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Evaluation of Conflict Management Styles of Construction Companies in Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract:

Managing conflict during construction process should be an essential skill to be possessed by managers as conflict is inevitable in evolving complexity nature of the industry. Hence, the study examined the level of adoption of the conflict management styles (CMSs), and identified and assessed the key factors influencing the choice of conflict management styles by employees of the construction companies in the study area. A cross-sectional quantitative research designed was adopted in this study. It involved the contracting firms that were registered with Federation of Construction Industry (FOCI). Only twenty-five (25) active members are currently registered with FOCI. Due to the small number, a total enumeration technique was adopted as the target population. Three (3) members of each contracting firm were purposely chosen. The purposely selected employees were lower-level managers (supervisors), middle level managers and senior level managers. This made the sample size of this study to equate seventy-five (75). Of the 75 questionnaires administered, only 55 were returned and used to collect data for this study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, RII and spearman's correlation. For managing task-related conflict among the employees of the construction companies, the results revealed that the level of adoption of CMSs is above average (61%) and that compromising style was frequently used whereas dominating style was least used. It was also revealed that 'personality trait', 'cultural diversity', 'leadership style', 'work experience', and 'power of contenders' were the top essential factors influencing the choice of CMSs used in the surveyed construction companies. This study provides construction managers with a better understanding of CMSs and also highlights the important influential factors, especially when task-related conflicts arise.

Keywords: Conflict, conflict management styles, descriptive research, Nigeria

1. Introduction

In organized teams, leaders must recognize that 'conflict is natural, pervasive, and inevitable' and 'its resolution processes take different forms and lead to different outcomes' (Sweeney & Carruthers, 1996), which are the basic tenets of conflict resolution's philosophy. This implies that in a gathering of more than one person, group or party responsible for a common goal, conflict is bound to arise, persist willingly or unwillingly (Ma *et al.*, 2012) and it could be managed by employing different strategies that could lead to different results. Conflict arises when a team or group member has the feeling that the other member in the group or party is at an opposition advantage over him (Tabassiet *al.*, 2019). The situation caused unplanned negative changes to the predetermined flow of programmes (Altuncan&Tanyer, 2018).

In the wake of a harsh and rapidly changing interdisciplinary business environment, complex business networks and multi-cultured team domains, construction conflict is inherently embedded within the day-to-day running of any contractual arrangement. Efficient and effective management of conflict cannot be overemphasized; hence, conflict management in a multi-culture business environment remains a significant issue. However, because of the unique and dynamic growth of complex structures and contracts of the construction industry, which is characterized with 'uncertainty and complexity' (Altuncan&Tanyer, 2018), the strategies employed to manage construction conflicts need continuous examination. Limited knowledge about how team leaders strategically apply appropriate conflict management styles to improve innovative performance remains elusive.

The application of inappropriate conflict management strategies poses a significant problem for the construction industry. Conflict management styles influence the outcome of any conflict, which could be 'destructive or constructive' (Tabassiet *al.*, 2019). From literature, it is notable that conflict management styles have an impact on performance (Zhanget *al.*, 2015; Lu & Wang, 2017). This is a clear pointer to the fact that there exist links between conflict management styles and performance. In addition, the frequent use of conflict management styles in handling any conflict in the construction industry has set the argument that team performance can be linked to the way conflict is being handled. Consequently, it is shown that conflict management strategies influence team performance.

1.1. Statement of the Research Problem

The increase in supply chains in the construction industry means more activities, more contractual agreements, more adversaries and more work relationships complexities. Hence, the potential for conflicts in their daily dealings and interactions increase (Ma *et al.*, 2012), yet the extant literature indicated little or no research in the Nigerian construction industry. Managing the conflicts within the construction working teams is an important factor that could make or mar construction project's success (Tabassiet *al.*, 2019). It is the most common problem in the working team of a project. The inability to manage these conflicts effectively and efficiently result to ultimately poor performance. Recently, an increasing number of studies are establishing the positive influence of conflict management on performance (Longe, 2015; Lu & Wang, 2017; Tajuddin *et al.*, 2017; Abdulsattar, 2017). This has shown the level of research attention given to CMSs by both practitioners and academia, and also, the need for a better understanding of CMS by managers (Alhasan *et al.*, 2014). However, most of this research aimed at the causes of construction conflicts (Mitkus&Mitkus, 2013; Khahro & Ali, 2014) at the project level. Tabassiet *al.* (2019) found that appropriate CMSs significant with project teams' performance in a multicultural setting. The existence of correlation indicated a strong tie. Unfortunately, most of the studies in the fields of CMSs and performance focused on individuality. There exist also few or no studies that assess these CMSs influential factors of construction companies' employees in Abuja, which is a fast-growing city in Nigeria.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the level of adoption of the conflict management styles by the employees of the construction companies in Abuja, Nigeria; and
- To identify and assess the key factors influencing the choice of conflict management styles by employees of the construction companies in the study area.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Conflict management is a crucial factor in the project-based industry for improving performance. The management of conflicts should be given adequate consideration throughout the phases of the construction process. This is because improper handling of conflict can lead to devastating project outcomes. This research is expected to make contributions to the practice and policy of construction companies. This extended the existing knowledge on conflict management in the study area. In addition, this study could contribute to practice, the findings emanated from this study may enable the employees of construction companies in Abuja to better appreciate the need for adequate knowledge on construction conflict management styles, and the essential factors affecting the choice of conflict management style in the study area.

1.4. Scope of the Study

Employees of construction firms based in Abuja, Nigeria were the unit of analysis for this descriptive research. The study covered building development organizations in Abuja, Nigeria. Abuja is the government capital of Nigeria where construction activities are high and coupled with its large population and relatively large provision of construction products necessary for the benefits of its teaming growing population. This research focused on only conflict caused by task-related issues within the construction companies. In addition, the employees of construction companies were limited to the lower-level (supervisors), middle-level and senior (top-level) managers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conflict Management Styles

Conflict circumstances can be viewed as surprising interruptions of undertaking plans. Rahim (2002) broadened the significance of dispute as "an intelligent interaction showed in inconsistency, conflicts, or discord manner between parties (for example singular, bunch, association, etc.)". Conflict is normally separated into two measurements: one comprising of clashes related to task issues and the other is related to excited or social issues (Zhang *et al.*, 2015).

In recent years, a few researchers in the conflict management domain hypothesised and added to a typical build to gauge the degrees of concern given to self as well as other people during conflict resolution. In an all-around embraced adaptation, the double concern model of conflict management styles, Rahim & Bonoma (1979) and Rahim (1983) deciphered the past investigations of Follet (1940). In view of two measurements: concern for oneself and concern for people, Blake and Mouton (1964) first proposed an organization of CMSs and perceived five styles, for instance, driving, pulling out, smoothing, compromising and basic reasoning. Thomas (1992) interpreted Blake and Mouton's assertion to be fighting, collaborating, avoiding, obliging and compromising. The study of Ma *et al.* (2008) was also of the opinion that the said five sorts are either assertive in perspective or cooperative in perspective.

Rahim's model, also called 'dual concern' is the most widely accepted and well-known theory for evaluating individual differences (Ayub *et al.*, 2017; Montes *et al.*, 2012). The model relies upon two measurements: concern for self and concern for others (see Fig. 1). These two measurements are further subdivided into integrating (collaborating), obligating (accommodating), dominating (contending), avoiding (withdrawing), and compromising (arranging). According to Rahim's model (see Altuncan & Tanyer, 2018 and Rahim, 1983), while 'concern for self' is high for both integrating and dominating styles, it is low for obliging and avoiding styles, and while 'concern for others' is high for integrating and obliging, it low for dominating and avoiding. Compromising style of conflict management exerts not too low and not too high from 'concern for self' and 'concern for others'. It provides a common ground for both contenders in a conflict to arrive at mutual agreement. Many studies have put these styles into use in identifying different conflict management styles

to postulate the most suitable conflict management (Cheung *et al.*, 2006; Davis *et al.*, 2010; Gbadamosiet *al.*, 2014; Gunkelet *al.*, 2016; Liu & Zhai, 2011; Lu *et al.*, 2017; Odetunde, 2013; Zhang *et al.*, 2015). On this premise, this study adopted Rahim's model to measure the task related conflict of employees in construction companies of the study area.

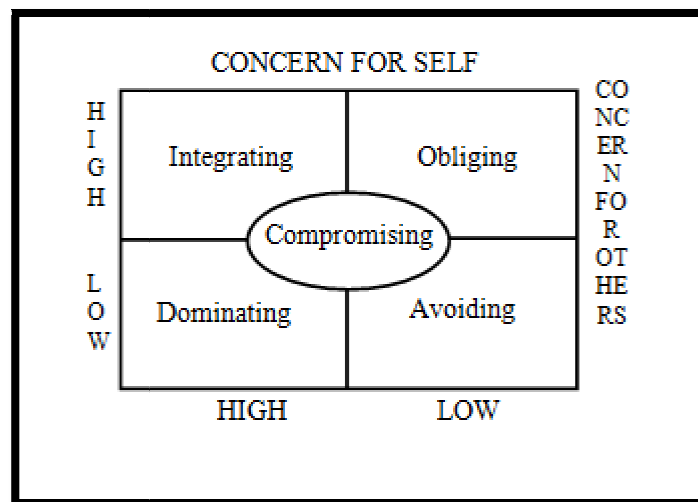


Figure 1: Dual Concern Model of the Styles of Handling Conflicts
Source: Altuncan&Tanyer (2018), Rahim (1983)

2.2. Factors Influencing the Choice of Conflict Management Styles

Among what makes the construction industry to be unique is the coming together of operatives with diverse backgrounds and personal differences from different geographical locations. The construction process involved huge activities relying on a large number of operatives (Durdyevet *al.*, 2017). The activities must be performed simultaneously at one point or the other. Hence, interactions among the operatives may lead to conflicts abound to arise. Therefore, construction conflict management procedures are put in place to check conflict occurrence and relationship building. These procedures are used to minimize construction conflicts that may hamper the required performance. Various scholars globally have identified and assessed influencing factors on conflict management styles (Anastasiou, 2020; Bordeanet *al.*, 2020; Jacob & Richard, 2007; Ma *et al.*, 2010; Musahet *al.*, 2015). For instance, Tong & Chen (2008) uncovered a possible connection between intercultural sensitivity and conflict management styles in the United State. They found out that in making to decision as to what type of conflict management style to choose, intercultural sensitivity assessment should be put in mind.

From small and medium-sized organizations, Bordeanet *al.* (2020) studied the existing relationship between gender and the choice of conflict management styles of employees in the organizations. It was discovered that dominating and avoiding styles predicted significant relationships with masculine and feminine individuals respectively (Bordeanet *al.*, 2020). Bercovitch& Jackson (2007) studied the contextual prerequisite to the choice of conflict management styles across international borders.

Table 1 summarized the review of extant literature for the factors that play significant role in the decision of what CMS will be employed when conflict arises.

S/No	Proposed Factor	Relevant Authors
1	Intercultural sensitivity (cultural diversity)	Kozan (2002), Tong & Chen (2008), Tsai & Chi (2011)
2	Gender role	Brewer <i>et al.</i> (2002)
3	Personality traits	Ayubet <i>al.</i> (2017), Chan <i>et al.</i> (2014), Kalaycı-Türk&Ceylan (2020), Moberg (2001), Qadir& Khan (2016)
4	Nature of dispute (issue criticality)	Bercovitch& Jackson (2007), Rosenthal & Hautaluoma (1988), Sun <i>et al.</i> (2021)
5	Nature of parties and their relationship	Bercovitch& Jackson (2007)
6	Gender (Biological sex)	Bordeanet <i>al.</i> (2020), Brewer <i>et al.</i> (2002), Rahim & Katz (2019), Rosenthal & Hautaluoma (1988), Ma (2007), Özkalpet <i>al.</i> (2009)
7	Group-oriented value	Ma <i>et al.</i> (2012)
8	Emotional intelligence	Aqqadet <i>al.</i> (2019), Chan <i>et al.</i> (2014), Shih & Susan (2010), Yin <i>et al.</i> (2020), Zhang <i>et al.</i> (2015)
9	Leadership style	Anastasiou (2020), Chandolia&Anastasiou (2020), Saeed <i>et al.</i> (2014), Ritu& Catherine, (2006), Kaimenyi (2014)
10	Work experience	Drory&Ritov (1997)

S/No	Proposed Factor	Relevant Authors
11	Level of task conflict	Lu & Wang (2017)
12	Bargaining power	Lu & Wang (2017)
13	Opponent's power (power of contenders)	Drory&Ritov (1997), Rosenthal &Hautaluoma (1988), Özkalpet <i>al.</i> (2009)
14	Relationship quality	Alozie&Kadiri (2020), Wang & Liu (2021), Xiaojinget <i>al.</i> (2008)
15	Communication	Alhassanet <i>al.</i> (2014), Musahet <i>al.</i> (2015)
16	Conflict type	Behfar (2008)
17	Cultural intelligence	Caputo <i>et al.</i> (2018), Gonçalveset <i>al.</i> (2016)
18	Recognition of superior (Hierarchical status)	Aquino (2000), Brewer <i>et al.</i> (2002), Redmond <i>et al.</i> (2016), Özkalpet <i>al.</i> (2009)
19	Temperament	Musahet <i>al.</i> (2015)
20	Age	Osisoma (2009)

Table 1: Global Factors Affecting the Choice of Construction Conflict Management Styles

3. Research Method

Methodologically, a quantitative approach, which is a system for gathering and analyzing quantitative data at all stages of the research process was adopted. This is to explore and understand an identified research problem in more detail (Cresswell, 2007). The rationale behind this is that the quantitative approach is sufficient in itself to catch the patterns and details of the situation, such as the construction conflict management process adopted in the construction industry. Quantitative research is concerned with measuring of quantity or amount and involving manipulation, or hypothesis testing. Therefore, this approach tends majorly toward objective measurement research (Fellow & Liu, 2008). Quantitative research relied on survey strategy. It is "objective" in nature. Survey strategy was used to collect quantitative data with the aid of questionnaire (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The questionnaire was designed to clearly simplify and structure the items in it in a manner void of any ambiguity.

3.1. Study Population

The target population included the key employees to construction contracting firms in Abuja. The contracting firms that were registered with Federation of Construction Industry (FOCI) will be involved in the study. According to FOCI Directory (FOCI, 2020), only twenty-five (25) active members are currently registered with FOCI. Due to the small number, a total enumeration technique was adopted for this study. This approach eliminated bias and gave credibility to the data collection process.

3.2. Sampling Frame

The sample of all the twenty-five (25) construction companies currently active with FOCI were selected. Owing to the small number of contracting firms in Abuja, three (3) members of each contracting firm were purposely chosen. This made the sample size of this study to equate seventy-five (75). The purposely selected employees were lower-level, middle level and senior level managers. Therefore, a total of seventy-five (75) copies of questionnaire was used for data collection in this study.

3.3. Data Collection Method and Instruments

The questionnaire designed for this research was a well-structured type and close ended type, such that options were provided for each question from which respondents ranked in order of preference and tick (where applicable) in the box that expresses their opinions. The questionnaire was designed accordingly (Shrair, 2011) through a complete writing search led to decide and clarify a few key issues that relate to definition understanding of conflict management process, factors affecting conflict management process and its extent of usage. The questionnaire was divided into sections. Section A, which was the general information (demographic information) about the respondents. This section includes: number of employees in the firm; average annual turnover; years of experience in construction business; and number of projects executed by the firm in the last ten (10) years. This segment is vital as it classifies the alternate points of view from the different members within the firm. Section B, which has to do with the objectives of the study. A five-point Likert scale was utilized, the mathematical worth 5 addresses critical while 1 addresses not significant, this was utilized to ascertain the mean score, relative important index (RII) and weighted average for constructs in this study.

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

Analysis of the information in this study was done utilizing quantitative scientific methods. This tool was used to rank the identified factors influencing choice of conflict management styles in the study area according to their importance level. The RII was computed for each factor identifying the most and the least significant influencing factors in the management of conflicts. Mean Score (MS) as a tool was used to rank the identified causes of conflicts, types of conflict management styles and factors influencing the choice of style used by construction companies in Abuja, the study area according to their importance level. MS-Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0 were utilised in computing the required information.

According to Fellows & Liu (2008), all surveys ought to initially be piloted with small sample of respondents. Hence, two principal partners of leading contracting firms, two employees in the contracting firms and two academicians with verse experience of the subject matter used to pretest the measurement instrument of this study. The outcome of the pilot study showed the questions were well formulated in relation to the objectives of this study and also that questions were well understood by the targets (the respondents).

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1. The Survey Result

4.1.1. Response Rate

During the administration of the questionnaire, out of the seventy-five (75) questionnaires that were distributed, only fifty-five (55) were retrieved. This indicated that 73.33% of the total questionnaires distributed were retrieved. Therefore, the response rate is approximately 73%, which is acceptable since it is more than the 20-30% range stipulated for construction industry research (Akintoye, 2000). With this high response rate, the statistical analysis conducted in this study was said to be reliable and valid (Ling *et al.*, 2009; Hwang *et al.*, 2014).

4.1.2. Analysis of General Respondent Demographics (GRDs)

The reliability of the data collected for this research was evaluated through the demographic information of respondents from selected organizations in Abuja. The GRD of the respondents revealed the profile of respondents in terms of the number of employees, annual turnover, the firm's years in the construction business, and the number of projects executed in the last 10 years in the organizations. The result revealed that approximately 70% (37) of the respondents were in the higher management level which is not less than the middle manager. Also, the results revealed that not less than 50% of all the organizations surveyed had 11-20 employees working in their companies. This indicated that an average mean of 17 employees works in any of the firms surveyed. This indicated that the majority of those firms that participated in this survey were more than one-man businesses. Though, they may be tagged as not large organizations.

Furthermore, the mean average turnover of the respondents was ₦46,130,000.00. The result indicated that overall, 48 firms out of 55 (representing approximately 87%) that responded to the questionnaire had been involved in construction work for not less than 6 years. This implies that the respondents were ideally suited for the purpose of this study. Their opinions were expected to be reliable and valid. With respect to number of projects executed in each firm within the last ten (10) years, more than half of the firms (56%) that responded to the questionnaire had executed between 11 to 20 projects within the last ten years in construction business. This could be because of most of the surveyed firms work for government of the federal government in Abuja. Therefore, the overall results indicated that the firms involved in this study have average of about 19 projects executed within the last ten years.

4.1.3. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Using SPSS 23.0, Cronbach's alpha was assessed to test the reliability of the scale used. According to Robinson *et al.* (1991), a good reliable scale should indicate a value not less than 0.7. Table 2, therefore showed the Cronbach's alpha values for the entire scale and values were not below 0.7 thresholds. This confirmed that the overall scale has good reliability (Robinson *et al.*, 1991). Moreover, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted, using the SPSS, to test the validity of the scale. Hence, standard factor loading (SFL), construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were the three most commonly used indicators to assess convergent validity in literature. According to Fornell & Larcker (1981), once the SFL of the constructs is greater than or equal 0.5, CR is greater than or equal to 0.6 and the AVE is also greater than or equal to 0.5, then the convergent validity is good. Therefore, as indicated in Table 2, both the CR and AVE are greater than the stipulated 0.5, well above the threshold of 0.6. For these reasons, the measures in this study demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity. This route had been commonly used in the construction management and conflict management literature (Lu & Wang, 2017; Özkalpet *et al.*, 2009).

Variable	Item	SFL	CR	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Conflict management style	Obliging (Accommodating)	0.632	0.826	0.549	0.845
	Avoiding	0.874			
	Compromising	0.823			
	Integrating	0.775			
	Dominating	0.690			
Factors influencing choice	Emotional intelligence	0.761	0.814	0.571	0.871
	Gender	0.735			
	Leadership styles	0.747			
	Personality traits	0.739			

Variable	Item	SFL	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
	Nature of parties and their relationship	0.717			
	Communication	0.740			
	Level of task conflict	0.675			
	Recognition of superiors	0.724			
	Relationship quality	0.714			
	Gender role	0.670			
	Cultural diversity	0.731			
	Temperament	0.751			
	Age	0.595			
	Opponent's power	0.712			
	Work experience	0.822			
	Bargaining power	0.629			
	Conflict type	0.685			
	Group-oriented Values	0.705			
	Nature of dispute	0.631			
	Cultural intelligence	0.567			

Table 2: Summary of Reliability and Validity Test Conducted

4.2. Specific Objectives

4.2.1. Level of Adoption of Conflict Management Styles

The respondents rated the frequency of use of the conflict management styles. In addition, respondents ranked the conflict management styles they perceived as being the most frequently use in relation to task-specific conflicts. Using weighted average mean score and mean score, the rank orders of levels of adoption of the conflict management styles were obtained for all responding organizations as well as separately for the level of management in the construction firms.

Following the interpretation of the five (5) point Likert scale, overall data analysis indicates the five conflict management styles associated with task in the construction industry. The mean scores ranged from 2.50 to 3.67 (see Table 3). This implies that all the conflict management styles are been used to handle conflicts in the construction companies in Abuja. The five styles were highly ranked by all respondents from all groups. From the overall column, weighted average (WA) of the means scores indicated that "compromising" had the highest WA mean score of 3.22 and ranked 1st. Followed by "avoiding" with WA mean score of 3.16 ranked 2nd. "Obliging" was ranked third with 3.02 WA mean score. While "obliging" had WA mean score of 2.98, "dominating" got WA mean score of 2.91. Both obliging and dominating management styles were ranked 4th and 5th respectively. The WA mean scores of all five construction conflict management styles were greater than 2.5, which is average on the five-point Likert scale in the questionnaire.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether or not several independent items come from the same population. This ANOVA is the parametric statistics and check to conform if assumption of normality and the assumption of homogeneity of variance were not violated. The hypothesis was tested using ANOVA. The results showed that, two (2) out of all the five (5) conflict management styles associated with task of construction companies were not significant. These two were "compromising" and "avoiding" management styles with P value > 0.05 (see table 3).

The remaining three conflict management types that were significant at the $p < 0.05$ were "Integrating" ($p = 0.008$), "obliging" ($p = 0.001$), and "dominating" ($p = 0.010$). This implies that the null hypothesis could not be accepted. The result established a statistically significant difference between all the stakeholder's views about the levels of adoption of conflict management styles of construction companies' employees. It means that all the employees (be it supervisors, managers and senior managers) were of the opinion that almost all the stakeholders have same views and perception to the subject matter. Majority of the respondents believed that most of the construction conflict management styles were significant.

Respondents involved in the survey were asked to rate (in scale 0% – 100%) the level of adoption of conflict management styles in their respective organisations. Table 3 indicated that stakeholders rated the level of adoption of conflict management styles a little bit above average. It can therefore be implied that the Abuja construction companies surveyed have 61.17% level of adoption of conflict management styles. This implies that stakeholders should be aware of different management styles to handle conflicts. Since it is the public domain that high level of conflicts in relation to tasks are dominant in the construction industry, hence, there is that need to put in place the necessary conflict management process to ameliorate the impact of conflicts on performance of firms. This resonates with the statements that conflicts in construction organizations are high (Maiti & Choi, 2018) and need the right conflict management styles to hand the conflicts.

Conflict Management Style	Overall				Supervisor		Middle Manager		Senior Manager	
	WA	p-Value	Rating (%)	Rk	MS	Rk	MS	Rk	MS	Rk
Compromising	3.22	0.391	64.40	1	3.50	2	3.25	3	3.10	2
Avoiding	3.16	0.155	63.02	2	3.67	1	3.21	4	2.96	4
Integrating	3.02	0.008 ^a	60.38	3	3.17	3	2.77	7	3.45	1
Obliging	2.98	0.001 ^a	59.62	4	2.67	4	3.26	2	2.53	7
Dominating	2.91	0.010 ^a	58.24	5	2.50	6	3.11	5	2.63	6
Average			61.13							

Table 3: Level of Adoption of Conflict Management Styles within the Firms

^aThe One-Way ANOVA Result Was Significant at the 0.05 Level

MS = Mean Score, WA = Weighted Average of the Mean Scores, Rk = Rank

Table 4 shows the correlation in agreement among the organization. Unsurprisingly, there is positively strong agreement among the supervisors, managers and senior managers of the surveyed organizations in this study.

	Supervisor	Middle manager	Senior manager
Supervisor	1.000		
Middle manager	0.073	1.000	
Senior manager	0.509	0.000	1.000

Table 4: Spearman's Correlation on the Ranking of Level of Adoption of Conflict Management Styles

4.2.2. The Factors Influencing the Choice of Construction Conflict Management Styles

Table 5 shows the RII for the identified factors impacting the choice of conflict management styles in Abuja construction companies as perceived and ranked by each participant. From the result of the analysis, all the twenty (20) factors used for this analysis were highly ranked with RII ranged between $0.9255 \leq 0.5000$ which showed most of the rankings were above average. A total of thirteen (13) out of the twenty (20) identified factors emerged in the first group ($RII \geq 0.6$), representing 65%. The remaining 7 (35%) of the factors fell in the second group ($0.6 < RII < 0.5$). Table 5 shows that there is a strong belief that "personality trait (i.e. consistency, stability in the patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors)" is a factor influencing the choice of construction conflict management style in the study area. All the managers in the companies feel that personality of the individuals involved will always be a pointer to what kind of conflict management style to adopt in any construction working environment. The supervisors, middle managers and senior managers ranked personality trait as 1st with RII of 0.7833, 0.89 and 0.9255 respectively. Overall, the respondents unanimously ranked personality trait as first when choosing the most suitable conflict management style ($RII=0.8528$). The opinions of the three key employees are significant different ($p=0.00$). In addition, the respondents overall ranked "cultural orientation/diversity" 2nd. They are of the opinion that effect of relevant cultural systems of the organization may influence the choice of conflict management style to adopt. Though, the three groups had different ranking individually. While the senior managers were of opinions that cultural orientation/diversity is important and ranked it 2nd ($RII=0.8157$), the supervisors and middle managers had different ranking of this factor.

The overall data analysis indicated the 20 identified factors influencing conflicts management styles, with RII ranging from 0.5648 to 0.8528 (see Table 5). The four most influential factors, namely "personality trait", "cultural orientation/diversity", "leadership style" and "work experience", were all highly ranked by all groups.

Factor	Overall			Supervisor		Middle Manager		Senior Manager	
	RII	p-Value	Rk	RII	Rk	RII	Rk	RII	Rk
Personality trait	0.8528	0.000 ^a	1	0.7833	1	0.8229	1	0.9255	1
Culture orientation/diversity	0.7358	0.001 ^a	2	0.6333	10	0.7063	3	0.8157	2
Leadership style	0.7233	0.177	3	0.7167	2	0.7458	2	0.6824	4
Work experience	0.6667	0.049 ^a	4	0.7000	4	0.6938	4	0.6078	14
The power of contenders	0.6591	0.174	5	0.6833	6	0.6563	5	0.6588	6
Conflict type	0.6340	0.376	6	0.7000	4	0.6146	10	0.6549	7
Bargaining power	0.6327	0.822	7	0.6833	6	0.6375	6	0.6118	12
Gender (biological sex)	0.6277	0.939	8	0.6333	10	0.6313	7	0.6196	11
Organizational communication	0.6239	0.939	9	0.7167	2	0.6188	9	0.6118	12
Cultural intelligence	0.6176	0.075	10	0.5500	17	0.5958	13	0.6745	5
Gender role	0.6164	0.123	11	0.6833	6	0.5875	14	0.6520	9
Temperament	0.6151	0.000 ^a	12	0.5000	19	0.5750	17	0.7176	3

Factor	Overall			Supervisor		Middle Manager		Senior Manager	
	RII	p-Value	Rk	RII	Rk	RII	Rk	RII	Rk
Relationship quality	0.6063	0.404	13	0.6500	9	0.6208	8	0.5686	19
Emotional intelligence	0.5962	0.132	14	0.5333	18	0.5979	12	0.6078	14
Recognition of superior (Hierarchical status)	0.5950	0.086	15	0.5667	16	0.5667	18	0.6549	8
Level of task conflict	0.5912	0.228	16	0.6333	10	0.6063	11	0.5529	20
Age	0.5911	0.252	17	0.5000	19	0.5833	15	0.6280	10
Nature of the dispute (issue criticality)	0.5887	0.815	18	0.5833	15	0.5792	16	0.6078	14
Nature of the parties and their relationship	0.5660	0.197	19	0.6333	10	0.5396	20	0.6000	17
Group-oriented values	0.5648	0.470	20	0.6167	14	0.5479	19	0.5843	18

Table 5: Factors Influencing the Choice of Construction Conflict Management Style Adoption
 ^the One-Way ANOVA Result Was Significant at the 0.05 Level, Rk-Rank

Conversely, in the overall, "nature of the parties and their relationship" and "group-oriented values" were ranked least (19th and 20th positions respectively) by the managers. These factors were ranked least with RII=0.5660 and 0.5648 and there were significant differences in opinions among the groups of stakeholders for this factor ($p < 0.05$).

Table 6 indicates lack of consensus among the three groups of ranking. Because of the lack of consensus, bilateral agreement/disagreement between the supervisors, middle managers and senior managers of the organizations was determined using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, (R_s). In Table 6, it is observed that while there is a relatively weak agreement between supervisors and middle managers ($R_s = 0.445$, significant at the 0.01 level), showing that the null hypothesis cannot be accepted and consequently the two rankings are considered dependent of each other. Also, there is significant weak agreement between supervisors and senior managers ($R_s = 0.082$, not significant), indicating that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and consequently the two rankings are considered independent of each other. Finally, there is agreement between middle managers and senior managers ($R_s = 0.333$, significant at the 0.05 level). It can be concluded that there is general agreement between supervisors and middle managers in respect of the ranking of the top five factors influencing the choice of conflict management styles in Abuja, whereas there is significant weak agreement between supervisors and senior managers.

	Supervisor	Middle Manager	Senior Manager
Supervisor	1.000		
Middle manager	0.445**	1.000	
Senior manager	0.082	0.333*	1.000

Table 6: Test for Agreement on the Ranking of Factors Influencing the Choice of Conflict Management Style

** Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)

* Correlation Is Significant at the 0.05 Level (2-Tailed)

5. Discussion of Findings

Respondents in this research, though with diverging opinion, ranked compromising as the most used construction conflict management style to handle any issue that might arise during the execution of tasks in the company. Compromising style as a strategy is defined as considered concerns for both self and others (Tsai & Chi, 2009). Both parties involved in conflict find a common ground with gain of partial satisfaction going to both parties. Finding from this indicated that the level of adoption of conflict management styles is above average (i.e. 61%). This is a pointer to the fact that the construction companies in Nigeria are aware of the important of handling construction conflicts logically in order to avert unnecessary consequences that are detrimental to accomplishing the predetermined goals. The result emanated from this study indicated compromising as the most used strategy to reduce task-related conflict by employees. Compromising (or arranging) style means to track down a shared belief in which the two sides compromise. It incorporates the two sides yielding on issues to arrive at a commonly gainful ultimate result and is viable when there is a cross-over between the two players' inclinations and force levels. Compromising style, addressing the midpoint between "concern for self" and "concern for other people", shows unobtrusive interest in accomplishing a commonly worthy answer for the two players (Montes *et al.*, 2012). It is viewed as an agreeable style to deal with struggle (Rahim, 1983). This style of conflict management finds the solutions that can provide satisfaction to both contenders and this enables definitive resolution (Maiti & Choi, 2018). This finding is in agreement with the Sri Lanka qualitative finding of Gunarathna *et al.* (2018) where the most used conflict management style is compromising. Unlike in New Zealand where the findings of Naismith *et al.* (2016) indicated that collaborating and negotiating conflict management styles are the most commonly used tool in handling conflicts in engineering projects. According to Özkalpet *et al.* (2009), compromising approach of conflict management favours collectivism. Although, construction activities involved differing group of companies with different backgrounds.

Concerning the factors influencing the choice of conflict management style, extant literature presented many factors that could determine the choice of conflict management styles (Akanjiet *al.*, 2018; Bordeanet *al.*, 2020; Drory&Ritov, 2006; Naismith *et al.*, 2016; Rahim & Katz, 2019; etc.), the RII of the twenty (20) identified factors a presented in Table 4.5 indicated that personality trait is an essential factor to reckon with. Personal trait describe how one behaves and feels. According to Ayubet *al.* (2017), the disparity in the way individual reacts, behaves, or responds to issue. This finding revealed how important personality trait is and this is not surprising as past studies have indicated positive relationships between the factor and the choice of conflict management style (Ayubet *al.*, 2017; Qadir& Khan, 2016). In addition, this study indicated the possibility of relationship between personality and compromising style of conflict management as suggested by Chan *et al.* (2014). Another important finding from this study is there exists relatively close agreement between the groups of respondents in their perceptions. The respondent substantially agreed that personality trait is an important factor in choosing the conflict management style in construction companies

6. Conclusions

This study concluded that there is a reasonable level of agreement among the employees in the construction companies in the study on the issue of tasks-related conflicts. The managers involved in this study are aware of the existence of different construction conflict management styles. This study indicated level of adoption of these management strategies to be on average. Hence, the study concluded that compromising style is the most adopted style in Abuja construction companies. Lastly, from the findings in this study, all the managers agreed that personality trait is the most important factors to be considered when choosing construction conflict management styles, hence the study concluded that personality trait should be given adequate consideration in reducing task related conflicts in any given construction companies.

7. References

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