

The Influence of Type a Behaviour and Locus of Control of Conflict Resolution Strategies Among SME Employees in Ondo State

Dr. Ihinmoyan Timothy

Department of Business Administration, Adekunle Ajasin University, P.M.B. 001, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State

Dennis Uba

Department of Pure and Applied Psychology, Adekunle Ajasin University, P.M.B. 001, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State

Dr. Olatunji, O. D.

Department of Business Administration, Adekunle Ajasin University, P.M.B. 001, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State

Abstract

The ability of employees to resolve conflicts is as important as making profit for the organization. Conflict within and outside an organization takes an enormous toll in the growth, development and sustenance of the organization. The study examined the influence of Type A behaviour and locus of control on conflict resolution among employees in SME's in Ondo State. The study made use of Pearson Product Moment Correction (PPMC) to measure the extent of relatedness of the predictor variables on conflict resolution among SME employees in Ondo State. A total of 210 SME employees participated in the study. Convenient sampling technique was used to select the participants. The result of the study show that Type A had a significant relationship with conflict resolution strategies [$r(210) = .31; p > 0.05$]. This implies that as Type A behaviour significantly predicted conflict resolution strategies. Similarly, openness to experience had significant relationship with conflict resolution strategies [$r(210) = .44; p < 0.05$]. based on the findings of the study, the result of the analysis revealed that An all-inclusive, effective and functional conflict resolution support system should be established by SME organizations to replace the existing system. Also, employees should be vested with reliable information through conferences, seminars, consultations and workshops on current conflict resolution practices systems as obtainable in developed societies.

Keywords: Type A behaviour, locus of control and conflict resolution strategies

INTRODUCTION

The ability of employees to resolve conflicts is as important as making profit for the organization. Conflict within and outside an organization takes an enormous toll in the growth, development and sustenance of the organization. Several organizations have invested time, money and effort aimed at understanding and controlling the effects of conflict among employees and customers alike (Ganster & Rosen, 2013).

The importance of conflict resolution cannot be over emphasized. Conflicts within organizations can pose significant threat to organizational goals and objectives, increase rate of turnover, and lower productivity (De Dreu, Harinck & Van Vianen, 1999). Literatures have examined conflict resolutions and suggested that conflicts are not necessarily controlled but can be managed and as well as forestalled. Several strategies have been designed to suit situational occurrences and research has recommend best practices (Haslam, Postmes & Ellemers, 2003). However, in recent times, human resource managers and entrepreneurs have clamoured for research into the variables that suggest conflict resolution characteristics in employees? Despite the plurality of literature on conflict resolution strategies, there seems to be paucity in empirical literatures that proffer solutions to this problem.

Within a small business, conflict may arise from opposing ideas, opinions, decisions and actions relating to work or personal matters. Irrespective of type of conflict, if not properly managed, can have a significant impact on a business from decreased productivity and lowered morale to increased absenteeism and increased employee turnover (Vittee, 2015).

Conflict resolution can solve relationship problem, time and resource while improving productivity and helping move projects forward (De Dreu, Weingart, Kwon, 2000). Conflict resolution strategy refers to the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution (Barsky, 2015). Roche, Teague, and Colvin, (2015) refer conflict resolution to any reduction in severity of a conflict. Dimensions of conflict resolution typically parallel the dimensions of conflict in a way that conflict is processed. The concept of conflict resolution strategy can be thought to encompass the use of non-violent resistance measure by conflicted parties in an attempt to promote resolution (Moffit & Bordone, 2005).

Personality refers to the enduring ways a person has of feeling, thinking, and behaving, is the first determinant of how people think and feel about their jobs or job satisfaction. Policemen's personality (like every other person) influences the extent which thoughts and feelings about a job are positive or negative (George, 1992). Adekunle and Awosika, (2008) asserted that there are broadly two personality types, Type A and Type B. Type A personalities are hasty, irritated and can be hostile and belligerent. They show skepticism of the world and are competitive and show tendency to be anxious and agitated when it comes to family and work-related situations. They have poor impulse control and feel that they always need to be active in all things. When it comes to emotions, they express their anger with outburst and verbal comments, display strong emotional reactions, can be unpredictable with emotional inconsistency, and experience negative emotions. Type A's always watches others and can react in a hostile manner towards others. They like to have control over everything so they tend to be team leaders but are difficult to please. Type A personalities are risk takers, rigid and inflexible (Irikefe, 2006).

Locus of control refers to the extent to which an individual or group of individuals belief that events in one's life is shaped or influenced by events within or outside (Rotter, 1966). Having an internal locus of control (believing one has control over her/his own life, as opposed to outside forces having control) while external locus of control is the belief that the

environment or situations influence one's life (Rotter, 1966). Oladipo, Olapegba and Adenaike, (2013) asserted that locus of control is an important feature of the law enforcement. Locus of control is considered as core self-evaluation that describes individual characteristics that may be dependent on the employee task.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict resolution strategies are paramount responsibilities of human resource managers, policy makers and other stakeholders. Literatures have suggested that conflict resolution practice may be hinged on several variables, such as, personality, demographic and contingency factors. As plausible as these suggestions portend, only a few literatures have been carried out to examine these possibilities. Therefore, the study attempts to examine the role that personality type play in conflict resolution strategies in Small Scale Enterprises (SME's). SME's become the focal point because these group have less been investigated. Also SME's will benefit from research in that, during recruitment and placement of employees, possess may provide fulcrum for the enterprise growth and development.

Contemporary studies have revealed that strong willed personalities can sometimes be intimidating especially to confrontation (Vittee, 2015). Type A personalities have been reported to show anxiousness and may handle rejection differently. When conflict occurs managers' experience dips in morale and productivity also, unresolved conflicts have also been implicated to cause sleep deprivation, strained intra-work relationships, workplace violence, sabotage and increase in compensation claims (Barsky, 2015). For the human resource personnel, it is important to be able to identify conflict in the workplace and know how to quickly and effectively resolve the underlying issues.

Whether dealing with disagreement between co-workers or breaking through a standstill, in a job contract negotiation, conflict resolution strategy is best approached through deliberate process that considers the different conflict resolution styles of each participant. Conflict resolution help solve work-relationship problems, time and resource and also improve productivity and help move projects forward. Conflict resolution strategy refers to the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution (Barsky, 2015).

The dual conflict model of conflict resolution asserts that group members balance their concern for satisfying personnel needs and interest with the concern for satisfying the needs and interest of others in different way (Adewale and Bamise, 2015). Being able to express one's feelings to a concern and understanding listener is enough to relieve frustration and make it possible for an individual to advance to a problem-solving frame of mind.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine whether Type A and locus of control will influence conflict resolution among employees in SME's in Ondo State. However, the specific purpose of this study is to examine whether Type A behaviour and locus of control will jointly influence conflict resolution among SME's employees in Ondo State.

Relevance of the Study

The outcome of this study will provide some pragmatic relevance for specialized institutions like the limited liability companies, ministry of works, Bureau of Public Enterprise. It would help to know where to focus conflict resolution on, also when and where to redesign their strategies to develop, promote and sustain an enlightened work force.

In addition, this study afford to provide real-life relevance for researchers as well as scholars as it would help with learning and educational practice which will be useful in Nigerian colleges including universities, in training human resource, business management, social and human science students on the importance of developing and sustaining proper resolution strategy. The results of this study, will also inform human resource managers/professionals about the need and requirements for employees (especially those in SME) to successfully inculcate the needed psychological attributes required for optimal conflict resolution.

Hypothesis

Based on the objective of the study as enunciated above, the following research hypothesis were formulated:

1. Type A behaviour will significantly influence conflict resolution among SME employees in Ondo State.
2. Locus of control will significantly influence conflict resolution among SME employees in Ondo State.
3. Type A behaviour and Locus of control will jointly significantly influence conflict resolution among SME employees in Ondo State.

Related Studies on Type A Behaviour and Conflict Resolution

Several studies on personality suggest that conflict resolution suggest that conflict management entails behavioural disposition that make it possible to eradicate conflict instead of reducing, eliminating or limitation their duration. This means that each organization should have a macro strategy reducing the negative consequence of conflicts. Personality type A, have been suggested to contribute to organizational conflict and that modern organizations need a macro organization strategy that completely reduce negative effects of conflicts makes use of their constructive dimension and contributes to organizational learning and success. Organizational causes of conflict are consequence of the characteristics of organizational design , limited resources and characteristics of organizational system such as compensation, decision-making, planing and budgeting (Petkovic, 2008). Cetin and Hacifazlioglu, (2004), personality differences in organizational conflict in a positive or negative way may affect the nature of the conflict whether beneficial or destructive.

Friedman, Tid, Cural and Tsai, (2000) suggest that conflict affect work and organizational productivity nuture both people and business. Particularly, enhance decision quality, improve individual satisfaction, increase productivity and organizational effectiveness, result in more narrative and can be engine of change (Chan, Monroe, Ng, and Tan, 2006).

Successful management these days depends heavily on an ability to handle conflict effectively as Mintzberg, (1975) observed over 30 years ago, he asserted that managers must spend substantial amount of time responding to the high pressure

disturbance and called that managerial role and McShulskis, (1996) re-affirmed with this finding that executives spend 18 percent of their time resolving employee personality clashes, while ten years before the time spent on employee mediation was half that amount. Thus, the foremost managerial task in modern times is to create a climate where conflict is managed and not avoided (Bagshaw, 1998) and to permit conflict to serve a productive function (Chan, Monroe, Ng, and Tan, 2006). In other words, contemporary managers are called upon to reduce differences in priorities and preference and use conflict in a way that benefits the organization (Friedman, Tidd, Cural, and Tsai, 2000).

Cohen, (2002) states that conflict resolution efforts are most successful in organizational in which for lack of better expression people feel cared for only when teachers and students feel valued, when they are engaged in the educational process, when their opinion are solicited and appreciated. People with type A personality have been reported to make hasty decisions and exhibit aggressive behaviour which may sometimes negatively affect the organizations members in a negative way.

Related Studies on Locus of Control and Conflict Resolution

Schultz and Schultz , (2005), also point out that employees who develop an internal locus tend to come from families where parents have been supportive and consistent in self-discipline. Also, locus of control is a personality trait that emerges as a stable orientation focusing on issues of how individuals attribute their success or failure in achieving tasks. Difference for example, western cultures varies individually and across cultures for example, western cultures and United States in particular tend to have strong , internal locus of control, where individuals attribute success or failure to their own skills and orientation.

African cultures tend to have stronger external locus of control where individuals attribute outcomes to change, fate or actions by powerful others (Kurtz and Turpin , 1999). in relationships individuals with internal locus of control have ben found to be more able to resolve conflict productivity than externals. Individuals with internal locus of control try harder to succeed because they believe they can control the outcome of discussion and are more likely to rely on integrative cooperative messages. Individuals with external locus of control are often characterized as those who give up easily and withdraw taking conflict personally and resorting to more aggressive tactics when forced into conflict and resort to using more distributable, competitive messages and avoidance messages. Bjorkqvist (1992) cited that adolescents in Finland and Italy reported that aggressive-physical , victimization, and indirect aggression correlated significantly with external locus of control in men than in women.

Method

The study examined how Type A behaviour and Locus of control will jointly and significantly increase conflict resolution among SME employees in Akure, Ondo State. The study made use of Pearson Product Moment Correction (PPMC) to measure the extent of relatedness of the predictor variables. A total of 210 SME employees participated in the study. Convenient sampling technique was used to select the participants.

Setting

The study was carried out in the cosmopolitan city of Akure, because of a large pool of SME's in the location. The organizations that participated were; Life Seeds Entrepreneurship Development Centre, Alagbaka, Akure, Airflow Engineering Links Ltd, Denki Wire & Cable Company, Akure-Ife Express way.

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted in the study. The participants were selected across various SME's in Akure environs. The dependent variable is conflict resolution while the predictor variables are Type A behaviour and Locus of control. This study was conducted using ex-post facto since it attempted to explain consequence based on antecedent condition.

Participants

The sampled population consists of SME employees who had been working for at least 3 months prior to this study. The questionnaires were distributed to participants at meetings on agreed dates, and they were collected back after 5 days. Out of 283 questionnaires distributed, 215 were returned, but 210 were found usable to generate the data. The distribution of the 210 subjects is as follow: demographic data obtained from the research study are as follows: The gender ratio is 110 (50.44%) for male and 100 (49.56%) for female participants. The mean of the ages was 27.19 and a standard deviation of 8.87. SME employees that were purposively sampled from various SME organizations were sampled. Yamane's (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size of this study. It is used to calculate the minimum sample size of a given population. The formula is given below:

$$n = N/1+N(e)^2$$

Where, n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision/margin of error, which is expressed as 5%. Accordingly, by applying the above formula, the sample size of the present study is calculated as follows.

$$n = 210/1+210(0.05)^2 \\ = 70$$

Life Seeds Entrepreneurship Development Centre = $70/210 \times 100 = 33.3\%$ of 210 = 70

Denki Wire & Cable Company = $70/210 \times 100 = 33.3\%$ of 210 = 70

Airflow Engineering Links Ltd = $70/210 \times 100 = 33.3\%$ of 400 = 70

Total number of Participants = $70+70+70 = 210$

Instrument

Relevant data was gathered through the use of validated questionnaire which comprised of 3 sections A-C. Section A comprised of demographic variables, Section B, Type A Inventory, Section C, measures of locus of control and Section D, measures of conflict resolution. Section B contains items measuring Type A by Endler and Parker, (1999). This is a 21-item scale that measures three coping strategies: task-oriented, emotion-oriented and avoidance coping. Task-oriented coping refers to purposeful task-oriented efforts aimed at solving the problem, cognitively restructuring the problem or attempts to alter the situation. The emphasis is on the task or planning, and to attempts to solve the problem.

All items are on a 5-point Likert scale format ranging from not at all = 1; very much =5. The scale is widely used as a self-report instrument for evaluating individual coping tendencies. Sample from the items of the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS-21) in Adolescents Scale includes; 'I blame myself for having gotten into this situation', 'I analyze my problem before reacting'. Nigerian author (Fasasi, 2002) has adopted and used this scale and has reported a Cronbach's alpha of .87.

Section C, contained the openness to experience measures items which was derived from the Big Five Personality Inventory by Ostendorf (1990), which consists of openness to experience (8 items), and other variables such as conscientiousness (10 items), Extraversion and Introversion (9 items), Agreeableness etc. However, only the 8 items that measured openness to experience was extrapolated for the study.

The instrument was adjudged to be valid because the criteria for the validation of instrument such as face, content and construct validities were ensured by the fact that items of the questionnaire were adopted from the main theorists instrument which had being validated. The reliability of the big five personality trait questionnaire was determined by the use of test-retest reliability and internal consistency reliability. The reliability coefficients are adequate and not inferior since the correlation between the two tests gave a reliability of 0.78.

Section D, measures interpersonal solidarity using Wheelless's interpersonal solidarity questionnaire constructed by Wheelless's in 1976. The ISQ is a 24 items that asks respondents to report their perception of closeness and tapping the effective domain of interpersonal relationships. The items of the ISQ are Likert type interval scaled from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). Positive worded items were reversed before data analysis so that higher scale scores were interpreted as high levels of satisfaction and solidarity. The item samples include; 'I resolve disagreements cooperatively', 'My opinion counts in my organization', 'There is an atmosphere of trust in my organization'. Wheelless (1976) reported a reliability of .98 Caine (1999) reported a reliability of .93.

Data Analysis

In order to determine the extent and direction of associations among the study variables, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was conducted. Multiple regression analysis was also used to test research hypothesis. Some of the socio-demographic variables were codified. For example, gender was coded male 0, female 1. All analyses were conducted using SPSS 20.0 Wizard. A multiple regression analysis model was used to predict the roles of coping strategies and openness to experience on Life Seeds Entrepreneurship Development Centre, Alagbaka, Akure, Denki Wire & Cable Company, Akure-Ife Express way.

Results

Test of Relationship among the Study Variables

The first analysis involved inter-correlations of all the variables of the study. The result presented in table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix Showing the Mean, SD and Inter-Variable Relationships

	Correlations									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	1									
2. Gender	-.052	1								
3. Religion	.163*	.074	1							
4. Marital Status	.493*	.143*	.242	1						
5. Job Position	.625*	.022	.114	.422**	1					
6. Job Tenure	.408*	.044	.068	.137*	.407*	1				
7. Academic Qualification	.082	-.090	.012	-.188*	-.160*	.098	1			
8. Type A Behaviour	-.250*	-.149	-.224*	-.181*	-.182	-.244*	-.219	1		
9. Openness to Experience	.019	-.157*	-.032	-.117	-.115	.092	.500*	.042	1	
10. Interpersonal Solidarity	.011	.122	.172*	.029	.167*	.181*	.282*	.312*	.442*	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Test of Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

Results in Table 1 indicated that age, gender, religion, marital status, job position, job tenure, marital status and academic qualification had significant relationship on conflict resolution strategies. Table 1 show that Type A had a significant relationship with conflict resolution strategies [$r(210) = .31; p > 0.05$]. This implies that as Type A behaviour significantly predicted conflict resolution strategies. Similarly, openness to experience had significant relationship with

conflict resolution strategies [$r(210) = .44$; $p < 0.05$]. This indicates that SME employees who reported high openness to experience develops and show increased tendency to exhibit tendency to conflict resolution vulnerabilities.

Discussion

The hypothesis which stated that Type A behaviour would independently and jointly predict conflict resolution strategies among SME employees was accepted. The results in Table 1 revealed that Type A influences conflict resolution strategies among the SME's employees. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Hagihara, Tarumi, and Morimoto, (1998) who revealed that the Type A behaviour pattern virtually guarantees that people will encounter many stressful situations, such as time pressures of their own making and barriers that anger them. Also, the combination of traits that make up Type A personality such as being impatient, very hurried, hostile and aggressive when it comes to relationships may be an explanation to why they show conflict resolution propensities.

Also, Kirkcaldy, Shephard and Furnham, (2002), in their study show that in a sample of 332 managers, a type A personality and an external locus of control are associated with greater perceived levels of stress (particularly in terms of interpersonal relationships), lower job satisfaction and a poorer physical and mental health than that of managers with a type B personality and an internal locus of control.

The result also revealed that SME's employee significantly influenced conflict resolution strategies at 57.6 %. Contemporary personality studies have suggested that individuals who are show high response to internal locus of control tend to show higher levels of altruistic behaviour such as, conflict resolution tendencies is a prerequisite.

Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of this study, the authors recommend the following:

1. An all-inclusive, effective and functional conflict resolution support system should be established by SME organizations to replace the existing system.
2. All employees should be vested with reliable information through conferences, seminars, consultations and workshops on current conflict resolution practices systems as obtainable in developed societies.
4. Consolidating institutional mechanisms to self-monitor SME operations by regulating conflict management practices.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

This study has some degree of limitations. The research sample was from one geo-political zone in the country. The study findings can not be assumed on a broad basis to other geo-political zone of the Federation.. The study depended extensively on self-report which is prone to responder bias. This study also focused on psychological perspectives. Future research can explore situational, socio-political, and cultural view points to get an all-inclusive perspective.

Conclusion

Inferences established from this study have implications in SME organizations and other stakeholders in the SME establishments. It necessitates the need for an exemplar modification in the way SME personnel, and operational processes are structured and applied in Nigerian SME operations. A new perspective to conflict resolution should be all-inclusive and serviceable. To effectively revamp the present process and practice of employee support, training programs on employee relations support need be established. Focus should be on interpersonal communication skills, knowledge driven innovation based on SME, mission, and culture, hinged on recognizance of employee requirements. This will create platform to realize institutional objectives and seamlessly align them to individual organizations goals.

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