



INTERGROUP CONFLICT AND TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG LECTURERS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

Udeogu Arinze Christian¹ and Onyeizugbe Chinedu Uzochukwu²

Email: ca.udeogu@unizik.edu.ng¹; cu.onyeizugbe@unizik.edu.ng²

Corresponding Author's Email: oladipoabimbola87@gmail.com

Cite this article:

Udeogu A. C., Onyeizugbe C. U. (2024), Intergroup Conflict and Turnover Intention among Lecturers in Public Universities in Anambra State. African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research 7(3), 1-13. DOI: 10.52589/AJSSHR-NFCUV90Z

Manuscript History

Received: 16 Apr 2024

Accepted: 10 Jun 2024

Published: 09 Jul 2024

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ABSTRACT: *Intergroup conflict has caused many employees to leave their jobs with ranging consequences on organizations' operations. Based on this, the study examines the relationship that exists between intergroup conflict and turnover intention in Anambra State Universities, using Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK) and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) as case studies. The Krejcie and Morgan formula was used to determine the sample size of 344. The data was analyzed using a simple regression model, while ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis. The results showed that in Anambra State's public universities, intergroup conflict and turnover intention have a statistically significant and positive association. Thus, the analysis suggests that the Federal Government should always honor agreements made with Academic unions in order to forestall future occurrences of industrial action.*

KEYWORDS: Intergroup conflict, Turnover intention, Public universities, Lecturers, Awka.



INTRODUCTION

Conflict occurs at different levels and takes different dimensions. Conflict may be between employees in the same group and equal hierarchy like lecturers in different departments which is called intergroup conflict. Also, management and employees may be at loggerheads because of various issues like the FG against ASUU. Intergroup conflict is said to manifest itself in all organizations in one of two primary ways. The horizontal conflict includes conflict between departments, such as that between two divisions within the same faculty, such as curriculum and instruction versus educational administration, sales versus production, planning versus research and development, academic staff versus administrative staff, and so forth. The second type of conflict is vertical tension, which involves conflict between different levels of management, such as between workers' unions and organizations, line functions and middle management, and so forth (Ahmed, 2016).

This kind of disagreement occurs when teams, departments, divisions, or units within an organization disagree on accepted standards and principles. As a result of factors relating to organizational structure, like unclear task definitions, these disagreements are not personal in origin (Afzal et al., 2009). Once more, these disputes could stem from variations in the performance requirements for different groups and units. Succinctly capturing the different nature of conflict in organizations, Kaur (2018)'s study affirmed that intergroup conflict negatively impacted on work engagement, while Muhammad et al. (2022) concluded in their study that interpersonal conflict can positively affect turnover intention. However, no matter the nature or direction of the conflict in an organization like the universities, how it is handled is what matters (Onuorah, 2019).

Scholars have established through a variety of approaches that turnover intention which denotes a person's intention to leave their employing organization is a direct result of intergroup conflict. This, in the opinion of Cho et al. (2009), indicates a rift in the bond between workers and the company. Organizational management takes employee intentions seriously since they can have a significant impact on the organization. It affects the commitment and seriousness of the employee. An employee who has the intention to leave or is looking for any possible means to leave may not put in his/her best in the work. According to Chimere-Nwoji (2017), the intention of employees to leave is a significant problem, particularly in the human resource management sector. In accordance with Riaz and Junaid (2011), low job satisfaction, low confidence, low organizational commitment, lack of job involvement, stress, employee turnover, anxiety, and the inability to influence decisions are some of the repercussions of workplace conflict.

However, in Nigeria, the loggerheads between the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) have been the major cause of turnover intentions in UNIZIK and COOU both in Anambra State. This has caused scores of lecturers in these universities to leave lecturing jobs in order to seek for a better offer. Many have even joined the train of "Japa Syndrome", thereby causing brain drain in these institutions. All these happened because many felt dehumanized and maltreated by the behavior of the government in regards the welfare of lecturers and revitalization of public universities for conducive learning environments. The seven and a half months of unpaid salary, which resulted in months of strike due to intergroup conflict, forced many people to resign from the job. A source from the Faculty of Education in UNIZIK confirmed that almost eleven lecturers left the faculty in the space of 2022 and 2023. These are actually contributing to the deterioration of public universities since lecturers are not



motivated to give their bests, and people with passion for the job are leaving due to the inhumane treatment of the Federal Government towards them.

Efforts by ASUU union to convince the government have also proved abortive. The government has established a number of committees to talk about ending the incessant strike in the institutions. Unfortunately, nothing reasonable has been achieved as the conflicts between the Federal Government and ASUU still linger. Studies have also been carried out to investigate the connection between intergroup conflict and turnover intention across the globe. However, studies have not been done in the public universities in Anambra State. Thus, the relationship between intergroup conflict and turnover intention, and the consequences on the quality of education in UNIZIK and COOU is the main aim of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Empirical Literature

Different scholars have discussed the relationship between intergroup conflict on turnover intention using various indicators. Although, there are paucity of empirical works that are directly related to the subject matter, this study reviews works that link conflict with turnover intention. Some studies on interpersonal conflict are also reviewed because the scholars used the word to also mean intergroup based on their justifications. Work conflict may be in the form of intergroup conflict while performance which it affects may take the shape of employee turnover intention.

In a study conducted by Yusoff et al. (2023) in Malaysia on the impact of intergroup and intragroup conflict on organization, descriptive analysis was done to know the factor impact on team innovation and freedom of voice. It was revealed that intergroup and intragroup conflicts are harmful to team innovation which resulted in decrease in employees' performance. The study further stressed that unmanaged conflict can result in higher turnover rates.

A study on the impact of interpersonal conflicts on job depression and turnover intention in different banks in Pakistan was done by Muhammad et al. (2022), using employer attitude as a moderator. Primary data were collected from 215 employees, while the data were analyzed with structural equation modeling. According to the results, differences in job depression, intention to leave, and organizational prestige can be attributed to changes in interpersonal conflicts in approximately 41.9%, 15.4%, and 15.8% of cases, respectively. The study came to the conclusion that interpersonal conflict had a positive impact on job depression and turnover intention in Pakistani banks.

In 499 private higher education institutions in Northern Cyprus, Asieh and Panteha (2021) studied the relationship between interpersonal conflict, turnover intention, and knowledge hiding. The moderating factors included employee cynicism and the emotional intelligence of the teachers, while 200 faculty members from the participating institutions provided data for the study, and Smart PLS3 (SEM) was used to assess the hypotheses. Interpersonal conflict has a direct impact on turnover intention and knowledge hiding behavior in these universities, according to the study's findings. The study also emphasized that faculty emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between the association between interpersonal conflict, turnover



intention, and knowledge hiding and that employee cynicism does not have a mediating influence in this relationship.

Egerová and Rotenbornová (2021) investigated the root causes of conflicts that arise between managers and staff as well as the conflict resolution techniques employed in the Czech Republic. Content and theme analysis were two components of the qualitative methodology used. An investigation of the topics pertaining to the reasons behind disputes between managers and employees was conducted through the use of thematic analysis. To determine the conflict management styles, content analysis was employed. 47 distinct written assignments that described employee-manager conflicts made up the data for both analyses. Fight was the most popular style employed by managers, both male and female, according to the content analysis results. Furthermore, the results showed that avoidance, adaptability, and collaboration are the three strategies that employees most commonly adopt.

Using the case of Kiboga Hospital in Uganda, Tebitendwa (2021) conducted research to determine whether intergroup disputes and organizational performance are related. In addition to a quantitative methodology, the study used a cross-sectional research design. There were 95 participants in the study, and 76 of them made up the sample size that was chosen using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Utilizing a self-administered questionnaire, data was gathered. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were performed on the data using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data, which had a standard deviation of 1.092 and an average mean of 4.154, indicated that respondents generally believed that intergroup conflicts affect performance. Intergroup disagreements and performance were shown to be significantly correlated.

Conflict and how it affects the behavior of workers in sugar mills Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan was conducted by Baloch et al. (2020). A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed during the investigation; 385 of them were returned. The analysis's findings showed a substantial positive relationship between turnover intention and intergroup conflict.

In 2018, Kaur carried out a qualitative study on the possible relationship between intragroup and intergroup conflict at work, psychological distress and work engagement of employees in a textile manufacturing company in Sri Ganganagar. 247 of the employees which is equivalent to 84% of the total employees responded to the questionnaires. The respondents comprise 187 males and 60 females. The analysis of covariance was conducted to analyze the data. The outcome revealed that intergroup conflict has negative but significant association with work engagement, while intragroup conflict was not strongly associated with work engagement than with job satisfaction.

In Rivers State's private healthcare organizations, Chimere-Nwoji (2017) investigated the connection between workplace conflict and workers' intentions to leave. The study employed a cross-sectional survey. A sample size of 226 was established using Krejcie and Morgan's method for determining sample sizes. Twenty of the 200 questionnaires that were returned were deemed invalid due to improper filling. In order to ascertain the association between the variables and the causal relationships that exist among the variables, the data retrieved from the responses were analyzed using both regression analysis and Spearman's Rank order correlation coefficient. The findings indicated a positive correlation between employee intention to quit and workplace conflict. The results showed a substantial link between employees' intention to quit and intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict.



In Malaysia, Langove and Isha (2017) looked at the relationship between turnover intention and psychological well-being, as well as the direct and indirect effects of interpersonal conflict. 396 IT executives who worked for Malaysian software companies provided the study's data. The research model was tested using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method of analysis. The findings showed that while psychological well-being interventions serve to lower the turnover intention of IT executives in the research area, interpersonal conflict contributes to turnover intention.

The impact of interpersonal conflict on employees' task performance, contextual performance, and turnover intentions in Pakistan's telecom industry was examined in depth by Shaukat et al. (2017). 306 telecom engineers and their managers provided information for the study. Data analysis was done using the SEM method. The findings demonstrated a positive correlation between relationship conflict and turnover intentions but a negative link between relationship conflict and task and contextual performance. It also showed how differently the three aspects of job burnout—exhaustion, cynicism, and interpersonal strain at work—mediate the relationships between task, conflict, and turnover intentions.

In the Indonesian city of Probolinggo, East Java, Hasanati et al. (2017) conducted a study to determine the impact of interpersonal conflict on counterproductive work behavior, which is mediated by job stress. Correlational research was the sort of research employed in the non-experimental research design. 213 public servants who fit the requirements were selected from the entire population to be included in the research sample. Cluster random sampling was the method employed for sampling. The Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale (ICAWS), the Job Stress Inventory (JSI), and the Counterproductive Work Behavior Checklist (CWB-C) scale were the data gathering tools employed. For data analysis, the Mediated Multiple Regression analysis technique was used. Testing the hypothesis revealed that workplace interpersonal conflict directly influences counterproductive work behavior, and that job stress acts as a mediating factor between workplace interpersonal conflict and counterproductive work behavior.

Akinbobola and Adetayo (2016) utilized Pearson correlation to analyze the descriptive and cross-sectional survey data collected from 265 women from corporate organizations in Lagos and Ogun states, Nigeria. Findings from this study suggested a significant relationship between family-work conflict, quality work life and turnover intention amongst the corporate women in these areas. Mukolwe et al. (2015) looked into how interpersonal conflict affected a few hotels in Kisii town, Kenya, in terms of organizational performance. Both explanatory research methodologies and descriptive survey methods were used in the study. It was directed towards 368 workers who were specifically chosen from hotels. Using stratified random sampling, 194 employees made up the sample size. Questionnaires were employed for gathering data, and reliability was evaluated through the use of Cronbach's Alpha following validation and pilot testing. The outcomes of interpersonal conflict do not significantly affect organizational performance, according to the results of the multiple regression analysis that was done. In contrast, interpersonal conflict strategies, relationship conflict, and task conflict, respectively, considerably affect organizational performance.



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Due to the nature of the study, a survey research design was chosen. This research design is suitable for this study because it enables the researcher to sample the perceptions or opinions of lecturers concerning the role of intergroup conflict on turnover intention. Data were collected from sampled respondents (lecturers) through questionnaires. Copies of the questionnaire designed were administered in order to obtain responses from the target audience.

Area of the Study

The study's area is Anambra State which is one of the five South East States in Nigeria, with its capital situated in Awka. Anambra State has two publicly owned universities which are UNIZIK, Awka and COOU, Uli.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is 3492 academic staff of the selected universities. The source of this figure is the personnel department of the respective schools studied. The distribution of the population is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Selected Universities Firms

S/N	Name	Population
1	UNIZIK	2480
2	COOU	1012
	Total	3492

Source: *Personnel Department of the Schools Studied, 2023.*

Table 1 shows the distribution of the population of the study, with UNIZIK having 2480 academic staff while COOU has 1012 academic staff, making a total of 3492 staff.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study made use of Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula to determine the sample size of the study. The workings are shown below:

$$s = \frac{x^2 NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + x^2 P(1 - P)}$$

Where

s = Sample size

x^2 = Table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at 0.05% confidence level (3.84)

N = population size (3492)

P = population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample size)



d = Degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05)

$$s = \frac{3.84 (3492)(0.5)(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2(3492-1) + (3.84) (0.5)(1-0.5)}$$

$$s = \frac{3333}{8.7275 + 0.96}$$

$$s = \frac{3333}{9.6875}$$

$$s \cong 344$$

In determining the proportion of questionnaires to be allocated to the studied institutions, Bowley's allocation formula was used and the workings are shown below:

$$nh = \frac{nNh}{N}$$

Where n = total sample size.

Nh = No. of items in each stratum in the population.

N = population size.

Allocation of the Sample Size

$$\text{UNIZIK} \quad 344 (2480) / 3492 = 245$$

$$\text{COOU} \quad 344 (1012) / 3492 = 99$$

From the calculation, it is seen that UNIZIK got a total of 245 copies of the questionnaire corresponding to the population proportion of the institution while COOU got a total of 99 copies of the questionnaire corresponding to their population proportion.

Method of Data Collection

The data for the study was collected in person, with the help of one research assistant. The research assistant was properly trained to entertain questions from the respondents and to also know those to distribute the questionnaire.



DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 below shows the distribution of the demographic characteristics of the people that responded to the questionnaire.

Table 2: Demographic Factors

No	Biographic	Frequenc y	Percentag e	Total
1	Gender			300
	Male	173	58	
	Female	127	42	
2	Age			300
	18-27	-		
	28-37	54	18	
	38-47	76	25	
	48-57	130	44	
	58 and above	40	13	
3	Marital Status			300
	Single	76	25	
	Married	211	70	
	Divorced	2	1	
	Widow	4	1	
	Widower	7	3	
4	Educational Qualifications			300
	HND/B.Sc	13	4	
	M.Sc/MBA/MA	186	62	
	Ph.D/Post-Ph.D	101	34	
5	Working Experience			300
	5 – 10 years	198	66	
	Above 10	102	34	

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 2 shows the demographic factors of the respondents. From the Table, 173 of the respondents are male while 127 are female. It can also be seen from the Table that none of the respondents is between the ages of 18-27, while 54 respondents are between 28-37, 76 are between 38-47. 130 are between 48-57, while 40 are 58 years and above. On the marital status of the respondents, 25% are single, 70% are married, 1% are either divorced or widowed while 3% are widowers. On their educational qualification, 13 of the 300 respondents have HND/B.Sc, 186 have M.Sc/MBA/MA while 101 have Ph.D/Post-Ph.D. Enquiry about their work experience shows that 66% of the respondents have worked between 5–10 years while the rest 34% have work experience that is above 10 years.



Distribution of Questionnaires

The questionnaire distribution schedule is presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Questionnaire Distribution Schedule

S/N	Institution	Distributed	Collected	Analyzed
1	UNIZIK	245	229	225
2	COOU	99	81	75
Total		344 (100%)	310 (90%)	300 (87%)

Source: *Field Survey, 2023.*

Table 3 shows the total number of distributed copies of the questionnaire, retrieved copies and the number analyzed for the study. From the Table, a total of 344 copies of the questionnaire were distributed in accordance with the sample size of the study, 310 copies were collected representing 90% of the distributed copies of the questionnaire while 300 copies were analyzed as they were some questionnaire copies that were incompletely answered.

Descriptive Statistics for Research Questions and Test of Hypothesis

Table 4: Distribution of Responses for Intergroup Conflict and Turnover Intention

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Verdict
Independent Variables (Workplace Conflict)								
Intergroup Conflict								
1	My department is having issues with another department(s).	56	88	23	44	89	2.93	Reject
2	I do not have a problem with anybody in other sections of the university.	89	60	5	66	80	3.04	Accept
3	My department tries to have a good relationship with other departments.	131	99	10	60	-	4.00	Accept
4	People in some departments are envious of my department.	40	54	53	63	90	2.64	Reject
5	There are some departments that do not like my department.	39	45	67	71	78	2.65	Reject
Dependent Variables (Employee Engagement)								
Turnover Intention								
6	I would gladly leave my department for another department because of the conflicts there.	47	65	8	100	80	2.66	Reject
7	If I see another good job, I will leave my institution as a result of problems there.	70	85	11	94	40	3.17	Accept
8	I do not have the intention of leaving my school because of the cordial relationship there.	65	70	-	102	63	2.91	Reject
9	I see myself retiring from my university.	80	89	18	113	-	3.45	Accept
10	I will give my all as I want to remain here for a long time.	67	79	10	102	42	2.76	Reject

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*



Table 4 indicates the distribution of responses for intergroup conflict and turnover intention of the respondents. The analysis here is carried out using the mean, with a benchmark of acceptance of 3 and above. Starting with the questionnaire items used in measuring intergroup conflict, when the respondents were asked if their department is having issues with another department(s), a mean of 2.93 shows that they disagreed. The respondents agreed that they do not have a problem with others in other sections of the university as shown with a mean of 3.04. A mean of 4 shows that they agreed that their department tries to have a good relationship with other departments while a mean of 2.64 indicates that they disagreed that people in some departments are envious of their department. They also disagreed that there are some departments that do not like their department with a mean of 2.65.

On questions concerning turnover intention, the respondents disagreed that they would gladly leave their department for another department because of the conflicts there with a mean of 2.66. A mean of 3.17, however, shows that the respondents agreed that if they see another good job, they will leave their institution as a result of problems there. On the contrary, they disagreed that they do not have the intention of leaving their school because of the cordial relationship there with a mean of 2.91. They agreed that they see themselves retiring in their university with a mean of 3.45 while a mean of 2.76 shows that they disagreed that they will give their all as they want to remain here for a long time.

Hypotheses Testing

There is a significant relationship between intergroup conflict and turnover intention among lecturers in public universities in Anambra State.

Table 5: Regression Result for Hypothesis Testing

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate
1	.984 ^a	.968	.968	1.278

a. Predictors: (Constant), INTGRP

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

Where:

INTGRP = Intergroup Conflict

Table 5 shows the regression analysis result for hypothesis two which states that there is a significant relationship existing between intergroup conflict and turnover intention among lecturers in public universities in Anambra State. As can be seen from the table, there is a positive correlation between the variables (turnover intention and intergroup conflict), as demonstrated by $R = .984$. Additionally, the R-Square (.968) indicates that variations in the independent variables (intergroup conflict) account for 97% of the variation in the dependent variable (turnover intention).

**Table 6: ANOVA Output for Hypothesis Two**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14691.662	1	14691.662	8997.588	.000 ^b
	Residual	486.588	298	1.633		
	Total	15178.250	299			

a. Dependent Variable: TURNINT

b. Predictors: (Constant), INTGRP

Source: *SPSS Output, 2023*

Where:

TURNINT = Turnover Intention

The ANOVA result obtained is displayed in Table 6. As can be seen from the result, the p-value is .000 and the F statistics is 8997.588. Because the p-value is below the threshold of significance (p-value < .05), it may be concluded that the association between intergroup conflict and turnover intention is statistically significant.

Decision: Accept the alternate hypothesis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study examines the extent of the relationship that exists between intergroup conflict and turnover intention among lecturers in public universities in Anambra State and the hypothesis accompanying this objective was that there is a significant relationship existing between intergroup conflict and turnover intention among lecturers in public universities in Anambra State. It is also instructive to note that the relationship observed was a positive one and the extent of the relationship seen was highly significant. This finding implies that an increase in intergroup conflict in the universities studied will also lead to an increase in turnover intention in the universities. When departments or groups within the university system are in conflict, it will trigger exiting wishes among the lecturers. For instance, the standoff between ASUU and the FG which has been lingering for a while has made many lecturers leave the schools and have also left many nurturing the intention to leave. Hence, an increase in this kind of conflict will keep increasing the turnover intentions of the lecturers to look for better places or countries to go and work. This finding is in contrast with the findings of Kaur (2018) which showed that intergroup conflict has a negative but significant effect on employees' intention. Additionally, Chimere-Nwoji's (2017) study demonstrated a strong correlation between workplace conflict and workers' intentions to resign. The results further showed that employees' intentions to resign are significantly correlated with intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup conflict.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study examines the relationship between intergroup conflict and turnover intention in public universities in Anambra State, Nigeria, using UNIZIK and COOU as case study. The analysis was carried out using survey and simple regression. The findings however reveal that there is a statistically significant relationship existing between intergroup conflict and turnover intention among lecturers in public universities in Anambra State. Intergroup conflict can force employees to decide to leave for a better place, and this could cause disruptions in the services of such employees to the organization, especially, if they hold better positions in the organization. It is therefore recommended that the FG as the employers needs to always respect agreements reached with the unions to forestall constant industrial action and the concomitant employees' turnover, which could lead to brain drain in the university system.

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