



Employees Grievance Procedure and workplace Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Select Tertiary Institutions in South East Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined grievance procedure and workplace conflict resolution mechanism in tertiary institutions, South East Nigeria Specifically, the study examined the impact of effective grievance procedure and other conflict resolution mechanism in Federal University of Technology Owerri and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. The total population of the study was 3254 comprising the employees of both Institutions. The findings revealed that grievance procedure has a positive and significant effect on the institutions functionality. The study concludes functional and effective grievance procedure will help in fostering good and positive working relationship among the entire workforce. Therefore the study believes that synergy and collaboration among the workforce is key to success.

Keywords: Employees Grievance Procedure, workplace Conflict Resolution Mechanisms and Conflict Management

Introduction

Today, the need to maintain a harmonious relationship in the workplace in order to boost employee morale, enhance organizational effectiveness, and improve organizational productivity has made the management of employee grievance a serious and vital organizational concern. Employee grievance management has emerged as a top priority for many right thinking managers and managements in our contemporary business arena, as organizations seeking to get the best out of every of its employees must have the capacity to maintain a harmonious management-labour relationship which is vital for organizational survival, success, effectiveness, and improved performance (Longe, 2015). The importance of effective employee grievance management has made organizations to begin to restructure their operating procedures to accommodate their employee's feelings, opinions and views in order to gain the employees trust, loyalty and whole hearted commitment, especially when it comes to employees having channels to express their grievances to the management (Obasan, 2011). The nature and dimensions of challenges being witnessed today arising from poor management of employee grievance is something every organization must try to avoid at all cost. In fact, any organization that neglects to put in place a proper employee grievance mechanism is making itself vulnerable to systemic inefficiencies that may likely consume the entire organization (Jeneja, 2018).

Employee grievance management therefore is vital for continuous industrial harmony and organizational productivity. Grievance procedures are borne out of employee feeling of being violated by fellow employees or management. When a good grievance management procedure is in place, the organization is more likely to experience high employee morale, commitment, opportunity for reconciliation, and harmonious management-employee relations which is a vital necessity for improve organizational performance. Certainly, the role and objective of management does not end at only attracting, retaining, motivating employees, instilling sanctions necessary to elicit employee behaviour responses, but in also ensuring that an effective grievance management procedure is in place within the organization. Juneja, (2018) noted that issues of grievance results from employees being dissatisfied with treatment meted out on them. Grievances do also results from employee's disagreement with their company's policy (Francis, 2018). In other words, when a company policy is not clear to an employee and does not specifically state what and how things should be done, earned, or ways to express dissatisfaction by employees, grievance is likely to result. Budd, (2018) observed that issue of grievance within the organization is identified as the protest of the employee against the application of policies that are considered to be unjust or unfair. In his opinion, Akanji (2005) state that grievance is bound to occur when management fails to honour or live up to the terms of agreement it entered with the employees or their representatives. However, since it may not be totally possible to stop grievances from occurring in organization, settling it as fast as it occurs at it root is very vital in order to stop the grievance from escalating to the point where it becomes a problem that may likely consume an organization. When grievance occurs, productivity goes down as employee's morale and commitments are generally affected (Juneja, 2018).

Effective handling of employee grievance is a vital role of the personnel managers in organizations today. Danku *et al.* (2015) contend that when grievances are left unhandled or improperly handled, they have profound influence on motivation, moral, management-labour relationships and negatively affect the productivity of the organization, therefore, must be tackled with all seriousness. Amah, (2014) posit that managers try to reduce grievances and other challenges that do arise within an organization's workplace by utilizing laid down procedure. Management and immediate supervisors therefore have a serious role to play in effective management of employees' grievance.

Amah (2014) defines grievance as any dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace expressed by employee in a formal way to his immediate supervisor. Grievances are indications of dissatisfaction of individual member with the ways things are playing out in their workplaces. Thus, employee grievance refers to any act of employee dissatisfaction cause by his immediate supervisor as regarding his work and workplace (Amah, 2014). Grievance also refers to a matter raised by employee to express dissatisfaction with management behaviour and is an attempt to bring out changes (Longe, 2015). It is any discontent dissatisfaction, expressed or not, and whether valid or not, arising out of anything connected with the organization which the

employee thinks, believed, or even feels is unfair, unjust or inequitable that he has suffered (Juneja, 2018). Due to various changes taken place in organizations, and also because of differences in the ways people behaves and perceive thing, there are chances that complaints and disputes must exist at workplaces. A grievance therefore could arise out of poorly or wrongly interpretation, administration or alleged violation of the general or specific terms of the collective agreement between managements and labour, and when employees' expectations are not fulfilled from the organization as a result of which a feeling of discontentment and dissatisfaction arises. Grievance is usually filled by an employee when he or she feels that his rights has been violated or that aspect of work agreement he entered with an organization either personally or through collective agreement of union or relevant agencies has been altered. Juneja (2018) believes that grievances are usually associated with dissatisfaction felt by an employee with his/her working conditions and procedures.

Employee grievance represents a feeling of dissatisfaction or discontent on the part of a worker resulting from the actions or decision of supervisors or top management. It is any real or imagined feeling of personal injustice which an employee has concerning his employment relation. Dwivedi (2009) defines grievance procedure as a method through which employees make their voice known about management practices and/or decisions, in order to have them properly resolved. Francis (2018) posit that disagreements are always an inevitable part of organizational life. However, management always put in place some processes and procedures which can be followed to ensure that every of such conflicts and grievance are resolved. Accordingly, individual grievance processed through several stages as outlined in the collective grievances is resolved through union-management meeting. In other words, grievance procedure is a mechanism of upward communication adopted by industrial organizations for the purpose of bringing workers grievance to the surface for handling. These definitions entails that a well formulated grievances procedure can enhance positive organizational outcomes and contribute to the effectiveness of management, as well as creation of a harmonious management-labour relations. According to Amah (2014), an employee cannot do effective work if he or she is aggrieved against his supervisor or the organization in general. The depression he experience due to his grievances will make his morale to be low and as a result his efficiency drops, irrespective of whether he enjoys th e work or if he is well paid or not. Unless the individual performing the job feels he is being fairly treated, his morale will be adversely affected". However, when an employee feels aggrieved as a result of neglect, unfair or unjust decision or actions of the manager or direct supervisor, there are opportunities for him to make his feeling or grievance known to the top management through grievance procedures set up by the management. According to Juneja (2018), grievance lower employees morale and efficiency, and when unattended to, results in frustration, dissatisfaction, low productivity, lack of interest in work, absenteeism,

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Efficacy of Grievance Procedures

The potential of grievances is always present at work. There is hardly any firm that can operate without one form of grievance or the other. However, the manner and speed with which those grievances are handled speaks much about how the harmony, productivity and performance of the organization will be. Hence, handling grievance through appropriate procedures plays a key role in the settlement of management's mistakes and weakness. If grievances are handled with a proper concern and consideration, they will initiate positive changes in the organization, thereby enhancing organizational productivity and employee satisfaction. The importance of having grievance procedure in place in an organization is that if an employee does not have opportunity to express his or her grievance, it will create some negative organizational impact which may include reduced productivity, absenteeism problem, disobeying of orders, indiscipline behaviour and reduced quality of work, among others. According to Amah (2014), the rationale for grievance procedures is to help individual organization attain its best in terms of employee's performance and service delivery. He however pointed out that in most cases the procedures are management cantered and may not allow employees to initiate expression of their dissatisfaction with regard to their work situations. Amah, (2014) argued that, "where there is no machinery for the effective settlement of grievances; they can have disruptive influences on the running of the organization.

A good grievance procedure help to settle grievance issues at the earliest possible stage and also helps to ensure that such disputes are resolve as close as possible to their source (Danku Apeletey, Aboagye & Benyebaar, 2015). Chances are that morale may go down, commitment reduces, and the worker may engage in some act of sabotage as a pay back to the supervisor or management. In order to ensure workplace stability, management-workers cooperation, and industrial peace an effective grievance procedure is required in the organization. This is because suppressed workers grievances are known to have given arise to accidents at the workplace, absenteeism, strike actions, and different forms of industrial sabotage, low morale and reduction in employee's commitment

Presence of grievance handling procedures will help the employees in addressing their issues and concerns and are important for sustaining high satisfaction high productivity of employees (Danku *et al.*, 2015). A good grievance procedure help management understand the feelings and attitude, of the workers concerning the organizations' polices, practices and rules, thereby helping them to make necessary improvement in policies and rules. It also serves as a medium for upward communication to organization top management, and makes them become more aware of employee's frustration, problems and general expectation. As a result, help an employee to reduce the pressures that has accumulated because of the grievance. It serves as a tool for management to maintain an open and harmonious relationship with the employees

within the workplace, identify questionable practices and areas of discontents in the organization and provides measures of correcting the questionable or faulty practices or policies, and reduces the likelihood or arbitrary action by supervisors as they know that employees can protest such behaviour to top management, where the supervisor may even be cautioned.

Dimensions of Employee Grievance Management

Effective grievance management is an essential part of personnel management; it is the management process of handling the grievance that occurred in a work place in more productive way. An effective employee grievance management ensures a peaceful harmonious work environment because it redresses the grievance to mutual satisfaction of both the employees and the managers, and also helps the management to frame policies and procedures acceptable to the employees. Accordingly, the use of an effective approach in managing an employee grievance is essential to resolving employees' dissatisfaction fairly. On their own, Danku *et al.* (2015) argue that the choice of an effective way of managing an employee's grievance ensures justice in the management of employee grievance and helps managers to base their decisions on ethical codes of conduct.

- a. **Collective Bargaining:** According to Juneja (2018), is the institutional processes by which union workers and their management or employers negotiate with the aim of determining the appropriate terms and conditions of workers employment. It is the process through which agreement between management and workers is reached with regards to wages, working hours and working conditions of employees at the organization (Amah, 2014). Workplace negotiations are usually undertaken by employees' union on behalf of an employee or employees in order to present a formidable front which management finds difficult to turn down. It usually covers general negotiations on employee's work hours, health and safety, salaries and grievances, training, overtime, grievance mechanisms, and even employee's rights to participate in workplace (Francis, 2018). Collective bargaining is a process of negotiation between employers and a group of employees aimed at agreements to regulate working salaries, working conditions, benefits, and other aspects of workers' compensation and rights. The interests of the employees are commonly presented by representatives of a trade union to which the employees belong. Amah, (2014) noted that collective bargaining helps to counter balance the undue advantage that employers have when employees collectively negotiate or make their demands. With collective bargaining, interests of the employees are commonly presented by representatives of a trade union to which the employees belong. Collective bargaining thus is an essential ingredient for industrial harmony in industrial relations. Collective bargaining helps to make the relation between employees and employers smooth, and help in preventing the employees from carrying out strikes actions, provision of security and stability to tenures of employees, offering of protection to all employees, keeps abusive employees powerless and promotes spirit of oneness among employees (Francis, 2018).

- b. Open Door Policy:** this refers to an organization's communication policy in which top management encourages openness and transparency from the employees of the organization by granting them unlimited access to the top management offices for them to make their complaints or contribute ideas which they believe will help to move the organization forward. According to Francis (2018), an open door policy enables an employee to approach top management and discuss issues such as job performance, co-worker conflicts, innovative ideas for business improvement and company policies. In addition, open door policy encourages effective communication between the employee and the management. It also eliminates room for confusion when the employees directly interact with their superiors. Moreover, it encourages healthy discussion at the workplace and enables the employees to seek their boss's help and freely discuss things with them for better clarity. Furthermore, open door policy fosters an environment of cooperation and respect between the senior management team and employees (Juneja, 2018).

Conflict management

Conflict management refers to attempt to control or regulate conflict through a number of measures. Conflict management strategies refer to the internal mechanisms used by the various authorities in resolving conflict (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). Constructively, managed conflict induces a positive performance while poorly managed conflict heats up the environment and brings about 'dislocation of the entire group and polarization, reduced productivity and job performance through an effective conflict management, a cooperative atmosphere is created.

Conflict management strategies connote what management can adopt to ensure that conflicts are resolved in a functional manner to the benefits of all the parties involved. Conflict resolution strategies that could be focused on individual members of the organization include, increasing awareness of the sources of conflict, increasing diversity awareness and skills, practicing job rotation, using permanent transfers or dismissal when necessary. On the other hand, conflict resolution strategies that could be focused on the entire organization include; changing organization's culture or structure, and altering the source of the conflict (Uchendu, Anijobi-Idem & Odigwe, 2013)

Conflict Management Strategies

Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts rationally, honestly, and competently. There are five conflict mode instruments which are globally used to identify conflict management (Ezigbo, 2011).

a. Collaborating

Collaborating method is a flexible style that makes sure both sides are satisfied. Sometimes it is effective in complex situations. It is also called a win-win strategy of conflict management. To be successful, participants need to be able to surface concerns in a non-

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threatening way. This is achieved through active listening and identifying problems (Ezigbo, 2011). To solve conflict, it requires an open discussion, exploration of alternative solutions, and needs commitment from both parties. It is an excellent way to reduce damage in the case of conflict within organizations.

The collaborative mode is appropriate when the conflict is important to the people who are constructing an integrative solution, when the issues are too important to compromise, when merging perspectives, when gaining commitment, when improving relationships, or when learning (Onah, 2015). One has to retain the ability to analyze the issues of concern with active listening without threatening confrontation. It also can be applicable for a smooth workplace environment for maximum productivity.

Collaborating leads to solving the actual problem with win-win outcome while it also reinforces the mutual trust and respect to each other, it is a win-win way of conflict management strategy, it needs more time and energy and assurance from both sides. Therefore, it may not be wise to apply this strategy when time is limited and a hasty verdict is required (Uwah, 2014).

b. Accommodating

Accommodation is an adaptation process. It can be called a smoothing approach. Accommodation involves having to deal with the problem with an element of self-sacrifice; an individual sets aside his own concerns to maintain peace in the situation. Some people use the accommodating mode when the issue or outcome is of low importance to them (Ezigbo, 2011).

A balance must exist between assimilation and accommodation as well as between an individual and the environment for accommodation process. An ample amount accommodation or smoothing is often necessary to meet and adapt to new situations.

Accommodation might bring an immediate solution to a prevailing conflict. It is applicable when one demands short-term or fast respite from conflict (Neo, 2013). It gives an opportunity to reconsider the scenarios from different positions. However, accommodation process carries a risk of being abused (e.g. opponents may constantly try to have it their way. It can make it more difficult to get win-win solutions in the future.

c. Compromising

This strategy results from a high concern for your groups own interest along with a moderate concern for the interest of other parties. The strategy is generally used to achieve temporary solutions, to avoid destructive power struggles or when time pressures exist. One drawback of this strategy is that parties involved can lose sight of important values and long term objectives. This approach can also distract the partners from the merit of an issue and crate a cynical climate

This is a win some -lose some approach where both parties are willing to sacrifice their own set of goals as long as the other party will do the same (Ezigbo, 2011). Some people define

compromise as “giving up more than you want while others see compromise as both parties winning. This requires a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation. It is appropriate where collaboration or forced resolution do not work.

Compromising may have a positive effect when time is a limiting factor and both parties want to look for a quick solution; it decreases the level of pressure and anxiety emanating from the conflict (Sellah & Adulpakade, 2012). A disadvantage of this strategy is the fact that both parties try to find an easy way out of the problem, which may prevent a smarter solution from being implemented.

d. Avoiding

Avoiding is also known as withdrawal. It is a low stress approach that one might attempt when other methods of conflict resolution are not an option. It is a method when one does not want to address the conflict and simply withdraws (Olukayode, 2015). Avoiding is appropriate when one thinks it is not the right time for confrontation. It might be appropriate in certain circumstances but not in all. More often than not, it is possibly better to confront the problem before it gets worse. One should have some abilities to apply this method such as ability to withdraw, sidestep issues, leave things unresolved and keep sense of timing.

Avoiding has little value in managing conflicts in workplace. It can be used for short term management of workplace conflicts in limited circumstances. Cooperation regardless of underlying conflict is sometimes necessary for workplace success. It can be applicable when conflict avoidance is urgent for attaining vital goals (Neo, 2013).

e. Competing

This is a win-lose approach. It is also known as forcing. In this case an individual or group is acting in a very assertive way to achieve its goals without seeking to cooperate with other parties.

Competing maybe appropriate in some situations but it should not come to a point where the aggressor becomes too unreasonable (Obasan, 2011). It works as a last choice to solve severe problems. The positive outcome of the competing method is making a quick decision when the conflict must be resolved in some fashion. Competing mode is appropriate when quick action needs to be taken, when vital issues must be handled, or when one is protecting vital self-interests. The negative aspects of forcing are that it may adversely affect a relationship and cause other long term problems with the opponents (Olu & Dupe, 2011).

Labour Dispute Resolution Measures

According to Ezigbo, (2011), the various labour management conflict resolution measures includes; reconciliation, negotiation, arbitration, mediation and Collective bargaining

i. Negotiation: To negotiate is to converse with a view to finding terms of agreement (Onah, 2015). In the same vein, negotiation is the process in which two or more parties exchange

goods or services and attempt to agree on the exchange rate (Ezigbo, 2011). Furthermore, negotiation is the process where mandated representatives of groups in a conflict situation meet together in order to resolve their differences and to reach agreement. It is a deliberate process, conducted by representatives of groups, designed to reconcile differences and to reach agreement by consensus (Mohammad & Maris, 2013). The result of negotiation is often dependent on the power of relationship between the groups. In work places, unions and management representatives sometimes use negotiation to resolve their conflict.

- ii. **Mediator:** When direct negotiation fail, parties in a conflict often call in an independent mediator. This person or group of persons will try to facilitate the settlement of the conflict. The mediator plays an active part in the process, advises both parties, act as intermediary and suggests possible solution. Mediators acts only in an advisory capacity, they have no decision making powers and cannot impose settlement on the conflicting parties (Ezigbo, 2011).
- iii. **Arbitrator:** This is an independent person who acts as an adjudicator in a conflict to decide on the terms of settlement. Both parties in the conflict have to agree on who the arbitrator should be, and that the decision of the arbitrator will be binding on them all.
- iv. **Conciliator:** A conciliator is a trusted third party who provides an informal communication link between the negotiator and the opponent. In practice, conciliators act as mere communication conduits. They also engage in fact finding, interpreting messages, and persuading disputants to develop agreement (Onah, 2015).
- v. **Consultant:** The consultants' role is not to settle conflict, but to improve relations between the conflicting parties so that they can reach settlement among themselves. This approach is to build new and positive perceptions and attitudes between the conflicting parties (Onah, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Pluralist Labour Relations theory which traces back to Sidney and Beatrice Webb (England) and John. Commons (USA). This school of thought is of the believe that an organisation is a complex social construction made up of various interest groups of which employees and management constitute two of such groups and because of the very nature of the organisation system, they are seen as invariably subscribing to different values and objectives.

The researcher decided to apply Pluralist Labour relation theory because from the above frame of reference, it is assumed there will be different source of authority within the organisation and the potential for conflict between them will always exist over the organisation of work task and allocation of reward, just like what we have in Federal University of Technology Owerri and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka where the employees through their various union is constantly striving to influence the management decisions as regards work pay, work policies and general working conditions and this often results to disagreement which is always resolved

through dialogue and negotiations . According to Hadson (2011), by recognising the inevitability of conflict, those holding this perspective tend to regard conflict necessary for healthy development of the organisation as it helps to bring the grievances held by workers to the surface. Basically, it is also argued that the potential for conflict provides a spur to management to explore innovative method of handling such conflict in a way that it will produce the best results. This scenario most times ends up setting a more proactive and improved means and standards as regards to industrial issues and activities (Edward, 2017). This can equally be attributed to the case of Federal University of Technology Owerri and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka where management/government has through such scenarios over the years imbibe more proactive and innovative measure in handling labour issues in the institutions

Acknowledging the existence of competing sources of authority, most notably in the form of trade unions is held by Pluralist as agreed by Budd (2015) to offer benefits by allowing organisations to deal with industrial relations issues on a collective basis. In this regard Just like we have in the two institutions under study, it is believed to not only provide management with the most efficient means of institutionalising employment rules and minimizing the level of workplace dispute, but to also encourage fairer outcomes by enabling employees to organise and counter-balance the power of management when negotiating workplace contracts and conditions. It is on the basis of this conception that the researcher align with the view of (Edward, 2017) that the Pluralist generally accept the legitimate right of employees to bargain collectively and unions to act in this capacity on their behalf and this is exactly what is obtainable in Federal University of Technology Owerri and Nnamdi Azikiwe University , Awka.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design in which structured questionnaire were used to elicit information from the target respondents who are employees of Federal University of Technology Owerri and Nnamdi Azikiwe University , Awka.

The targeted population of this research consist of the entire workforce of the selected Institutions in South East, Nigeria. However, two Federal Institutions were chosen because of their outstanding record on service delivery and research coupled with the fact they have existed over two decades therefore has a track records in various ramifications. According the personnel department of the two organisations, the total population of workers in Unizik is 1610 while that of FUTO Owerri is 1624 .Therefore the total population of the study is $1620 + 1635 = 3254$. The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. Since the actual population is known, and the researcher found it difficult to sample the entire population, Taro Yamane's Method (1967) was used to arrive at sample size of 358. From 358 administered copies, 345 copies were properly filled and returned to the respondents, signifying that 11 copies of the questionnaire were not retrieved. Hence, 345 respondents became the valid sample size of the study, since it is disreputable and highly outlawed for researchers to manipulate data for

a particular research in order to avoid uncertain and unreliable results. Thus, 96.9% (345) copies of the administered questionnaire was retrieved and confirmed. The data collected for the study were analysed using simple descriptive statistics (namely simple percentage), and presented in tables. The study hypotheses were tested using simple regression model. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 2.1 was used for the analysis. Furthermore, the hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. The personal data of the respondents were analysed using simple percentage. Objective were analysed using simple regression model

Results and Discussions

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 157 | 45.5 |
| | Female | 188 | 54.5 |
| | Total | 345 | 100 |
| Marital Status | Married | 254 | 73.6 |
| | Single | 71 | 20.6 |
| | Divorced | 20 | 5.8 |
| | Total | 345 | 100 |
| Educ. Qualification | WASSCE/NECO | - | - |
| | OND/NCE | 81 | 23.5 |
| | B.Sc/HND | 208 | 60.3 |
| | M.Sc/MBA | 47 | 13.6 |
| | PhD | 9 | 2.6 |
| | Total | 345 | 100 |
| Age | Below 20 | - | - |
| | 21 – 25 | 27 | 7.8 |
| | 26 – 30 | 81 | 23.5 |
| | 31 and above | 237 | 68.7 |
| | Total | 345 | 100 |
| Years of experience | Below 5 years | 39 | 11.3 |
| | 5 – 8 years | 155 | 45.0 |
| | 9 – 12 years | 86 | 24.9 |
| | Above 12 years | 65 | 18.8 |
| | Total | 345 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Gender: majority of the respondents 54.5% were females as against 45.5% of the respondents who were male. Literally, most of the institutions personnel in southeast part of Nigeria are dominated by women, while men mostly venture into entrepreneurship activities. This is because most men have the capacity to withstand business risk and fluctuations more than the female counterpart. And women derive more pleasure working in government establishment so as to give them time for household activities.

Marital Status: 73.6% of the respondents were duly married as against 20.6% of the respondents who are single. However, 5.8% of the respondents were divorced. The result agrees

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with apriori expectation because most of the populace in the south eastern part of Nigeria gets married within the age of 25 – 40 years. In effect, the high percentages of married people are in consonance with the age range of the respondents.

Educational Qualification: The Table 4.2 further indicated that, 60.3% of the respondents are certified B.Sc/HND certificate holders; followed by 23.5% of the respondents who are OND/NCE certificate holders. More so, 13.6% of the respondents have acquired M.Sc/MBA certificate and 2.6% of the respondents are doctorate degree holders. None of the respondents had WASSCE/NECO or FSLC as highest level of education. High level of education attainment are recorded among the respondents, this conforms to apriori expectations, because one of the criteria put-in-place for personnel employment in the medical sector is high level of education. With this, the researcher is sure with validated responses on the questionnaire items among respondents.

Age of Respondents: As indicated in Table 4.2, 68.7% of the respondents were above 31 years of age. This was followed by 23.5% and 7.8% of the respondents who were 25 – 30years of age, and 21 - 25years respectively. However, age distribution is classified into four major age groups. These are, the youthful dynamic age group, which is made up of those within ages 20 to 30 years, the active productive working class which consists of those within ages 31 to 45 years, the declining productivity age class which is made up of those within ages 46 to 60 years and the old age class which is made up of those above 60 years (Oni, 2016). From the above categorization, most of the respondents (25 - 45 years) fell within the active working class, which implies that those in this age group are up and doing. They can make rational decisions pertaining to labour relations management and organizational performance in the study area.

Years of Experience: from the survey result, 45.0% of the respondents have been working in FMC within 5 – 8years. This was followed by 24.9% and 18.8% of the respondents who have within 9 – 12years and above 12years of working experience respectively. More so, only 11.3% of the respondents have below 5 years as working experience. From the result, more than 90% of the respondents have above 5years of working experience with the Institutions. Hence, the respondents were able to decode the implications of labour management relations on organization

Data Presentation

Data presentation addressed objective questions as presented in the structured questionnaire.

Effect of grievance procedure on functionality of the Institutions

Table 2: Effect of grievance procedure on functionality of the institutions

| Statements | S A | A | U | D | SD | Total | \bar{x} |
|------------|--------|---|---|---|----|-------|-----------|
|------------|--------|---|---|---|----|-------|-----------|

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|------|
| 1. | Good grievance procedure is vital for continuous harmony and organizational functionality | 219 63.5% | 68 19.7% | 46 13.3% | 8 2.3% | 4 1.2% | 345 100 | 4.42 |
| 2. | It increases employees trust, loyalty as well as enhances commitment to the organization | 234 67.8% | 48 13.9% | 50 14.5% | 7 2.0% | 6 1.7% | 345 100 | 4.44 |
| 3. | A well formulated grievance procedure encourages a positive organizational outcome and contributes to effectiveness | 274 79.4% | 33 9.6% | 20 5.8% | 9 2.6% | 9 2.6% | 345 100 | 4.60 |
| 4. | A good grievance procedure helps in settling disputes at the earliest possible ways and time | 195 56.5% | 118 34.2% | 24 7.0% | 8 2.3% | - - | 345 100 | 4.44 |
| 5. | It helps management to understand the employees feelings and attitudes towards the organizations policies and rules | 202 58.6% | 104 30.1% | 25 7.2% | 14 4.1% | - - | 345 100 | 4.43 |
| 6. | It serves as an upward channel of communication in the organization | 113 32.8% | 185 53.6% | 12 3.5% | 29 8.4% | 6 1.7% | 345 100 | 4.07 |
| 7. | It ensures a peaceful work environment by redressing grievance to mutual satisfaction of both labour and management | 241 69.9% | 93 27.0% | 4 1.1% | 7 2.0% | - - | 345 100 | 4.64 |
| 8. | It encourages justice and fairness by ensuring that decision are based on ethical code of conduct | 232 67.2% | 69 20.0% | 25 7.2% | 19 5.5% | - - | 345 100 | 4.48 |

Source: Field Survey, 2025 Decision rule: mean > 3.0 adopted, mean < 3.0 rejected.

Effect of grievance procedure on functionality of the Institutions is presented in Table 4.3. As recorded in the Table, 79.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that a well formulated grievance procedure encourages a positive organizational outcome and contributes to functionality and effectiveness. 69.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that grievance procedure ensures a peaceful work environment by redressing grievance to mutual satisfaction of both labour and management. Supported by 67.8% of the respondents who agreed that effective grievance procedure increases employees trust, loyalty as well as enhances commitment to the organization. 67.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that grievance procedure encourages justice and fairness by ensuring that decision are based on ethical code of conduct. 63.5% of the respondents added that, good grievance procedure is vital for continuous harmony and organizational functionality. 58.6% and 56.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that grievance procedure helps management to understand the employees' feelings and attitudes towards the organizations policies and rules; good grievance procedure helps in settling disputes at the earliest possible ways and time respectively. More so, 53.6% of the respondents agreed that serves as an upward channel of communication in the organization. The mean value of the items showed 4.42; 4.44, 4.60, 4.44, 4.43, 4.07, 4.64 and 4.48 respectively. From the result, eight (8) out of eight (8) items had a mean value greater than 3.0. Based on the decision rule that a

mean value > 3.0 is accepted while a mean < 3.0 is rejected, we concluded that, grievance procedure significantly affect functionality of FUTO and UNIZIK

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: Grievance procedure has no significant effect on functionality of Federal University of Technology Owerri and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Analysis of simple linear regression analysis result for hypothesis 1.

Table 3: Simple linear regression analysis result of effect of grievance procedure on functionality of the Institutions

| Variables | Parameters | Coefficient | Std error | Tcal – value |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| Constant | β_0 | 2.285 | 0.462 | 4.941*** |
| Grievance procedure (X_1) | β_1 | 0.603 | 0.116 | 5.195*** |
| R-Square (R^2) | | 0.393 | | |
| Adjusted R-Square (R^2) | | 0.390 | | |
| F – Statistics | | 26.986 | | |
| F – Probability | | 0.000 | | |
| Durbin-Watson stat | | 1.912 | | |

Decision Rule: If $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$ accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. (***) = 1%), (**) = 5%), and (*) = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively t-tab value = 1.968 df = 343 Dependent Variable: functionality, Predictors: (Constant), grievance procedure

Source: Field Survey, 2025 (SPSS Version 20)

Simple linear regression analysis was used to test hypothesis 1 and the result is as follows: the coefficient of grievance procedure (X_1) was statistically significant and positively related to functionality of FUTO and UNIZIK at 1% level. Implying that a unit increase in grievance procedure, holding other variables constant, increases functionality of FUTO and UNIZIK by 0.603 unit. From the result, the t-calculated value of grievance procedure was 5.195; and the t-tabulated value of 1.968, since the t-calculated value is greater than t-tabulated value in absolute terms, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative, thus grievance procedure has positive and significant effect on functionality of FUTO and UNIZIK

The coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) was 0.393, which implies that 39.3% changes in the dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable, while 60.7% was unexplained by stochastic terms in the model. Thus, the independent variable (grievance procedure) can only explain 39.3 percent of changes in functionality of FUTO and UNIZIK, leaving 60.7% was unexplained. The R^2 adjusted was 39.0% indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 5% probability level. The Durbin-Watson statistical value of 1.912 was observed which falls within 1.8 to 2.5, implying that there is no evidence of autocorrelation in the data analysis. More so, the f-statistical (calculated) value of 26.986 was observed in the analysis which is greater than t-critical (t-table) value of 1.968; and f-probability value of 0.000 was observed from the analysis which is less than 0.05 (95% of freedom), indicating that estimated regression model adopted in this study is

statistically significant at 5% probability level. With this, the researcher rejected the null hypotheses and accept alternative hypothesis hence, grievance procedure has positive and significant effect on functionality of tertiary Institutions in south east i.

Discussion of findings

From the empirical result, the t-calculated value of grievance procedure was 5.195; and the t-tabulated value of 1.968, since the t-calculated value is greater than t-tabulated value in absolute terms, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative, thus variation in grievance procedure has positive and significant effect on functionality of FUTO and UNIZIK. The result agreed with the findings of Onwu (2012) who revealed that mutual labour management relation (grievance management) has an effect on workers performance. Supported by Gopisetti and Linganna (2017), who upheld that dispute settling process positively affect employee performance. However, Vijayalakshmi and Gurumoorthy (2019) carried out a study on organization dispute settling procedure in public sector, Singapore. The study revealed that long grievance settling process affect effective result and employee collaboration negatively.

Conclusion

Employees are very crucial to the organization; putting personal touch to job environment is a good element of labour management relations, for instance a chat with a junior staff at his table by a top management might mean much to the junior staff and bolster his sense of belonging and willingness to work harder. Meanwhile as one considers the need to be reasonable, the employees should also cultivate the right attitude to work by being willing to accept change and pledge his loyalty as well. Every organization has some set objectives which it wants to achieve, and these objectives cannot be achieved without an effective cordial relationship between labour and management. The success of an organization is not only measured by the amount of profit the company can make, but also by the degree of industrial peace and harmony that can be maintained, therefore employers of labour must pay more attention to the needs of labour, so as to maintain high performance. Management having been entrusted with the day to day running and administration of the organization should regard and treat employees as a vital and essential asset of the organization; employees on the other hand should try to appreciate the effort of management in trying to protect the interest of the organisation and stakeholders. Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Whenever there is a grievance or disagreement in the organization, management should try and resolve it at its early stage either through negotiation or collective bargaining, before it gets too late and result to a strike.
2. Both the management and employees should understand that they both play an important role in the organization, they should see each other as indispensable in the actualization of the organizational goals and objectives, and this can be achieved by seeing and treating the organization as a system

Conclusively, the major limitations encountered include scope covered. It was limited to two Federal Institution in South East, Therefore, further studies should incorporate other federal as well as state parastatals using different indicators .

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