

Conflict Resolution In A Private-Owned Corporation: A Case Study Of Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro, Ogun State

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Abstract: Conflict is unavoidable in organizations because employees, managers, and host communities often pursue different interests and expectations. In private-owned corporations, conflict may arise from wages, working conditions, promotion procedures, communication gaps, safety concerns, and community relations. This study examines conflict resolution in Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro, Ogun State, with emphasis on the organization's conflict-management mechanisms and stakeholder engagement strategies. The study adopts a descriptive case study design and proposes the use of questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis for data collection. Findings from the reviewed literature indicate that conflict resolution is more effective when organizations combine formal grievance procedures with transparent communication, employee engagement, leadership responsiveness, and community participation. The study concludes that effective conflict-management systems improve organizational productivity, workplace harmony, and corporate legitimacy. Recommendations include strengthening grievance-handling systems, improving supervisory communication skills, and increasing employee participation in organizational decision-making.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Employee Engagement, Organizational Conflict, Lafarge WAPCO Plc, Industrial Relations

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Conflict is a normal part of organizational life and becomes more significant in industrial settings where production targets and human relations intersect. In private-owned corporations, conflict can affect productivity, morale, safety, and organizational reputation if it is not managed effectively. Lafarge Africa Plc operates cement facilities in Ewekoro and Sagamu, Ogun State, and Ewekoro remains one of its major operational locations. The company's operational expansion and stakeholder engagement initiatives demonstrate the relationship between industrial growth and organizational harmony.

B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the existence of organizational policies and human resource systems, industrial corporations continue to

experience disputes relating to compensation, supervision, promotion, discipline, and labor relations. In host communities, tensions may also emerge when expectations concerning employment opportunities, compensation, and development projects are not adequately met. This study therefore investigates how Lafarge-WAPCO Plc manages workplace and stakeholder conflicts while maintaining productivity and corporate legitimacy.

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to: (i) examine the causes of conflict in Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro; (ii) identify the conflict-resolution mechanisms used by the company; (iii) assess the effectiveness of these mechanisms; (iv) determine the role of communication and employee engagement in conflict resolution; and (v) suggest strategies for improving conflict management within the corporation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ✓ What are the major causes of conflict in Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro?
- ✓ What conflict-resolution strategies are used in the organization?
- ✓ How effective are these strategies?
- ✓ What role does communication play in resolving conflict?
- ✓ How can conflict resolution be improved in the company?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H01: There is no significant relationship between communication and conflict resolution in Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro.

H02: Employee engagement has no significant effect on conflict reduction in Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro.

H03: Formal grievance procedures do not significantly improve conflict resolution in the organization.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Conflict in organizations may be functional when it encourages innovation and constructive dialogue, or dysfunctional when it results in tension and reduced performance. In corporate settings, conflict commonly arises from communication breakdowns, unclear authority structures, unfair treatment, and competition for organizational resources.

B. THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study adopts the interest-based conflict-resolution theory, which emphasizes identifying underlying interests and needs rather than imposing compromise. The study also draws upon systems theory, which views organizational conflict as a product of interdependence among employees, departments, and external stakeholders.

C. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Previous studies on Nigerian organizations indicate that conflict resolution becomes more effective when management combines dialogue, fair procedures, and responsive leadership. Existing literature further suggests that employee engagement and effective communication reduce workplace misunderstanding and improve trust within organizations.

D. LITERATURE GAP

Although several studies have examined conflict management in Nigerian organizations, limited empirical attention has been given specifically to Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro. This study therefore contributes to the literature by examining conflict-management practices within a major industrial corporation in Ogun State.

III. DATA AND METHODS

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a descriptive case study design because it permits an in-depth analysis of conflict-resolution practices within a single organization.

B. AREA OF THE STUDY

The study area is Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro, Ogun State, Nigeria.

C. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The study population consists of management staff, supervisors, union representatives, and selected employees of Lafarge-WAPCO Plc, Ewekoro.

D. SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A purposive sampling technique may be adopted to select respondents with direct knowledge of workplace conflict and conflict-resolution practices.

E. INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data may be collected through questionnaires, interviews, and organizational document review.

F. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument should be validated by experts in management and industrial relations, while reliability may be tested using Cronbach's alpha technique.

G. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaires will be distributed to respondents and interviews may be conducted with selected staff and management personnel.

H. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data may be analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, while qualitative responses may be analyzed thematically.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A. INTRODUCTION

This section presents and interprets data collected from respondents concerning conflict causes, conflict-handling practices, and the effectiveness of organizational conflict-resolution strategies.

B. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings are expected to show that communication gaps, workload pressure, and promotion-related concerns constitute major causes of organizational conflict. Findings may also indicate that management meetings, grievance channels, and supervisory mediation remain important conflict-resolution tools within the organization.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSION

Conflict resolution in private-owned corporations is essential for organizational stability, productivity, and trust. The Lafarge-WAPCO Plc case demonstrates that conflicts can be effectively managed when organizations combine formal grievance procedures with transparent communication, employee participation, and community engagement.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Management should strengthen grievance-handling systems, train supervisors in mediation and communication,

increase employee participation in decision-making, improve transparency in promotion and disciplinary procedures, and ensure that corporate social responsibility projects reflect host-community priorities.

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