

## Organizational Politics and Workplace Conflict in Selected Tertiary Institutions in Edo State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The increasing rate of organisational politics and workplace conflict has been a great challenge to tertiary institutions in Edo State. This study examined how organisational politics affects workplace conflict among tertiary institutions in Edo State. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship that exists between self-interest and communication breakdown of selected tertiary institutions in Edo State. A total number of 369 copies questionnaire were administered to the respondents domiciled in the six selected tertiary institutions under study (University of Benin, Benin city, Institute of Technology and Management, Usen, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, College of Education, Igueben, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Institute of Physical and Health Education, Afuze) using purposive sampling technique and 343 copies of questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents. The study was guided by one research question and one hypothesis, correlational design was adopted. The data used was primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The data collected was presented using descriptive statistics and the hypothesis was tested using Pearson product moment correlation with the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS version 21). The findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between self-interest and communication breakdown among the selected tertiary institutions in Edo State and the study concluded that organisational politics will definitely lead to workplace conflict if not properly managed. The study recommended that the management of tertiary institutions should put more effort in the supervision of staff so as to reduce the rate of organisational politics which is expected to increase employee performance, effective communication and employee output in the long run.

#### Keywords:

Organizational politics  
Workplace conflict  
Self-interest and  
Communication breakdown.

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### 1. Introduction

The contemporary world is increasingly multicultural and the identity crisis resulting from this sometime threatens sustainable human development, which makes the promotion of understanding and dialogue to be a prime issue in the management of multiculturalism, organisational firms, global peace and security (Oloyede, 2009). Organisational politics and work conflict are inevitable in any organisation. Efficient and effective management of organisational politics and work conflict are fundamental to the development of any society, but the prevailing situations in Nigeria constitute a reversal of this reality (Uzoigwe, 2009).

Work conflict is a term that refers to all expressions of dissatisfaction within the employment relationship, especially those pertaining to the employment contract, and the effort bargain. Conflict is a part of organisational life and may occur between individuals, between the individual and the group, and between groups which may arise as a result of organisational politics (Lamner, 2009).

Eze (2011) posits that organisational politics is a self-serving behaviour which seeks to achieve self-interests, advantages and benefits at the expense of others. Organisational politics is an elusive type of power

relations in the workplace. Organisational politics represent a unique domain of interpersonal relations, characterized by the direct or indirect (active or passive) engagement of people in influencing tactics and power struggles (Wilson & Judge, 2012).

Organisational politics in tertiary institutions are frequently aimed at securing or maximizing personal interests or, alternatively, avoiding negative outcomes within the organisation (Ferris & Kacmar, 2011). Workers in tertiary institutions always engage in the politics so as to aim personal objectives. Though organisational politics is a correlate of work conflict, Udoye (2011) perceived conflict as dysfunctional, which may be beneficial because it may cause an issue to be presented in different perspective.

Conflict has both positive and negative effects.

It can be positive when it encourages creativity, increase in productivity, new looks at old conditions, exposes the leadership style, employee turnover, level of customers satisfaction, the clarification of points of view, effective communication, introduce new ideas, reduces ego problem and development of human capabilities to handle interpersonal differences (Gerardi, 2011). Conflicts have become part of human organisations the world over.

There are two major types of conflicts, internal and external. Internal conflict occurs between employees and their employers while external conflict occurs between employees and other bodies outside the organisation such as the government. Examples of internal conflicts abound between management and their employees in the universities while external conflicts occur between the university unions and the federal government.

External conflicts seem to be the crux of the crises in the universities and they occur at alarming rates due to the diverse nature of the parties involved. The political nature of man, together with the fact that conflict is a global phenomenon in organisations, has made its occurrence in the universities an inevitable situation. But what seemed an aberration is the constant return to the resolution table with seemingly unending resolutions. The various unions in the federal universities are always in constant conflict with either the management or the federal government. These unions are the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU) and the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU).

Since the 1990s, it has become nearly impossible for universities to run an entire session without academic activities being disrupted by government universities face off. In the South-West, the federal universities have had to be closed for several months due to the staff demands. From 2009 to 2017, there was hardly any semester that could boast of a conflict free calendar. Often, governments in Nigeria resorted to certain headline postures in order counter ASUU's strike actions. These include banning and unbanning of the union, seizure of salaries under the guise of no work no pay; ejection from government quarters, detention.

Other staff unions within the universities system have often focused more on welfare and salary of members, rather than on the issues of funding an autonomy. Till date, only ASUU is perhaps the only union that has signed comprehensive agreements with governments on the vexed issues of funding, autonomy and conditions of services. Onyeonoru and Bankole (2001) observe that much of the conflicts involving the governments and non-academic staff unions emanate from the collective agreements reached between the government and ASUU, which the unions often regard as exclusionary. These have led the popular parity conflicts in the universities that sometimes involve physical assaults.

At the institutional level, the relationship between university authorities and staff unions, especially the academic body, has also not been that rosy.

Vice Chancellors in most Nigerian universities have often been in collision with unions on many issues which include wide communication gap between the staff and the school authority, delay in meeting staffs demand by the school authority, withholding vital information by the school authority, lack of funding of various university projects, award of contract, repayment of outstanding allowances and salaries, purchase of facilities, library and laboratory materials.

Olorode (2001) insists that the inability of most Vice Chancellors to effectively manage the resources available to their universities is due to the fact these people have acquired almost unlimited power to manipulate university resources according to their whims and caprices. This high rate of corruption in the university system, in his opinion, arises from the absence of democratic control of university administration.

In 1996, at Ogun State University (now Olabisi Onabanjo University), Ago-Iwoye, over one hundred academic staff were unilaterally sacked by the Vice Chancellor for their refusal to "sign back" during a nationwide strike called by the national body of ASUU.

Thus, due to the fact that some Vice Chancellors became much too sensitive to criticism (Belo, 1998) and did not necessarily see themselves as accountable to anyone in the university, they effectively transformed into feudal lords within an environment designed to promote tolerance and freedom. This is a graphic description of what someone has called the winner takes-all syndrome. All these acts or arbitrariness dictatorships have put ASUU on collision with the administration of many universities.

The disagreement usually results in strike, lockout, which in one way or the other depends heavily on the service of the conflicting organisations. Work conflict sometimes arise in tertiary institutions from self-interest which normally occurs when employees are looking for personal benefit thereby leading to poor

communication which result to communication breakdown, lack of compromise, poor orientation and poor leadership style. A high level of organisational politics has affected so many tertiary institutions as it leads to communication breakdown, low productivity, low employee output, low employee morale and poor employee commitment.

Also the problem of lack of cordial relationship has been a great challenge to tertiary institutions which leads to lower productivity. There has been a great set back in the turnover of some organisations which is as a result of strong negative perceptions of the employees. As a result of these perceived problem, this study therefore seeks to determine the extent that relationship exists between organisational politics and workplace conflict in selected tertiary institutions in Edo State.

The broad objective of this study is to identify the extent of relationship that exists between organizational politics and workplace conflict among the selected tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria.

The specific objective is to:

1. Determine the extent of relationship that exists between self-interest and communication breakdown in selected tertiary institutions in Edo State.

### **1.1 Research Question**

1. To what extent does self-interest affects communication breakdown in selected tertiary institutions in Edo State?

### **1.2 Research Hypothesis**

1. H1: There is significant relationship between self-interest and communication breakdown in selected tertiary institutions in Edo State.

This study covers organizational politics and workplace conflict of the six (6) selected tertiary institutions in Edo State with two from each of the three senatorial districts. The schools are: University of Benin City, Benin City (Edo South), Institution of Technology and Management, Usen (Edo South), Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma (Edo Central), College of Education, Igueben (Edo Central), Auchi Polytechnic Auchi, (Edo North), Institute of Physical and Health Education, Afuze (Edo North). This research study decomposed organizational politics with self- interest and work conflicts with communication breakdown.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1. Conceptual Review**

Organisational Politics can be understood in terms of what people think of it rather than what it actually represents and therefore politics in organisations reflect the organisational climate. Organisational politics and power have been regarded as critical factors affecting various organisational practices (Klim & Emerson, 2004).

However, Morgan (1998) added that organisation is a premise composed of people who have varied task, career, and personal interests which allows us to understand it as a political entity.

Politics is the process of making decision applying to all members of each group. More narrowly, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of government organized control over a human community. Politics is the study practice of the distribution of power and resources within a give community (a usually hierarchically organized population or in a working environment) as well as the interrelationship (s) between communities (Ferris & Kacmar, 2011).

A variety of methods are deployed in politics, which include promoting or forcing one's own political views among people, negotiation with other political subjects, making laws, and exercising force, including warfare against adversaries. Politics is exercised on a wide range of social levels, from clans and tribes of traditional societies through modern local governments, companies and institutions up to sovereign states, to the international level. It is very often said that politics is about power. A political system is a framework which defines acceptable political methods within a given society.

Organisational politics is an important ingredient of the life of any organisation, which refers to behaviour in which personal interests are safeguard rather than organisational interests. The concept of organisational politics, well established now, has been well defined by Ferris and Kacmar (2011) and they viewed it as "it is the amount to which employee observe their work setting as political in nature which result to make them feel their environment unfair and unjust".

The nature of behaviour of employee working within an organisation is frequently considered as political and this political environment affect the nature and behaviour of the employee.

Organisational politics perceptions is worksites have been viewed as and empirically evident of its negative relationship with job satisfaction (Anthony & Cleveland, 2009) organisational commitment and job performance (Anderson, 2004).

Vigoda (2002) concluded that these negative perceptions about organisational politics make employees feel they are working in an unjust and unfair environment which make them dissatisfied and as a result they are compelled either to quit the organisation. When there is unfair environment, reciprocating does not pay equitable reward anymore. Vigoda (2002) opined that employees visualize that while they are putting great

deal of efforts working in organisation, such type of efforts or investment expecting future returns are not fair so the likelihood of disharmonious exchange relationship emerge.

### **2.1.1. Organisational Politics and Job Performance**

Definition of job performance as a variable in empirical research and its acclaimed relevance in the field of industrial or organisational psychology (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002) differs across researchers. Viswesvaran (2001) attributes this dissimilarity to the characteristic of it being an abstract and latent construct with many manifestations – a notion supported by Motowidlo (2003). Performance is a multidimensional construct where different types of behaviours need to be considered in order to understand it Aguinis (2005).

Literature has related employees' performance in organisation based on two perspectives namely task performance and contextual performance (Borman, Buck, Hanson, Motowidlo, & Stark, 2007). Task performance refers to two activities mainly: (1) activities that transform raw materials into goods and services in organisation, and (2) activities that help with the transformation process by for example providing planning, coordination and supervision to ensure organisation efficiency and effectiveness (Casio & Aguinis, 2005). Accordingly skills and abilities are the two main factors that contribute to task performance.

Meanwhile contextual performance refers to behaviours that influence the effectiveness and efficiency of organisation. Aguinis (2005) suggested that good environment in which task performance can occur will help to achieve these goals.

Additionally, personality is one of the important aspects that plays significant role in influencing contextual performance. among the characteristics of as suggested by Aguinis (2005) are: (1) persisting with enthusiasms and exerting extra effort to complete task activities, (2) volunteering to carry out tasks activities that are not formally part of the job, (3) helping and cooperating with others, (4) following organisational rules and procedures, and (5) endorsing supporting and defending organisational objectives.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that both task performance (TP) and contextual performance (CP) are important especially in managing performance of employee in organisation. Aguinis (2005) supports that task performance (TP) and contextual performance (CP) is an important dimension of performance management system to ensure organisation efficiently, effectiveness and performance. This study focused the definition of job performance based on two dimensions mainly task performance (TP) and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB).

Task performance as defined by Borman and Motowidlo (1997) has five dimensions that include 1) job-specific task proficiency, (2) non-job-specific proficiency, (3) written and oral communication proficiency, (4) supervision – in the case of a supervisory or leadership position, and (5) management. In contrast to task performance, Adams (1999) and O'Brien and Allen (2008) suggested that voluntary behaviour that are deviant and damaging to the organisational goals which are considered in negative form are also as a part of employees' performance construct.

### **2.1.2. Communication**

Performance of any organisation will never come to success if there is a poor communication process. Any organisation without effective communication process will always lag behind. A listener takes delivery of the message and must be an active listener. Effective communication takes place only when the listener clearly understands the message that the speaker intended to send.

According to Okoli (2010) effective communication is a two way information sharing process which involves one party sending a message that is easily understood by the receiving party. Effective communication by business managers facilitates information sharing between company employees and can substantially contribute to its commercial success. Effective communication is not merely about exchanging information between you and your audience.

It is about making what you want to say, what you actually say and what your audience interprets, consistent. The goal of effective communication is to create a common perception that is received in a positive manner, so that the organisation can together agree on a further action or decision. The importance of effective communication relies on the fact that it reduces misunderstandings or the possibility of overlooking important information. This ultimately saves time as situation can be assessed accurately and can also save organisation from potential embarrassment from assuming things that are incorrect (Drucker, 2011).

### **2.1.3. Self- Interest**

Self-interest refers to actions that elicit the most personal benefit. It can also be explained as the best economic benefit one can accomplished when individuals act in their own self-interest (Guerico, 2010). Guerico explanation of the invisible hand reveals that when dozens or even thousands act in their own self-interest, goods and services are created that benefit consumers and producers.

According to Adams (1999) in a market economy, individuals own most of the resources available, labour, land and capital, and use voluntary decisions, made in self-interest, to control the marketplace. In this type of system, the government plays a small role and the economy is shaped by two forces, self-interest and

competition. Self-interest is arguably the single largest motivator of economic activity. In his book covering the subject, "The Wealth of Nations", Adam Smith describe it this way: self- interest can cause the following:

- Self- interest causes us to create negative karma
- Self- interest prevents us from achieving our goals
- Self- interest makes us extremely sensitive and easily offended
- Self- interest makes us feel guilty and engage in self-pity
- Self- interest causes fear.

According to Adams (1999) traditional economic theory assumes that human behaviour is driven by self-interested pursuits. This assumption appears valid because there is direct link between outcomes that benefit the self and happiness: simply put, people feel good when their lot in life improves and we feel bad when it worsens. Moreover, the relationship between self-interested pursuits and happiness is complicated (Hsee & Hastie, 2006).

#### **2.1.4. Conflict**

Conflict has its origin in difference, in objectives, interest efforts, approach, timing attitudes and others. Conflict is defined as an overt behaviour arising out of a process in which one unit seeks the advancement of its own interest in its relationship with others (Lamner, 2009). The interference must be deliberated and goal directed by, at least, one part.

This concept of conflicts incorporates such protest movements in formal organisations as promotion of interest, session and seizure of power. Conflict has also been defined as a situation of disagreement between two parties (Amusan, 2006).

Accordingly, a conflict situation is characterized by the inability of those concerned to iron out their differences and reach an agreement on issues of common interest. Ejiogu (2000) also perceived conflict as mutual hostility and all kinds of opposition or antagonistic interaction including disagreements or controversies about ideas, values, and ways of life.

#### **2.1.5. Workplace Conflict**

According to Gerardi (2011) workplace conflict is an expression of dissatisfaction within the employment relationship especially those pertaining the employment contract and the collection bargaining. Also, Marshall (2004) viewed workplace conflict as resulting from the incompatible interest of workers and employers in the workplace; disagreement arising when the terms and the conditions of employment clash resulting from opposing view held by the management participant in the workplace fashioned according to their steps and position on the organisational location.

#### **2.1.6. Conflict Management**

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the position aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organisational setting (Udoye, 2011).

It can also be explained as the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way (Oloyede, 2009). Conflict management implemented with a business environment usually involves effective communication, problem resolving abilities and good negotiating skills to restore the focus to the company's overall goals. Organisational conflict at the interpersonal level includes dispute between peers as well as supervisor-subordinate conflict (Gerardi, 2011).

According to Hickman (2010) Party-Directed Mediation (PDM) is a mediation approach particularly suited for disputes between co-workers, colleagues or peers, especially deep-seated interpersonal conflict, multicultural or multiethnic disputes. The mediator listens to each party separately in a pre-caucus also includes coaching and role plays.

The idea is that the parties learn how to converse directly with their adversary in the joint session. Some unique challenges arise when organisational disputes involve supervisors and subordinates. The Negotiated Performance Appraisal (NPA) is a tool for improving communication between supervisors and subordinates and is particularly useful as an alternative mediation model because it preserves the hierarchical power of supervisors while encouraging dialogue and dealing with differences in opinion (Dana, 2003).

#### **2.1.7. Types of Organisational Conflict**

Udoye (2011) observed that organisational conflict involves interpretational conflicts with colleagues or supervisors, or intergroup conflicts with different sections of an organisation. There are two essential types of conflict in organisations: vertical and horizontal.

Vertical conflict occurs in groups of different hierarchy levels, such as supervisors and salesmen, whereas horizontal conflict occurs between individuals of the same level, such as managers in the same organisation. In the vertical conflict, differences in status and power between groups are in general larger than in the horizontal conflict because these aspects tend to equalize in equivalent hierarchical levels (Okoli, 2010). When vertical conflict takes place between operational workers and administration, their sources refer to:

- a. psychological distance: workers don't feel involved in the organisation and feel that their needs are not met.;
- b. power and status: workers fell powerless and alienated;
- c. differences in value and ideology: this difference represents underlying beliefs on objectives and goals of an organisation and;
- d. scarce resources: disagreements regarding benefits, salary and work conditions.

In vertical conflict, apparently individuals in lower organisational level seek to avoid conflicts with higher hierarchical levels (Mitchell & Weber, 2002).

### **2.1.8. Conflict between Staff Unions and Management of Tertiary Institutions**

Three prominent unions are recognized within the universities in Nigeria. They are the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)/Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU)/Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Polytechnics (SSANIP), and Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU). The major objective of these unions is to protect the welfare of their members.

On Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), for instance, Iyayi (2002) says the union is a trade union which like other trade unions is a "combination of workers or employers, whether temporary or permanent, the purpose of which is to regulate the terms and conditions of the employment of workers". In specific terms, Iyayi outlined the principles that guide academic staff as a union as follows:

- Integrity, transparency and accountability,
- Professionalism, objectivity and hardwork,
- Courage, sacrifice and total equipment,
- Internal democracy, teamwork and group solidarity, as well as
- Patriotism, anti-imperialism and working class solidarity.

In carrying out these principles, academic staff has been at loggerheads with tertiary institution authorities.

Authors and researchers had attributed the incessant conflicts in tertiary institutions in Nigeria to many factors, such as: lack of implementation of national agreements violation of local agreements or non-provision of basic facilities and poor staff welfare; non-provision of municipal services (i.e. electricity, water and telecommunication), poor sewage and refuse disposal (Odewumi, 2003).

According to UNESCO (1997) facilities play crucial role in the efficacy of tertiary education. The issue of inadequacy and decayed infrastructural facilities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria abounds in literature. While classrooms in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria are inadequate for the population of students and for effective teaching and learning, staff offices are also inadequate and poorly equipped for comfortable living of staff. Staff quarters are also insufficient for staff while many are substandard. It needs not be overemphasized that in a tertiary institution, there should be regular supply of utilities such as electricity and water, to ensure comfortable living of staff living within the campus.

There should also be regular refuse and waste disposal in the campuses. When these are not carried effected, it usually leads to conflict by staff. Attitudes of tertiary institutions' administrators, also leaves much to be desired. Many administrators have turned to 'tin gods' in campuses. Students and staff dare not challenge them on any issue or policy/programme. Promotion of staff has been unnecessarily delayed, due to internal conflict with senior management. Many policies in tertiary institutions have not been staff and management friendly. All these, make staff to embark on conflict with management.

### **2.1.9. Victimization of Staff of Tertiary Institutions**

The case of the forty four (44) lecturers of University of Ilorin (one of the Universities in Nigeria) few years ago which generated controversies and led to strikes in many universities, is another example. The lecturers were dismissed for joining their colleagues in other tertiary institutions, to embark on strike, to press home there demand for increased welfare packages.

Within the last decade, a particular Head of State in Nigeria, also gave the order that any lecturer in any of the universities in Nigeria who refused to resume from strike they embarked on then, should be ejected from his/her quarter. What seems to be a joke initially was eventually implemented where many lecturers were beaten by law enforcement agents and their properties thrown out of their quarters. It took the intervention of some influential citizens of the country to resolve the issue amicably. This action of government however forced many lecturers to exile where they felt their safety will be guaranteed.

#### **2.1.9.1. Low Wages/Poor Conditions of Service**

In Nigeria, salaries of lecturers of tertiary institutions are very low relative to what their counterparts earn in foreign countries. A survey by National Universities Commission (NUC) in 2007 revealed that a full professor in Botswana earned \$27,000 per annum, between \$21,000 and \$35,000 in Namibia, between \$5,000 and \$75,000 in South Africa. In the case of Nigeria, a full professor earned about \$12,000 as at year 2006.

It is disheartening to note that the salary of a full professor in Nigeria is not up to that of a fresh graduate in the oil and banking sectors. Nigeria is even a country where the annual salary of a university professor is not up to the amount being spent to hire a coach to train footballers. To worsen situation, there has been irregularity in the payment of staff emoluments.

Many strikes had been observed in the past due to inability of government to pay the salaries and allowances of staff as and when due. In the recent past, staff of many tertiary institutions were at loggerheads with government, due to non-payment of their 'monetization arrears' which was promised to be paid to workers by the last civilian government, following the introduction of the obsolete monetization policy in the country. Agitation for increases salary and allowances has thus continued to dominate the demands of trade unions from government. Unfortunately, staff of tertiary institutions in Nigeria have been turned to dogs that must bark before being given food to eat.

## **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

Theory of procedural justice and humanistic theory are discussed in this study. This study is anchored on Humanist Theory.

### **Procedural Justice Theory**

Studies by Ferriss, Frink, Bhawuk, and Zhou (1996); Folger, Konovsky, and Cropanzano (1992) used the theory of procedural justice to arguing that organisational politics is related to the efficiency of human resource systems and to decision-making processes. Lack of minimal justice and fairness in these systems is found as a main cause of higher perceptions of organisational politics and therefore hampers organisational outcomes.

All these studies relied on Lewin (1936) argument that people respond to their perceptions of reality, not to reality itself. Likewise, politics in organisations should be understood in terms of what people think of it rather than what it actually represents. Studies thus proposed that perceptions of justice and fairness reflect a political eliminate in the workplace and may also be related to a variety of work outcomes. Ferris and Kacmar (1992) extensively advocated these ideas in numerous studies. The procedural justice theory becomes relevant to this study as it relates organisational politics to human behaviour in a typical workplace environment. The study shows how academic staff of sampled institutions conflicts brings about efficiency in the management of such institution resource under in order to attain the organisational goals.

### **Humanistic Theory**

According to humanistic theory of Albert (1991) people have strong inclination to live and be happy, to seek pleasure and avoid pain. They are goal oriented, active and changing creation with a strong compulsion to fulfill their potentials. The theory also explained that for dispute to occur in a working environment there must be a source of inclination.

However people of the same ages engage in numerous irrational thoughts, unsuitable, and dysfunctional behaviours that are incline to sabotage their potentials. People are born with a distinct proneness to engage in self destructive behaviour and learn through social conditioning to exacerbate rather than minimize their proneness. People grow up in social groups and spend much of their energy trying to impress, live up to the expectation of and outdo the performance of others. On the surface, they are 'ego oriented', identify seeking, or self-centred.

Even more importantly, however, they usually define themselves as good or worthwhile when they believe that other accept and approve of them. Ellis says that it is realistic and sane for people to find or fulfill themselves in their interpersonal relations and to have a considerable amount of what referred to by Adler as social interest so as to avoid either organisational conflict or violence in any environment. This theory relate to this study as it helps to describe how dispute in a typical workplace could create happiness, pleasure, and avoid pain in the life of academic staff. Thus, academic staff are seen as people of the same "mindset" or "ages" engaging in irrational thoughts during the period of conflicts which could incline to sabotage their potentials.

## **2.3. Empirical Review**

Okoli (2010) carried out a study on impact of violence on employee performance using two manufacturing companies in Lagos state.

Two research questions guided the study and survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consists of 170 staff. The data used was a primary data collected through questionnaire and the data collected was analysed using simpler percentage and ANOVA. The findings showed that violence has a negative impact on job satisfactions.

Henry (2006) examined the relationship between workplace conflict and employee performance using six manufacturing companies in Bangkok Thailand. Three research question guided the study and survey research design was adopted.

The data used was a primary data collected through structural questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using MINITAB 18 and the statistical tool used was Pearson correlation moment. The study revealed that there is significant relationship between workplace conflict and workers performance.

Baron (2009) examined the relationship between organisational politics and employee performance using Grenard Oil Production Company in Lagos as a case study. The study was guided by three research questions and the data used was a primary data. The data collected was analysed using correlation. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between organisational politics and employee performance.

Eze (2011) examined the effect of organisational politics on employee performance using Nigerian brewery in Enugu Stat as a case study.

The study was guided by two research questions and descriptive survey research design was adopted. The data used was a primary data collected from structural questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using Z-test. The study revealed that organisational politics has a significant effect on employee performance.

Wilson and Judge (2012) carried out a study on work politics as correlate of employee performance using four manufacturing companies.

The study was guided by two research questions and descriptive survey research design was used. The data used was a primary data collected through structural questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using Pearson product moment correlation. The study revealed that work politics has a negative relationship on employee performance.

Drory (1990) and Drory and Romm (1988) in their two field studies established that politics has a more deleterious impact on the attitudes of low status employees and a less deleterious impact on the attitudes of high status individuals. Drory (1990) posited that this occurred because the higher status individuals were in a better position to shape and benefit from political decision making.

Ferris and Kacmar (1992) and others in earlier research found out that formal organisational processes are negatively related to perceived organisational politics. Moreover, scarce resources also encourage political involvement of employees while on the other hand sufficient organisational resources make achievement of disjointed goals a little easy. Further they continue to say that the likelihood of exhibiting political behaviour increases with the increase in role ambiguity, and goal ambiguity.

Buchanan and Badham (1999) and Gray and Ariss (1985) observed that political behaviours play significant role in the organisational change process and that structural factors like; uncertainty and ambiguity, resource management, and redistribution of power, in the process of change in organisation simulate employee involvement in organisational politics.

According to Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, and Toth (1997) employees who view the organisation as political in nature unequal, or promoting only the aspirations of the powerful members may be encouraged to leave it physically and also psychologically, since organisational politics cause disengagement or psychological withdrawal of individuals. However empirical studies provide only marginal support for this idea.

Ferris, Russ, and Fandt (1993); Ferriss et al. (1996) and Bozeman and Donez (1996) established that those individuals who understand or can control political dynamics respond less negatively than those who lack understanding or control. These perceptions of politics were negatively related to job satisfaction and organisational commitment as identified by Drory (1990).

Vogpda-Gadot (2003) found out that workplace politics was perceived as self-serving behaviour by employees to achieve self-interests, advantages, and benefits at the expense of others and sometimes contrary to the interest of the entire organisation or work unit. These results do not concur with the employees' job satisfaction and intensions to leave.

E. Aryee (2004); Byrne (2005); Chen and Fang (2007); Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson, and Bratton (2004) provided evidence that organisational politics has direct influences on the job performance and that political perceptions were negatively related to affective commitment and job satisfaction. They were positively related to turnover intension and uncorrelated with continuance commitment. Politics was not significantly associated with performance. however, organisational support was positively related to affective commitment, job satisfaction, and job performance. similarly conclusion was drawn by Buchanan and Badham (2007) that employee involvement in organisational politics affects organisational performance, effectiveness, decision making and change processes in organisation.

Mao (2006) established that the organisational level and workplace friendship are negatively correlated. That is, employees of higher organisational level have weaker workplace friendly than employees of lower organisational level.

Wei, Liu, Chen, and Wu (2010) did not find any significant relationship between organisational level and perception of organisational politics, Nasir and Zaki (2009) essentially showed inconclusiveness between job status and job satisfaction. It would have seemed natural that those who are higher should fare better, but their results showed a mixed conclusion. Ofoegbu, Akanbi, and Akhanolu (2012) established that there was a strong association between pay and promotion policy and job satisfaction. Further there is positive association between perception of organisational politics and workplace friendship.

Gotsis and Kortezi (2010) studied established that organisational politics was negatively related to performance of organisation. Similarly other studied established that managers are positively related to the



involvement of organisational politics. These studies concluded that managers who are highly involved in organisational politics were found to be achieving goals of organisation with the help of organisational politics. Therefore managerial involvement in organisational politics was proposed to be necessary for the survival of the organisation (Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1979).

Other empirical conclusion of interest to my intended paper is that organisational politics is negatively related to the employee perception about the fairness and justice in the organisational processes (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; S. Aryee, Chen, & Budhwar, 2004; Beugre & Liverpool, 2006; Ferris, Russ, & Fandt, 1999). Drory and Beaty (1991) also suggested that gender should be investigated as a variable which potentially affects the attitudes and behaviours of organisational members with regard to organisational politics and that the possible unique effect of internal politics on public agencies and public servants is still unclear and deserves more attention.

Williams and Anderson (2011) carried out a study on perception of organisational politics on employee output using three oil producing companies in Malaysia. The study guided by two research questions and descriptive survey research design was adopted. The data used was primary data collected through structural questionnaire. The data collected was analysed using T-test. The study revealed that organisational politics has a significant effect on employee output.

### 3. Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design method. This is premise as it allows the researcher to determine the strength and direction of a relationship that exists between self-interest and communication breakdown in the selected tertiary institutions in Edo State.

The population of this study comprises twelve (14) tertiary institutions as at 2017 in Edo State, Nigeria with the total number of 5,703 academic staff.

**Table-1.** List of Tertiary Institutions and their Numbers of Academic staff in Edo State.

S/No	Institutions	No of Staff
1.	Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi Edo State	1150
2.	Edo State College of Agriculture, Iguoriakhi	90
3.	Wellspring University, Edo State	125
4.	School of Health Technology, Afuze	61
5.	Igbinedision University Okada	120
6.	University of Benin, Benin City	2236
7.	Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwe	160
8.	College of Education, Ekiadoilor, Benin	118
9.	Edo State Institute of Technology and Management, Usen Benin City	249
10.	Edo University, Iyamho	107
11.	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	982
12.	Edo State College of Education, Igueben	159
13.	Shaka Polytechnic, Benin City, Edo State	126
14.	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City	120
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,703</b>

Field Survey, 2018.

The table above is a list of all the tertiary institutions in Edo State. Among the six states in South-south geo-political zone, Edo State boasts of the largest number of tertiary institutions, a scenario which arguably justifies its choice for the study.

Therefore, the target population of this study consist academic staff of the six (6) selected tertiary institutions which is 4837. Out of which the designed sample n=369 was obtained from Taro Yamane formula cited in Omoankhnen and Osagie (2007).

Where:

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

n = desired sample size

N = population of study

E = allowed margin of error = 5%

l = constant

$$n = \frac{4837}{1+4837(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4837}{1+4837(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{4837}{1+12.0925} = \frac{4837}{13.0925}$$

n 369

The table below presents institutions and their respective numbers of academic staff

**Table-2.** Institutions and their respective number of academic staff as at 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2017.

S/No	Institutions	No of Staff	Sampled Across Institution
1.	University of Benin, Benin City (Edo South)	2236	170
2.	Institution of Technology & Management, Usen (Edo South)	249	19
3.	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma (Edo Central)	982	75
4.	College of Education Igueben, (Edo Central)	159	12
5.	Auchi polytechnic, Auchi (Edo North)	1150	88
6.	Institute of Physical and Health Education, Afuze, (Edo North)	61	5
	Total	4837	369

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Purposive sampling techniques was used to select the number of tertiary institutions in Edo State used for this study because for easy availability of data, convenience, interest of the researcher and quick access to information for intensive study on the principles that they can be representative of the entire population used for the study.

Taro Yaman’s statistical formula was used in determining the sample size, the techniques is scientific hence is objective in nature. The sample size is 369 was chosen without any deliberate discrimination. That every academic staff in the six (6) selected tertiary institutions in Edo State had an equal chance to be included in the study.

The data used in this research study was primary data collected through a structural questionnaire. The researcher visited the six (6) sampled tertiary institutions in Edo State, and administered the questionnaires personally with the help of the academic staff in the schools requesting to complete it as truthfully as they can. The completed copies of questionnaire were collected immediately after the respondent completed the questionnaires.

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher on the basis of the research question and it was divided into two parts. Part one comprises of general information resulting to the respondents; part two is designed to get information on self- interest and communication breakdown.

A total of 369 questionnaire were administered to respondents out of which only 95% (i.e. 343 were duly filled and returned. i.e. the respondents of University of Benin, Benin City received 170 questionnaires out of which 158 were filled and returned, Institute of Technology and Management, Usen, received 19 questionnaires out of which 19 were filled and returned, Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma, received 75 questionnaire out of which 70 were filled and returned, College of Education, Igueben received 12 questionnaire out of which 12 were filled and returned, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi received 88 questionnaires out of which 79 were filled and returned, and Institute of Physical and Health Education, Afuze received 5 questionnaires out of which 5 were filled and returned and this will bring a total of 343 questionnaires retrieved from the respondents in the six (6) selected tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria which the research analysis was based.

A 5 point Likert scale of 1 to 5 was used to measure the extent to which the various respondents agreed or disagreed with the issues raised. i.e. Strongly agree (SA) = 5; Agree (A) = 4, Disagree (D) = 3, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2, Undecided (U) = 1.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the questionnaire together with the objective of the study and hypothesis were sent to two experts and specialists in the field of research at Faculties of Management Sciences. This was to establish that the instrument was the appropriate one for measuring the variables contained in the study. The instrument was judged to have both face and content validity. The opinions and advice of these experts and specialists were highly considered in preparation of the final draft of the questionnaire.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest method was employed in testing for the reliability of the instrument. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the strength of the relationship between the two sets of results from the copies of questionnaires. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient formula is given below:

$$r_s \text{ (or P)} = 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{N^3 - N} \quad \text{OR} \quad 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

where  $r_s$  = Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient.

1 = Unity i.e. perfect correlation from which any value in the quality may be taken to reduce the coefficient.

6 = This is the constant value

$\sum d^2$  = The sum of the difference in ranks squared.

N = Number of cases

Decision Rule: Accept the instrument if the value is  $\geq 0.5$

**Table-3.** Test and Re-test table value for the Instrument.

S/No.	Pre-test	Post-test	D	d <sup>2</sup>
1	10	7	3	9
2	6	8	2	4
3	8	8	0	0
4	2	7	5	25
5	4	7	3	9
6	10	6	4	16
7	15	14	1	1
8	12	6	6	36
9	4	6	2	4
10	0	5	4	16
11	5	3	2	4
12	5	7	2	4
13	0	2	2	4
14	15	10	5	25
15	14	12	2	4
Total				170

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Using the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient formula, the reliability of instrument was calculated as thus:

$$1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{N(N^2-1)}$$

$$r^2 = 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{N(N^2-1)}$$

$$1 = \frac{1020}{15(15^2-1)}$$

$$1 = \frac{1020}{3360}$$

$$1 - 0.3036$$

$$0.6964$$

After the computation, the reliability of 0.69 was obtained. This was considered high enough for the instruments to be reliable.

#### 4. Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed quantitatively using the statistical packaged for social science (SPSS, version 21). The data collected were also subjected to descriptive statistics which includes frequencies, means, and percentage. Interpretation of the data was done within the frame of reference of the research problem.

The relationship between variables was established using the Pearson correlation tests (r, correlations). Pearson correlation product moment was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The correlation formula is given below:

$$r^2 = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{(n\sum x^2 - \sum(x)^2) (n\sum y^2 - \sum(y)^2)}$$

$$0 < r^2 < 1$$

In this study,  $r^2$  is used to determine the relationship between the sub-variables.

Decision rule: We do not reject the alternative hypothesis when the probability value is less than alpha otherwise reject.

## 4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

### 4.1.1 Data Presentation

Table-4. Self- interest.

S/N	Self- interest	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
1	I always work to satisfy myself not others	177(48%)	120(32%)	26(7%)	36(10%)	10(3%)	369(100%)
2.	I always make sure I benefit from whatever I do.	146(62%)	68(18%)	21(6%)		52(13%)	369(100%)
3	My primary concern is always what I can gain from what I do.	146(39%)	109(30%)	47(13%)	31(8%)	26(10%)	369(100%)
4.	I will satisfy customers as long as there is something I can gain from it.	187(51%)	130(35%)	16(4%)	7(10%)		369(100%)
5	I always do my job the way it pleases me.	177(48%)	120(32%)	26(7%)	36(10%)	10(3%)	369(100%)
6	When salaries are not paid, I find difficult to carry out my responsibilities as an academic staff of the university.	187(51%)	130(35%)	16(4%)	7(10%)		369(100%)
7	I will always put in my best when I can derive personal benefit from my work place.	146(39%)	109(30%)	47(13%)	31(8%)	26(10%)	369(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

From the analysis above, 48 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they always work to satisfy themselves not others, 32 percent agree, 2 percent were undecided, 7 percent disagree while 10 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that they always work to satisfy themselves not others.

The analysis above shows that 62 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they always make sure they benefit from whatever they do, 18 percent agree, 13 percent were undecided, while 6 percent of the respondents disagree that they always make sure they benefit from whatever they do.

From the analysis above, 39 percent of the respondents strongly agree that their primary concern is always what they can gain from what they do, 35 percent agree, 10 percent were undecided, 13 percent disagree while 8 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that their primary concern is always what they can gain from what they do.

From the analysis above, 51 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they satisfy customers as long as there is something they can gain from it, 35 percent agree, 4 percent disagree while 10 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that the satisfy customers as long as there is something they can gain from it.

The analysis above shows that 48 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they always do their job the way it pleases them, 32% agree, 77 disagree, while 10% strongly agree and 37% undecided that they always do their job the way it pleased them.

From the analysis above, 51 percent of the respondents strongly agree that when salaries are not paid they find it difficult to carry out their responsibilities as an academic staff of the institution, 35% agree, 47 disagree and 10 percent strongly disagree.

From the analysis above, 39 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they will always put in their best when they can derive personal benefit from their work place, 30 percent agree, 13 percent disagree, while 8 percent strongly disagree and 10 percent undecided.

The analysis above shows that 58 percent of the respondents strongly agree that their institution effort is made to help them understand instruction, 28 percent agree, 7 percent were undecided, 3 percent disagree while 4 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that their institution effort is made to help them understand instruction.

From the analysis above, 51 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they are usually left to obey instructions the way they understand them, 22 percent agree, 7 percent disagree while 20 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that they are usually left to obey instructions the way they understand them.

Also, 35 percent of the respondents strongly agree that there is no understanding between them and their boss, 32 percent agree, 8 percent were undecided, 15 percent disagree while 8 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that there is no understanding between them and their boss.

The above analysis also shows 30 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they find it difficult to understand what is required of them, 39 percent agree, 23 percent disagree while 8 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that they find it difficult to understand what is required of them.

**Table-5.** Responses on Communication Breakdown.

S/N	Communication breakdown	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
8	In my institution, no effort is made to help us understand instruction	213(58%)	104(28%)	10(3%)	16(4%)	26(7%)	369(100%)
9.	I am usually left to obey instructions the way I understand them.	187(51%)	83(22%)	26(7%)	73(20%)		369(100%)
10.	There is no understanding between me and my boss	130(35%)	120(32%)	57(15%)	31(8%)	31(8%)	369(100%)
11	I find difficult to understand what is required of me.	21(30%)	28(39%)	16(23%)	6(8%)		369(100%)
	The channel of communication in my institution is always informal in nature.	109(35%)	146 (39%)	83(23%)	31(8%)		369(100%)
	I find it difficult to give feedback to my head of department	146(39%)	109(30%)	47(13%)	31(8%)	26(10%)	369(100%)
	I find it difficult to understand my responsibilities as a result of poor communication channel in my institutions.	177(48%)	120(32%)	26(7%)	36(10%)	10(3%)	369(100%)
	As a member of ASUU I find it difficult to understand the co-existence of the union and management of the institutions	228(62%)	68(10%)	21(6%)		52(13%)	369(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

The above analysis shows 35 percent of the respondents strongly agree that the channel of communication in my institution is always informal in nature; 39 percent agree, 23% were undecided while 8% of the respondents strongly disagree that the channel of communication in my institution is always informal in nature.

From the analysis above, 39 percent of the respondents strongly agree that they find it difficult to give feedback to their heads of department, 30 percent agree, 13 percent disagree, 8 percent strongly disagree and 10 percent undecided.

From the above analysis shows that 48 percent of the respondents strongly agree that find it difficult to understand my responsibilities as a result of poor communication channel in my institutions, 32 percent agree, 7 percent disagree, while 10 percent strongly disagree and 3 percent undecided.

From the above analysis 62 percent of the respondents strongly agree that as a member of ASUU the find it difficult to understand the co-existence of the Union and Management of the institutions.

**Testing of hypothesis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with aid of Statistical Package for Scientific Studies (SPSS Version 21)**

**4.2. Hypothesis Testing**

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between self- interest and communication breakdown in the selected tertiary institutions in Edo State.

*Descriptive statistics*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Self- interest	14.200	8.4352	5
Communication breakdown	14.200	10.3396	5

## Correlation

		Self- interest	Communication breakdowns
Self- interest	Pearson Correlation	1	.839
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	5	5
Communication breakdowns	Pearson Correlation	.839	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	5	5

From the analysis above, it shows that the probability value (0.04) is less than the alpha value (0.05), the researcher accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between self-interest and communication breakdown in the selected tertiary institution in Edo State with a correlation value of 0.839.

## 5. Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between organisational politics and workplace conflict in the selected tertiary institutions in Edo State. Having done the analysis, the findings of the study revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between self- interest and communication breakdown of selected tertiary institutions in Edo State

From the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that organisational politics leads to workplace conflict if not managed since there is a positive significant relationship between self- interest and communication breakdown in the selected tertiary institution in Edo State.

### 5.2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the management of tertiary institutions should put more effort in the supervision of staff so as to manage the extent/level of organisational politics. This is expected to directly increase employee performance, effective communication and employee output.

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