

COMMON INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY AND FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHERE

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Abstract

Internal conflicts are inherent in organisations, including universities with more complex structures that specifically handle different functions in teaching and research. It is evident there are challenges of internal conflict in universities. This research therefore examined internal conflicts management strategies in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere. The objectives include to find out the most common types of internal conflicts in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere and to examine the most frequent factors responsible for internal conflicts in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere. The theory used for the study is Pluralist. The study employed questionnaire to collect data. The target population of the study are academic and non-teaching staff in the study area. 1,065 samples were selected using Krejcie and Morgan sample size calculator from the target population. From 1,065 distributed, only 1000 were duly filled and returned. The data collected were analyzed using simple frequency tables and percentages with the aid SPSS version 16. The findings show that the types of internal conflicts experienced in the two universities include; conflict between university management and academic staff unions and non-academic unions and conflict between academic staff unions and non-academic staff union among others. The study also found that most frequent factors responsible for internal conflict in the study universities include imposition of decision on employees by the university managements, refusal of the university managements to honor agreements reached with workers unions, competition over Tetfund conference/workshops and study fellowships among others. The study concluded that internal conflicts are inevitable in human life and so are they in institutions of higher learning including Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere. Based on the findings, the study recommended the need for improved consultations, the need to adhere strictly to the guidelines for selection and nominations of staff for tetfund sponsorship and improved guidelines for sharing of earned academic allowances among academic and non-academic staff in the universities.

Keywords: Internal conflict, academic staff unions, non-academic staff unions and university management

1.1 Introduction

Organizations are established for the purpose of achieving desired goals. Whether these organizations are private or public, formal or informal institutions, leadership plays a key factor in steering their affairs to achieve the desired goals and in minimizing internal conflicts. It is also a way of influencing the activities of employees; specifically, leaders are engaged in coordinating, managing human and non-human resources in actualizing the organizational goals. The absence of good leadership can lead to the failure of organizations in achieving their goals; as a result, this can also influence internal conflict (Yusuf, Umar & Aina 2014). Internal conflicts, therefore, have been observed to be in existence in all human organisations. Internal conflicts could be described as the forms of competition, oppositions, disagreements, frictions between two or more parties and its manifestation in the forms of arguments, protests, demonstrations, aggression and other destructive behaviours.

While internal conflict occurrence have been observed to be inevitable and ubiquitous in human organisations, the frequent factors responsible for it have remained topical issues and matters of concern to individuals, groups and scholars (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). Institutions of higher learning exist because they have goals to attain, which includes providing accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities, preparing students with knowledge and skills for self-reliance, promoting and encouraging scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service and to contribute to national development through high level manpower training, among others (Olalekan, 2018). These goals can be effectively attained when the human resources within the institutions are properly managed for their positive impacts on productivity. This also will help in reducing the spread of internal conflicts in the institutions.

There were studies conducted in Nigeria which examine the common internal conflict that cut across areas of human endeavours. With respect to the academic environment, studies were conducted to examine the common internal conflict in many Nigerian universities, including the public and private ones by Joseph and Joseph (2007), Olalekan (2015), Igbinoba et al (2019) and Baffa et al (2022), among others. It has been observed from these studies that Nigerian universities have for decades been faced with crises ranging from conflict between students and academic staff, academic staff and non-academic staff, academic staff and management of universities and non-academic staff and management of universities. There are also inter and intra conflicts between units, departments, divisions and directorates and amongst staff. Based on the available literature, the most rampant internal conflict is between staff and the university managements over staff development, conditions of service, staff union associations and university managements over staff welfare and refusal of managements to honour agreements reached.

Similarly, internal conflict between students' unions and university managements are equally frequent which, most at times, results from inadequate social amenities on campuses, such as electricity and water supply, transportation, among other factors (Olalekan, 2015). These internal conflicts have given rise to distrust and hostility among professional associations, academics, non-academic staff and students, thus, contributing in hampering smooth, effective and efficient administration in the universities; this may lead to revolts, protests, unrest and violence, as well as incessant closure of schools for months (Victor & Stella-Maris, 2013).

Furthermore, literature shows that, internal conflicts in many universities arise due to disagreements between staff unions and managements and between unions over conditions of services, welfare among other factors which, at times, affects the academic calendar, thereby rendering school environments completely insecure for serious academic activities which is not beneficial to students, institutions and the society at large (Adoja, 2014). Other studies, however,

revealed that internal bureaucratic structure, poor communication and organizational policies are major causes of internal conflicts in many Nigerian universities (Peter et al; 2021). Gombe State was created from former Bauchi State. Since its creation, the State has eight State and four Federal tertiary institutions including the Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere. Since their establishments in 2004 and 2011 respectively, it is evident that, the managements of the universities use different internal conflicts management strategies in resolving internal conflicts. Therefore, this research is aimed at studying common internal conflict in the two selected universities in Gombe State.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i. Most common types of internal conflicts in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere
- ii. Frequent factors responsible for internal conflicts in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere

1.3 Theoretical framework

Pluralist theory was adopted and used as the theoretical framework for this study. The pluralist theory is a more realistic theory which states that internal conflicts exist in all level of organizations in a society. Pluralist view that the work place organizations consist of workers and managements bargaining in imperfect labour markets in the presence of pluralist conflict-that is, in an employment relationship consisting of multiple, sometimes conflicting interests in which employers might want lower labour costs, flexibility and an intense pace of work while employees might want high wages, employment securities and a safe work environment as well as shared interests such as products, productive workers and profitable organisations (Clegg, 1975).

Pluralist theory is relevant for the study, because it sees organization as being made up of powerful and conflicting sub-groups; management and trade unions. In universities, these include; the university managements and staff associations that fought over a certain issues including; poor conditions of services, denial of entitlements, wages and benefits, denial of right and privileges, competitions over tetfund research grants/fellowships and the like. The resultant effects of these disagreements lead to revolts, and prolonged strike which usually affects the academic calendar among others.

In addition, pluralist theory believes that the place of work is composed of diverse sets of beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors. In capitalist societies for instance, this divergence of interest has led to the formation of trade unions in workplace organizations since internal conflicts are inevitable because of inherent competing interest. Internal conflict can be resolved by collective bargaining and if well managed, could be channeled towards positive change. Trade unions for the pluralist theory are legitimate representative of employees, and they are viewed positively because they help employees emphasize their decision-making power (Leat, 2001).

2.1 Materials and Methods

The target population of the study includes all staff of Gombe State University and Federal University, Kashere. The Gombe State University has a total population of 1,173 from which 584 were academic staff while 589 were non-academic staff. Similarly, Federal University Kashere has a total population of 2,284 out of which 695 were academic staff, while 1,589 were non-academic staff. Therefore, the general population of the study were 3,457 which comprises of staff of both Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere.

From the combined population, one thousand and sixty five (1065) were selected as sample size for the research study. The selection of sample size was done using Krejcie and Morgan formula for sample size determination with margin of error of 2.5% and 95% confidence level. From

the sample size drawn for the research, three hundred and sixty-three (363) staff of Gombe State University were administered with the research questionnaire. Similarly, seven hundred and two (702) staff of Federal University Kashere were equally administered with the research questionnaire.

The sample sizes were disproportionately selected based on the population of the study universities. From the sample size, 171 were academic and 192 non-academic staffs of Gombe State University and 214 were academic and 488 were non-academic staffs of Federal University of Kashere respectively. Also, the study employed a primary data collection instrument which includes questionnaire.

The data generated were analyzed using descriptive statistics which involved the use of tables, frequencies; percentages and cross tabulations to analyze the quantitative data. The data collation was done with the aid of the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS version16).

3.0 Results

3.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-24 years	33	3.3
25-29 years	160	16.0
30-34 years	305	30.5
35-39 years	253	25.3
40-44 years	100	10.0
45-49 years	115	11.5
50 years and above	34	3.4
Total	1,000	100.0
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	638	63.8
Female	362	36.2
Total	1,000	100.0
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary Education	81	8.1
Diploma/NCE	150	15.0
HND/B.Sc	421	42.1
Masters	231	23.1
Ph.D	117	11.7
Total	1,000	100.0
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	244	24.4
Married	622	62.2
Separated	46	4.6
Divorced	59	5.9
Widowed	29	2.9
Total	1,000	100.0
Monthly Income in Naira	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 50,000	160	16.0
50,000 to 99,999	63	6.3
100,000 to 149,999	50	5.0

150,000 to 199,999	406	40.6
200,000 to 249,999	131	13.1
250,000 to 299,999	56	5.6
300,000 to 349,999	34	3.4
350,000 to 399,999	21	2.1
400,000 to 449,999	52	5.2
450,000 and above	27	2.7
Total	1,000	100.0
Nature of appointment	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	970	97.0
Contract	30	3.0
Total	1,000	100.0
University affiliation	Frequency	Percentage
Gombe state University	378	37.8
Federal University of Kashere	622	62.2
Total	1,000	100.0
Academic cadres	Frequency	Percentage
Academic staff	486	48.6
Non-teaching staff	514	51.4
Total	1,000	100.0
Year of service	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	295	29.5
6-10 years	384	38.4
11 years and above	321	32.1
Total	1,000	100.0

The age distribution of the respondents in table 3.1 shows 30.5% falls between 30-34 years, 25.3% aged between 35-39 years, 16.0 % were between 25-29 years, 11.5% were between 45-49 years, 10.0% falls between 40-44 years, years and 3.4% falls between 50 years and above. The sex distribution of the respondents depicts that, 63.8% were males and 36.2% were females. The data shows that, 42.1% of the respondents were B.Sc certificate holders, 23.1% had Masters and 15.0% had Diploma/NCE certificates. Similarly, 11.3% of the respondents had Ph.D and 8.1% were Secondary School Certificate Holders. From the data, it has shown that, majority of the respondents had HND/B.Sc certificates. The table also, shows 62.2% of the respondents were married, 24.4% were single, while 5.9% were divorced. The 4.6% of the respondents were separated and 2.9% were either widowed or widower.

Similarly, the table shows 40.6% earn between 150,000 to 199,999 thousand naira monthly, 16.0% earn less than 50,000 thousand naira monthly, 13.1% earn between 200,000 to 249,999 thousand naira and 6.3% earn between 50,000 to 99,999 thousand naira monthly. The 5.6% of the respondents earn between 250,000 to 299,999 thousand naira, 5.2% earn between 400,000 to 449,999 thousand naira, 5.0% earn between 100,000 to 149,999 thousand naira and 3.4% earn between 300,000 to 349,999 thousand naira. Also, 2.7% of the respondents earn between 450,000 thousand naira and above and 2.1% earn 350,000 to 399,999 monthly.

The table also shows 51.4% of the respondents were non-teaching staff of the Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere and 48.6% were academic staff of the universities.

The 62.2% were also academic and non-academic staff of the Federal University of Kashere. The 37.8% of the respondents were academic and non-academic staff of the Gombe State University. The table shows 62.2% were also academic and non-academic staff of the Federal University of Kashere. Finally, the table indicated that, 38.4% of the respondents' spent between 6-10 years working, 32.1% spent between 11 years and above working in the universities and 29.5% spent between 1-5 years working. The table shows majority of the respondents have spent between 6 to 10 years working.

3.2: Types of Internal Conflict Experienced in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Internal conflict between academic staff unions and non-teaching staff unions	383	38.3
Internal conflict between university managements and non-teaching staff unions	172	17.2
Internal conflict between university managements and academic staff unions	156	15.6
Internal conflict over miscommunication between units, directorates and departments	102	10.2
Interpersonal conflict among staff	88	8.8
Others	99	9.9
Total	1,000	100.0

The table 3.2 shows the types of internal conflicts experienced in the study universities. The 38.3% of the respondents views internal conflict between the academic staff union and non-teaching staff unions, where 17.2% views internal conflict between the university managements and non-teaching staff unions. The 15.6% of the respondents views the existence of internal conflict between the university management and academic staff unions in the universities. The 10.2% of the respondents views internal conflict between units, directorates and departments largely over miscommunication and 8.8% views staff interpersonal conflict among staff in the universities. The 9.9% had identified other types of internal conflicts in Gombe State University and Federal University, Kashere, respectively. These include; within and between the departments, units and directorates over examination results, conflict over selection procedures for study fellowship, among others. The data has shown that, the most common type of internal conflict in the universities was between academic and non-teaching staff unions.

3.3: Most Frequent Factors Responsible for Internal Conflict in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere

Responses	Most often	Often	Less often	Not at all	Total
Imposition of decision by university management on employees	400 (40.0%)	236 (23.6%)	189 (18.9%)	175 (17.5%)	1000 (100.0%)
Refusal of the university to honour agreement reached with workers unions	418 (41.8%)	351 (35.1%)	119 (11.9%)	112 (11.2%)	1000 (100.0%)
Competition over Tetfund conference/workshops and study fellowships	477 (47.7%)	317 (31.7%)	85 (8.5%)	121 (12.1%)	1000 (100.0%)
Unequal treatment between staff unions on earned academic allowance, responsibility and hazard allowance	462 (46.2%)	298 (29.8%)	190 (19.0%)	50 (5.0%)	1000 (100.0%)
Staff not coming to work regularly	336 (33.6%)	250 (25.0%)	198 (19.8%)	216 (21.6%)	1000 (100.0%)
Persistence of internal conflict in GSU and FUK	537 (53.7%)	346 (34.6%)	84 (8.4%)	33 (3.3%)	1000 (100.0%)

The table 3.3 shows respondents views on imposition of decisions by the university managements on employees, where 40.0% opined that, it is often influences internal conflict, 23.6% viewed it most often influences internal conflict and 18.9% viewed it less often influences internal conflict in the universities. Finally, 17.5% opined that, such imposition does not influence internal conflict in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere respectively. From the respondent's opinions, majority viewed that, it often influences internal conflict in the study universities.

Similarly, the table has shown respondent's views regarding refusal of the university managements to honour agreements reached with workers unions which triggered internal conflicts in the universities. The 41.8% of the respondents have viewed that it most often causes internal conflicts in the study universities. The 35.1% have opined that, it often influences internal conflict and 11.9% also viewed that, it's less often influences internal conflict in the universities. Finally, the remaining 11.2% of the respondents have viewed that, refusal of the university managements in honoring agreements reached with workers unions does not influences internal conflict in Gombe State University and Federal University, Kashere.

Furthermore, the table shows that, 47.7% of the respondents viewed that, competition over staff development training fund most often triggers internal conflict in Gombe State University and Federal University, Kashere. 31.7% of respondents viewed that, it's often trigger internal conflict, 8.5% viewed it less often trigger internal conflict. The remaining 12.1% said, they don't know. The in-depth interviews confirm the frequencies of internal conflict resulted over competition on staff development training fund in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere as well.

The table further shows that, 46.2% of the respondents opined that, unequal treatments between staff unions in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere often influences internal conflicts between the staff unions. The 29.8% of the respondents viewed that it is most often

influences internal conflict between the staff unions in the universities. While 19.0% of the respondents viewed that, it is less often influences internal conflict and the remaining 5.0% viewed that, it is not at all influences internal conflicts in the universities. So, the majority of the respondents have opined that unequal treatment of staff unions regarding earned academic allowance, responsibility and hazard allowance frequently influences internal conflict in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere.

Finally, the table has shown that, 33.6% of the respondents' viewed that, an act of staff not to come to work regularly influences internal conflict between the affected staff and the university managements. The 25.0% and 19.8% respectively opined that, it is less often and often influences internal conflicts in the universities. The 21.6% have opined that, it doesn't at all influence internal conflict in the universities. The data have shown majority opinions of the respondents viewed that, staff not coming to work regularly have most often influences internal conflicts in the universities.

4.0: Discussions

First, the finding of the study shows respondents' views on the common internal conflict experienced in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere. The table 3.2 shows the common types of internal conflicts experienced in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere which includes; between university managements and academic staff unions, between university managements and non-academic staff unions, between academic staff unions and non-academic staff unions, internal conflicts over miscommunication between units, directorates and departments, interpersonal conflicts among staff in the universities among others. From the findings, it has shown that, majority opinions indicated the prevalence of internal conflict between the academic staff unions and non-academic staff unions in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere.

The data above have supported the earlier findings made in different universities in Nigeria. A study conducted by Osadeke et al (2018), in South Western Universities in Nigeria revealed the most common internal conflicts to include conflict between academic staff unions and the university authorities, conflict between academic staff unions and non-academic staff unions, conflict between non-academic staff unions and university managements and interpersonal conflict among staff. Furthermore, Olaleye and Arogundade (2013), research on the common types of internal conflicts in Nigerian Universities in the South West using Lagos State University and Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba found that the most common types of internal conflicts include between academic staff and the university managements, non-teaching staff and the university managements, academic staff and non-teaching staff unions as well as interpersonal conflict among staff. Similarly, Victor and Stealla-Maris (2013), have further examined the common causes of internal conflicts in Nigerian universities taking South Western Nigerian Universities. For them, continued competition for scarce resources like research fund, teaching and students amenities, staff pay and other welfare services all have claims on the limited resources at the disposal of the university managements.

Similarly in analyzing the most frequent factors responsible for internal conflicts in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere, majority of the respondents have indicated that, imposition of decisions by university managements on employees without their consultation is often influencing internal conflicts as shown in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere. These findings relate with a study conducted by Adoja (2014), which stated that internal conflicts in many universities in Nigeria especially the public universities arise over imposition of decisions by the universities on their employees which were influenced by poor organisational, bureaucratic structures and as well as conditions of service.

Also, majority of the respondents view refusal of university managements to honor agreements reached with workers unions influences internal conflicts. This relates to a finding of a study conducted by Adeyemi and Ademilua (2012), where they identified communication gap between the university managements and workers to be the leading cause of internal conflicts in Nigerian universities. The communication gap further adversely affect the administrative effectiveness in the universities (Mukoro, 2013).

In the same vein, findings of the study has demonstrated respondent's opinions over competition for tetfund conferences and study fellowships. The majority respondents had demonstrated, it is most often causes internal conflicts in the study universities. In public universities in Nigeria, internal conflict most at times arises due to competition for tetfund conferences, workshops and study fellowships. Previous studies have supported this findings. For instance, a study conducted by Fashoyin (1981), revealed that staff pay and other welfare services all have their claims on the limited resources at the disposal of the university management. This created competition among staff thereby leading to internal conflict especially between the university management and staff seeking fellowships. This in so many occasion resulted in demonstrations, strikes, boycotts of lectures and violent riots by the university staff which at times render the university compuses unsecure for academic and administrative activities (Aina et al, 2015).

Equally, findings of the study have indicated that, unequal treatments between staff unions regarding earned academic, responsibility and hazard allowances most often influences internal conflicts as shown by majority opinions of the respondents. The literature has supported this findings by revealing that, internal conflicts arises due to unequal treatment between the staff unions over welfare including earned academic allowance, study fellowships and sometime delay in promotion of non-teaching junior staff in the universities. This mostly influences internal conflicts (Peter et al 2021).

In the same vein, the results also shows majority opinions regarding staff not coming to work regularly which at times influences internal conflicts between the affected staff and their respective head of units with. In addition, another factor contributed to staff associated problem of not going to work in Federal University of Kashere was the proximity of the university from Gombe metropolis where majority of the staff stay. In a related literature, it has shown that the act of staff not coming to work regularly influences internal conflicts in public universities in particular. It is one of such multiple factors influences internal conflicts in universities in Nigeria as indicated by Victor and Stella-Maris (2013). Other factors include staff pay and other welfare allowances, limited research fund, teaching and students amenities.

Similarly, the findings of the study indicated that, persistent of internal conflicts in the study universities were as a result of unequal payment of allowances (EAA, responsibility and hazard allowance) and staff development training fund (Tetfund) among others. This is stated by the majority responses. These factors analyzed and discussed are the main causes of internal conflicts in the study universities, though some of these factors are less often and less frequently causes internal conflicts. Similarly, it has shown in the literature that persistent of internal conflict arises due to multiple of factors including unequal pay in allowances between staff and staff nomination for fellowship, conferences and workshops among other factors (Olalekan, 2015).

5.0: Conclusion

It has been concluded that, internal conflicts are inevitable in human life, and so are they in higher institutions of learning including Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere. Based on this, internal conflicts in tertiary institutions can lead to competition,

disagreement and misunderstanding which may lead to demonstrations, strikes and incessant closure of schools. Hence, it is impossible to attain a conducive environment in the higher institutions characterized by internal conflicts. The major factors influencing internal conflict in Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere includes imposition of decisions by university managements without consulting workers unions, unequal treatment of staff associations by the university managements regarding earned academic, responsibility and hazard allowance and competition over staff development training fund for conferences, workshops and study fellowships among other several factors. While Tetfund intervention is a major boost to university education, yet there are conflicts over the selection processes and equitable distribution of the fund to staff applied for study fellowship, workshops and conferences.

6.0: Recommendations

- i. There is the need for the managements of Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere to improve on consultation strategy and this significantly will reduce internal conflicts in the study universities.
- ii. The Managements of Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere need to honour local agreements reached with staff unions and this will help in reducing the intensity of internal conflict arising from refusal of the university managements to honour agreements reached with staff unions.
- iii. There is the need for managements of Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere to adhere strictly to the guidelines for selection and nomination of staff for Tetfund sponsorship for conferences, workshops and study fellowships on first come, first serve.
- iv. There is the need for the managements of Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere to provide guidelines that must be abide by all staff unions for distributions of fund main for allowances like earned academic, responsibility and hazard allowances between the staff unions.
- v. The managements of Gombe State University and Federal University of Kashere need to provide punishment measure for staff that is not coming to work regularly and this will help in making them become punctual to their duty post and improve their productivity and performance.

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