative). It is as common to come across suggestion that conflict can be used constructively to explore different solution to a problem and stimulate creativity by recognizing and sensitively exposing as a way of bringing emotive and non-rational arguments into the open while constructing long standing tension. Thomas (1976) defines conflict as "the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated or is about to frustrate some of his". This definition by Thomas means that conflict in organizations involves situations in which the expectations or actual goal directed behaviour of a person or group. In such a situation, the person whose goal is blocked or about to be blocked experiences frustration which further leads to conflict. Conflicts are bad and dysfunctional when there have negative effects on individuals or organizations, thus diverts the individuals or organization from achieving their set out goals. On the other hand, certain conflicts are good and functional when they stimulate useful ideas, innovations and change and thus assist the individuals or organization to achieve their set out goals Cosier (1956).

Conflict which aims at a resolution of tension between antagonists, is likely to have stabilizing and integrative function for the relationship by permitting immediate and direct expression of rival claims, such social systems are able to adjust their structures by eliminating their sources of dissatisfaction. The multiple conflict which there experience may serve to eliminate the cause for dissociation and to reestablish unity Cosier (1956). The above statement by Cosier, reemphasized the fact that not all conflict are bad and dysfunctional and that any conflict which helps to resolve tensions or misunderstanding and thus stability, unity and integration between the disputing parties are good and functional. However, with specific reference to industrial organization Komhauser (1954), holds the view that industrial conflict occurs whenever a clash of interest or objectives exists in industrial worker-management relations. On this premise, we define industrial conflict as an aspect of discontentment and a contention which either the workers or employers of labour utilized to put excessive pressure against each other so as to get their demands. Conflict are expressed in different terms such as strike actions, industrial conflict, industrial unrest, industrial disharmony, trade dispute and industrial dispute. All these concepts expresses the existence of unhealthy relationship between key actors in an industrial settings. According to Adejo (2004), conflict resolution involved turning opposed position (the claim and its rejection) into a single outcome, that the objective of conflict resolution is remove the factors that actually countered the conflict to the satisfaction of parties in conflict. Conflict is not just a technical task of making the best changes or just a questions of having the right answer and convincing the parties in conflict to real agreement and be satisfied with the outcomes. The support can only be gotten if the method of resolving the conflict affects their beliefs, customs practices as well as their parts.

The relationship between the NULGE and the management of Ibaji LGA have been characterized by antagonism during the period 2013 2017. However, the resolution of these conflicts cannot be over emphasized because that was the only means to ensure good governance in Nigeria. According to Nwachukwu (1994), he sees collective bargaining as mechanism used for conflict resolution between the Nigerian Labour Congress and the government of Nigeria. The use of collective bargaining in conflict resolution has gained acceptance most especially in the resolution of the conflict between the two parties because of its efficiency in bringing conflict to an end. Collective bargaining has been used by the NULGE to pursue peace over the years. This is seen as a panacea for good governance in Nigeria.

Conflict resolution requires that the parties in conflict trust each other and that the parties in conflict are capable of and willing to locate the source of the conflict. Also, a man convinced against his will is not convinced; thus, we can generally eliminate the archaic, although often used, hammer on the head method. Putting the lid on conflict does nothing about eliminating its source.

An often-used method for resolving conflict is the use of superordinate goals. For example, the entire work force, taken as a whole, is something of a superordinate goal uniting conflicting groups beneath that umbrella. The employer gets the groups to see how the conflict serves to reduce productivity, thus reducing the smaller group's stake in the benefits of the major organization's success. Even though the source of conflict is not thus treated, it is an important first step because it sets the stage for compromise. This approach is similar to the common enemy approach, wherein groups in competition find unity viewing an outside group as a common enemy. This unity can hide, or make less important, conflicts within the group.

A unique method to resolve conflict is to increase interaction between conflicting groups by physically exchanging persons between conflicting groups. For example, if the payroll unit is having difficulty dealing with the budget unit, a temporary shifting of people between these groups could help the conflicting elements learn the other's problems and frames of reference. The result should be better communications, greater understanding, and less future conflict (Nwachukwu, 2000).

The quickest resolution is a confrontation meeting. The employer should be warned, however, that confrontation requires complete preparedness on his part. He must have the facts of the conflict situation and confidence in his selfcontrol and his ability to use diplomacy, tact and problem solving. Even then, he must also accept the possibility that a confrontation may worsen, not better, the situation.

A. Statement of the Problem

In Ibaji local government, the implementation of agreements of wages and salary, reached through the machinery of nationwide negotiations that has predominated the public sector, has often been chaotic, attended by controversy, agitations, and wide spread strikes costing the entire local government enormous resources in terms of many-days lost. As a result of these conflict repeated attempts to sustain and consolidate good governance failed in Ibaji local government area.

B. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the contributions of Nigerian Union of Local Government employees (NULGE) to conflict resolution in Ibaji local government area, Kogi state.

C. The specific objectives include the following:

- 1. To examine the nature of conflicts in Ibaji local government council, Kogi state.
- 2. To determine the factors responsible for conflicts between Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees and the Management of Ibaji local government council, Kogi state.
- 3. To evaluate Conflict Resolution strategies adopted by NULGE in resolving conflicts in Ibaji local government council, Kogi state.
- 4. To examine the challenges encountered by NULGE in the process of conflict resolution in Ibaji local government council, Kogi state.

D. Hypothesis Statement

The structured hypothesis for this research is stated thus:

Hypothesis 1

Ho: Conflicts in Ibaji Local Government council in Kogi state have negative effect on the performance of the local government council.

Hi: Conflicts in Ibaji Local Government council in Kogi state have positive effect on the performance of the local government council.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: Dialogue and attentions have no significant effect on the resolution of conflict in the local government.

Hi: Dialogue and attentions have significant effect on the resolution of conflict in the local government.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is on the assessment of contributions of Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) in conflict resolution in Ibaji local government area of kogi state, therefore, a cross-sectional survey research design was used. The target population of the study constitutes 1,165 staff from Ibaji local government council (Kogi State Local Government Service Commission Annual Report, 2014) and 15 political office holders in Ibaji Local Government Council.

The sampling techniques or procedure adopted for the study was stratified simple random sampling. Ibaji local government council has seven Departments. Therefore the departments as well as the political office holders were divided into different strata after which random sampling was used to select 285 respondents from the different strata.

This study used both secondary and primary data collection methods. It is important to note that the questionnaire was structured using the 4 point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Data obtained was presented using frequency distribution table and percentages. The obtained data was processed and then analysed using spss.

III. RESULT

This sub-heading focuses on the presentation of results which are in line with the questionnaire and the hypothesis.

S/N	Item description	Frequency	Percentage	Response
1	Administrative incompetence is a major barrier to conflict	192	75.89	Agree
	resolution in the study area.			
2	Conflict is an unavoidable phenomenon	199	78.66	Disagree
3	Conflicts in the study area leads to incessant strikes and industrial	177	69.78	Agree
	actions.			
4	Conflicts in the study area has negative effect on the performance	223	88.16	Agree
	and output of the community.			
5	Conflicts in the study area has helped NULGE successfully press	200	79.05	Agree
	home certain demands.			_
6	Dialogue is a veritable tool for conflict resolution.	201	79.45	Agree
7	Employees perform better when there is cordial relationship	206	81.43	Agree
	between the management and the labour union.			8
8	NULGE executives tends to play double standards in the discharge	191	75.50	Agree
	of their duties			

 Table 1: Analysis of the frequency and percentage response of both staff and political office workers of NULGE on conflict resolution in ibaji local government area of Kogi state, Nigeria.

Source: Field Survey Of 2020.

Test of Hypothesis Hypothesis 1:

Ho: Conflicts in Ibaji Local Government council in Kogi state have negative effect on the performance of the local government council. H: Conflicts in Ibaji Local Government council in Kogi state have positive effect on the performance of the local government council.

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Table 2.1 Symmetric Measures								
	VALUE	Asymp. Std. error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx Sig.				
Interval by Interval Pearson's R Ordinal by Ordinal	-864	.015	27.163	.000°				
Spearman Correlation N of Valid Cases	-875	.017	28.611	.000°				
-	253							

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a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Source: SPSS 20

The Pearson's Correlation coefficient in the above table shows a negative value of 0.864. Considering the decision rule which states that a correlation coefficient of 0.7 and above means that there exist a strong relationship between variables and 0.45-0.69 is considered an average relationship between variables, while value below 0.45 is considered weak related variables. Also a correlation coefficient can be negatively related, this is shown when an increase in independent variables leads to a decrease in the dependent variables.. (Altman, 2003). We conclude that Conflicts in lbaji Local Government council in Kogi state have negative effect on the performance of the local government council.

Hypothesis 2

 H_0 : Dialogue and attentions have no significant effect on the resolution of conflict in the local government.

H_i: Dialogue and attentions have significant effect on the resolution of conflict in the local government.

Tables 4.15 and 4.16 will be cross tabulated to analyze this hypothesis

	VALUE	Asymp. Std. error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx Sig.			
Interval by Pearson's R	.967	.005	60.058	.000°			
Interval	.979	.008	75.708	.000°			
Ordinal by Spearman Ordinal Correlation N of Valid	253						
Cases							

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Sources: SPSS 20

The above table show a positive Pearson's Correlation of 0.967, this depict a strong positive relationship between variables thereby leading to the adoption of the alternative hypothesis "Dialogue and attentions have significant effect on the resolution of conflict in the local government". Though NULGE had not really give attention to the conflict as opined by the respondents in Table 4.16 but these factors are seen to be significant in conflict resolution in Ibaji Local Government area.

> Major Findings of the Study

This study found that Conflict is not an unavoidable phenomenon in Ibaji Local Government council of Kogi state.

Conflict in Ibaji Local Government council in Kogi state culminates in incessant industrial actions/strike by employee unions in the local government. persistence industrial conflict hamper development in the local government.

Lack of earning opportunity, poor remuneration, poor leadership, lack of or poor motivation and political interference, all have significant impact on the conflict in Ibaji Local Government area of Kogi State, and Conflicts in the Local Government council have negatively affected the performance of the local government council. In the same vein, NULGE executives are more concerned about what they can acquire personally than what will benefit union members.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reveals that the implication of contlict on socio-economic and political development of the local government cannot be overemphasized. Its toll in terms of colossal loss is enormous and devastating. Conflict has tremendously hampered development in the local government. Institutional mechanisms and procedures are often neglected as the executive members of NULGE are handpicked by the executive to enable them have their way.

The executive of NULGE are always self-seeking and pay little or no attention to the interest of workers in the local government. Conflict cannot be effectively controlled if the local government management carry out corrupt and ill motivated practices unabated.

Leadership tussles among NULGE members affect the activities of NULGE towards the resolution of conflict in the Local Government. The influence of political class in the

composition of NULGE executives is a challenge to effective conflict resolution in the local government.

NULGE has not justified the purpose for its establishment in the local government. Dialogue has significant effect on the resolution of conflict in the local government". Though NULGE had not really given due attention to it, it is an indispensable and significant factor in conflict resolution in lbaji Local Government area.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion the study revealed that conflict in Ibaji LGA has lead to tremendous looses as well as continuous strike action which has hampered the development of the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study are as follows.

1. Conflict can be avoided in the local government via effective dialogue. Hence, NULGE executive should strive to justify its establishment by ensuring fair representation in terms of the demand of the workers as regards training, remuneration, poor leadership, poor motivation and political. 2. There should be prompt remittance of check off dues to NULGE to enable the union

carryout her activities toward the resolution of conflict in the Local Government area.

3. Institutional mechanisms and procedure should be in place and effectively utilized in

the course of impasse to ensure quick and amicable resolution of conflict in the local

government.

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