

AN ASSESSMENT OF DISPUTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AMONG COMMODITY MARKET ASSOCIATIONS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

AKEEM ADERAYO SARAOKI

Ph.D Student

Centre for Peace and Security Studies

Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin

Kwara State, Nigeria.

akeem.saraki@kwasu.edu.ng; kilani.jilani@gmail.com

+234806 747 6439

&

DR. RAJI SHITTU ADEWOLE

Centre for Peace and Security Studies

Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin

Kwara State, Nigeria.

Abstract

This research project aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of dispute management strategies employed by commodity market associations in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study recognizes the pivotal role these associations play in maintaining a harmonious and cooperative environment among their members, and it seeks to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of existing dispute management mechanisms. The methodology involves a qualitative approach focusing on in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including association leaders, members, and individuals involved in the administration of dispute management processes. This qualitative method aims to uncover perspectives, experiences, and perceptions surrounding the various strategies in place. The analysis explores the diversity of dispute management strategies, ranging from formal mechanisms such as arbitration and mediation to informal approaches rooted in traditional practices. It will also assess the role of communication, leadership, and organizational culture in influencing the effectiveness of these strategies. Special attention will be given to identifying any contextual factors specific to Kwara State that may impact the success of dispute management efforts. Anticipated outcomes include an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of current dispute management strategies within commodity market associations in Kwara State. The research findings aim to contribute practical recommendations for refining existing approaches or implementing new strategies that better align with the unique dynamics of commodity markets in the region. This analysis aspires to foster a more cooperative and resilient environment among association members, ultimately enhancing the overall sustainability and success of commodity market associations in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Dispute Management Strategies, Conflict Analysis, Association Dynamics, Market Member Relations.

Introduction

Markets enable buyers and sellers to share risks associated with the production and sale of goods and services, and as such help to mitigate risk for individual parties and encourage more investment in the market. Ultimately, markets facilitate a competitive environment where businesses compete with each other to attract customers. This competition helps to ensure that businesses provide high-quality goods and services at reasonable prices (Beers, 2021 & Astapsova, 2022). In a globalized world, trade and conflict are interdependent. For instance, the recent war between Russia and Ukraine has disrupted the supply chains of many commodities, leading to sharp increase in the prices of consumable commodity, particularly oil/gas, fertilizers, and grains.

Beyond this noticeable effect, dispute among major stakeholders in the distribution channel of commodity market have been reported across globe as a result of the high cost and shortage in the supply of grains due to Russia-Ukraine war (Bafflesfandangle, 2022). In a study of McKinsey's latest European Consumer Pulse Survey, carried out from September 23 to October 2, 2022, which garnered the views of 1,000 respondents in each of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom in commodity market places, it was confirmed that dispute between consumers and traders of grain commodity worsened, especially in Germany and France, due to a variety of factors which include changes in supply and demand, fluctuations in prices, and general inflation (Mckinsey and Company, 2022). Also, The Human Rights Watch (2022), reveals disruption of global commodity markets and trade flows to Africa by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, resulting to an already increase in high food prices in the African region, "even countries that import little from the two countries are indirectly impacted by higher world prices for key commodities."

In Africa, crowded market, struggles over market power by commodity market unions, and contest for market access/space often offer a fertile context for conflict entrepreneurs, while transport-related issues may act as a conflict trigger or a background factor to exacerbate other causes of tension in some selected markets places as investigated by Porter, et al (2010). For instance, in Ghana, Agbogbloshie; a marketplace for the sale of fresh foodstuffs always experience space dispute among yam traders due to insufficient land space to display their produce (Wiredu and Sam, 2019).

In many markets in Kwara State of Nigeria, the desires to buy and sell commodities often result into strained relationships, unhealthy rivalries, tense commercial atmosphere, and other kinds of trade dispute among commodity traders. Much of the conflict triggers revolves around economic issues and threats influenced by competition for sales of commodity to some customers which culminate into disunity or discord as obviously experienced in markets where different commodity traders compete for economic gains. Thus, commodity markets in Kwara State are characterized by trade disputes which are majorly non-violent.

Despite the potential for trade to become a locus of dispute, market interactions and trading relationships have facilitated reconciliation because disputing groups do work together to secure their individual livelihoods. Moreover, market spaces are important potential for mediation because they bring conflict related groups together, especially in boundary regions. This is evidence in Jos central market whereby traders of different ethnic group not only assist one another but protect each other from being attacked by hoodlums during the crisis period

in the metropolis (Bonkat, 2015). This study appraises the dispute management strategies of Commodity Market Associations (CMAs) on its members in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Objective/Structure

The purpose of this study is to analyze the conflict management strategies of the Commodity Market Association (CMA) in selected commodity markets and their impact on the peaceful coexistence of member in Kwara State, Nigeria. The objective is to investigate the causes of trade disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State and identify the conflict management mechanisms involved in dispute resolution among commodity market traders in Kwara State. Finally, we examine the effectiveness of the dispute management mechanisms among commodity market traders in Kwara State. To achieve these general objectives, this document is divided into sections, starting with an introduction and continuing with conclusions and recommendations.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative method to achieve the stated objectives. For this study, purposive sampling method is adopted in selecting two marketplaces in each of the senatorial district of the State, namely, Gbugbu International market and Kaima market both in Edu and Kaima LGAs of Kwara North Senatorial district; Owode Market and Kara Ajase both in Offa and Irepodun LGAs of Kwara South Senatorial district; and Ipata and Mandate market in Ilorin East and West LGAs of Kwara Central Senatorial district. The population for this study is estimated to be Thirteen Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty-Nine (13,259) market traders in all the registered marketplaces in Kwara State (Kwara State Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of commerce, 2022). However, the targeted population consists of men and women of commodity traders in some selected registered marketplaces in the three senatorial districts of the State, heads of the market union and security agents stationed at those marketplaces are selected for interview sections.

The instrument used for data collection is in-depth interview. Oral interview sessions were conducted for the market union leaders and representatives of security agencies at their own convenient time and places. This was projected to gather primary information from targeted respondents.

Conceptual Discourse and Literature Review

Trade Dispute

Section 47 (1) of the Trade Disputes Act (TDA), (2004) defines trade dispute as “any dispute between employer and workers or between workers and workers which is connected with the employment or non-employment or the form of employment and physical condition of work of any person”. Such dispute might be caused by economic, managerial or environmental factor. In the same manner, trade dispute is defined by Section 54 (1) of the National Industrial Court Act (NICA), (2006), to be “any dispute between employer and employees including dispute between their respective organizations and federations which is connected with: the employment or non-employment of any person, terms of employment and physical conditions of work of any person, or the conclusion or variation of a collective agreement, and an alleged dispute”. The ongoing Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike provides an instance. ASUU has alleged that the Federal Government refuse to honour the agreement both parties at different times as well as the non-improvement of the former’s

working condition. Some employees also take cognizance of their work environment, and they want an improvised working condition, failure of the employer to ensure good and secured working environment could also lead to trade dispute.

Thus, trade dispute can be said to be the disagreement that occurs between an employer and an employee or between an organization and its member of staff. Trade dispute can also occur between two or more employee or group of employers within an organization. Trade dispute often arises when the employer refuse to honor the agreement that was reached between the employer and the employer, or the employee feels cheated or abused in the course of working in the organization. The agreements are in most cases as a result of the employer negotiating their needs and express their grievance, but when such agreements are not met, there is tendency for industrial action like strike or down tools by the employer (Bown and Reynolds, 2014; Xiang, 2020; Adegbite, Alawode and Alabi, 2021).

Causes of Trade Dispute

Bown and Reynolds, (2014) opine that organization consist of people of various background and belief, this belief or orientation is likely to clash with that the employer or between 2 or more employee within an organization. Moreso, the insatiable nature of man will always make the employee to demand for more while the employer will focus on increasing its productivity while aiming at increasing its profit. As noted earlier, trade dispute might be caused by economic, managerial, or environmental factor as well as globalization.

Economic Factor

Trade disputes are caused by economic factor such as wage, increase in cost of living, demand for increase in bonus and incentives. When there is increase in task of an employee the employee tends to seek more financial gains and on the other hand, the employer will be looking at maximizing profit. Increase in cost of living, is also an economic factor that cause trade dispute. For instance, the increase in fuel price and cost of diesel have led to the cost of production which in turn, have led to the cost of food and essential commodity; this was one of the factors that led to industrial action in January 2011 during the Goodluck Jonathan administration.

Managerial Factor

One of the functions of a good manager is to manage both material and human resources within the organization. The managerial factor includes attitude of the manager, human relation, leadership quality among other factors. It will become a disaster when the manager could not manage the human resources adequately or could not have the right leadership skills to manage the employee. It is always advisable for a manager to be more democratic than autocratic in nature. This will likely boost the relationship between the manager and employee. Regardless, the democratic nature of the manager should not be at the expense of the organization development. The manager should also ensure that the wellbeing of the employee are not been jeopardized and that employment and promotion should be based on merit. More so, employee should be motivated rather than been coerced to work; this entire sum to the leadership and managerial quality of the manager.

Environmental Factor

Environmental factors that trigger trade disputes include work environment, facilities, and work condition. When employee work under a harsh condition and the employer tend not to ensure a conducive working condition, there is a likely chance that dispute will arise. Employees need to be giving the right tools in the right facilities so as to the right job. According to The Guardian (2021), Hundreds of causal workers protested against what they described as pathetic situation at OK Foods, a subsidiary of Olam International Limited, the employee alleged poor pay, poor working conditions and constant threats to being laid off.

Globalization

The world is a global village where good policy of a country is emulated by other countries. Employee also tend to want a better working condition that meet international standard. For instance, Nigeria Doctors under the umbrella Nigerian Association of Residents Doctors (NARD) went on strike on August 2, 2021. One of the reasons for the strike was government inability to provide adequate protection, bonus, and facilities for them during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the cause of demanding for all this, reference was made to developed countries like USA, UK, Canada, Germany etc, on how they have been able to provide adequate funding and facilities for their doctor during and after the pandemic.

Theoretical Framework

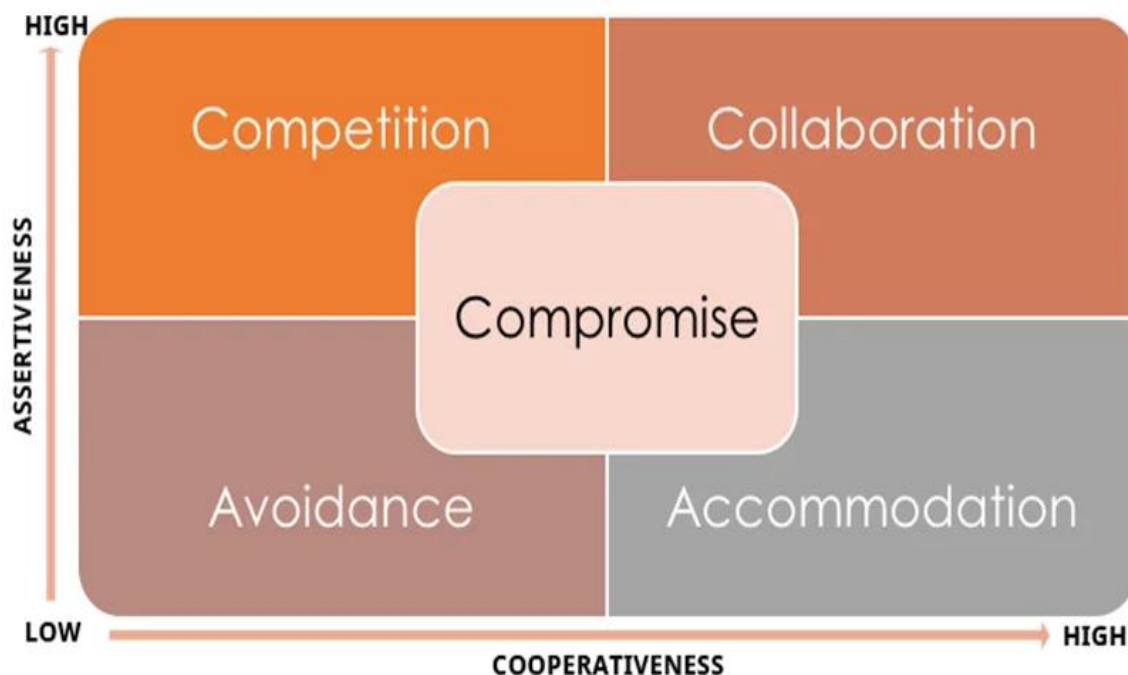
Conflict Resolution Theory

Conflict Resolution Theory (CRT) is a prominent framework within the fields of psychology, sociology, and organizational studies, offering insights into the dynamics, processes, and outcomes of conflict management and resolution. Developed by scholars such as Kenneth R. Thomas (1927 - 2008), Dean G. Pruitt (1930), and Roger D. Fisher (1922 – 2012), conflict resolution theory provides a comprehensive understanding of how individuals, groups, and organizations navigate conflicts to achieve mutually satisfactory outcomes.

At its core, Conflict Resolution Theory explores the nature and dynamics of conflict, emphasizing the role of perceptions, communication, power dynamics, and negotiation in resolving disputes. It defines conflict as a perceived divergence of interests, goals, or values between individuals, groups, or entities. Conflict may arise from competition for resources, differences in perspectives, or incompatible objectives. The theory further describes conflict resolution as the process of addressing and resolving disputes through constructive communication, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques. As such CRT aims to facilitate the transformation of conflict into opportunities for collaboration and mutual understanding (Burton, 1986; Schellenberg, 1996; Sanson, and Bretherton, 2001; Dixit, 2004; 7CTOs, 2022; Kumar, 2023).

One central component of conflict resolution theory is negotiation which involves the exchange of offers, concessions, and agreements to reach mutually acceptable solutions. CRT examines negotiation strategies, tactics, and outcomes across various contexts, including interpersonal, organizational, and international settings. 7CTOs (2022), posits that, as developed by Thomas & Kilmann, conflict resolution theory identifies five primary conflict styles, namely competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. The model has two approaches, also known as “dimensions”: assertiveness and cooperation. Thus, individuals and groups employ different approaches or styles to manage conflicts, ranging

from competitive and assertive behaviours to cooperative and accommodating strategies.



Source: <https://www.mtdtraining.com/blog/thomas-kilmann-conflict-management-model.htm>

From the illustration, the grid that forms the backbone of the model is a simple 2x2 design with an overlapping square in the center, much like a more involved Venn diagram. At the centre is the Compromising mode of conflict resolution. On the x-axis is cooperativeness, and on the y is assertiveness. The four other cells (besides the aforementioned Compromise) are as follows:

- High assertiveness and high cooperativeness: Collaboration
- High assertiveness and low cooperativeness: Competition
- Low assertiveness and high cooperation: Accommodation
- Low assertiveness and low cooperation: Avoidance

Conflict resolution theory offers several principles and propositions to guide the analysis and practice of conflict management and resolution. According to Kumar, (2023), CRT underscores the principle of Win-Win solution which emphasizes the importance of seeking mutually beneficial outcomes that address the interests and concerns of all parties involved in the conflict. This is because Win-win solutions promote cooperation, trust, and sustainable relationships. The theory also stresses the principle of interdependence that sees conflict parties as interdependent, where their actions and decisions affect one another. CRT acknowledges the interconnectedness of individuals, groups, and organizations within social systems, influencing the dynamics and resolution of conflicts.

The theory, as posited by Longpoe, (2020), highlights effective communication as essential for resolving conflicts, facilitating understanding, empathy, and constructive dialogue between conflicting parties. It underlines active listening, empathy, and clarity in communication to overcome misperceptions and promote reconciliation. In the same vein, conflict resolution theory explores how power asymmetries impact negotiation strategies, coercion, and conflict

escalation or de-escalation. In other words, power imbalances can influence the dynamics and outcomes of conflicts, shaping the ability of parties to assert their interests and negotiate favorable terms (Yevsyukova, 2022). The theory stresses the role of third parties in managing conflicts, enhancing communication, and fostering consensus-building. Burton, (1993), as noted by Yevsyukova, (2022), agrees that third-party intervention, such as mediation, arbitration, or facilitation, helps facilitate the resolution of conflicts by providing neutral, impartial assistance to conflicting parties.

To analyze and address a wide range of conflicts, the conflict resolution theory has been applied across various contexts and domains. CRT offers insights into the dynamics of conflicts within interpersonal relationships, such as romantic partnerships, friendships, and family dynamics. It provides strategies for managing conflict escalation, promoting empathy, and resolving disputes through effective communication and negotiation. Within organizational settings, CRT, according to Ndeche, and Iroye, (2022), informs the management of conflicts arising from differences in goals, priorities, or work styles among employees, teams, or departments. It offers techniques for promoting collaboration, constructive feedback, and conflict resolution skills training to enhance organizational effectiveness.

The theory also applies in the context of community and intergroup conflicts where it contributes to the analysis and resolution of conflicts between communities, social groups, or identity-based factions. It explores the role of identity, culture, and structural factors in fueling intergroup tensions and offers strategies for fostering reconciliation, dialogue, and social cohesion (Leshem & Halperin, 2020; Yevsyukova, 2022). At the international level, CRT provides frameworks for understanding and addressing conflicts between nations, states, or geopolitical actors. It examines the root causes of international conflicts, such as territorial disputes, resource competition, or ideological differences, and proposes diplomatic, negotiation, and peacebuilding strategies to mitigate tensions and promote resolution (Longpoe, 2020; Morumbasi, 2021). Within legal systems application, conflict resolution theory informs alternative dispute resolution methods such as mediation, arbitration, and restorative justice. It emphasizes collaborative approaches to resolving legal disputes, reducing adversarial dynamics, and enhancing conflicting party satisfaction with the outcomes (Ross, 2001; Ndeche, 2022).

Conflict Resolution Theory is not without critiques and limitations, despite its widespread use and applicability. According to Leshem & Halperin, (2020), CRT oversimplify the complexities of conflicts by focusing on rational decision-making, communication, and negotiation processes. This is because conflicts frequently involve emotional, cultural, and systemic factors that defy straightforward resolution through negotiation alone. Also, power imbalances may inhibit genuine dialogue, compromise, and equitable outcomes in conflict resolution efforts, thus, the theory is criticized for its neglect of the role of power dynamics and structural inequalities in perpetuating conflicts, particularly in cases of social injustice, oppression, or marginalization.

Furthermore, conflict resolution theory must account for cultural norms, values, and communication styles to ensure relevance and sensitivity in diverse settings. As such, the theory is limited by its application on culture and context sensitivity. In other words, conflict

resolution approaches derived from Western perspectives may not always be applicable or effective in non-Western cultural contexts. In the same manner, conflict resolution theory raises ethical questions regarding the neutrality, impartiality, and legitimacy of third-party interveners in conflict resolution processes. Essentially in conflict resolution, mediators and arbitrators must navigate ethical dilemmas, power dynamics, and conflicting interests to facilitate fair and just outcomes. Finally, while conflict resolution theory emphasizes the importance of win-win solutions and sustainable agreements, conflicts may persist or resurface due to unresolved underlying issues, lack of trust, or changing circumstances. Conflict resolution efforts must address root causes and structural factors to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation (Quille, 2000; Dixit, 2004; Leshem & Halperin, 2020; Yevsyukova, 2022).

Regardless of its critiques and limitations, conflict resolution theory remains a vital framework for analyzing and addressing the complexities of human conflicts in interpersonal, organizational, community, and international settings. Its continued relevance underscores its significance in the pursuit of peace, justice, and social harmony. Conflict resolution theory offers valuable insights into the dynamics, strategies, and outcomes of conflict management and resolution across various contexts. By understanding the principles of communication, negotiation, power dynamics, and third-party intervention, practitioners and policymakers can develop effective approaches to addressing conflicts and promoting constructive dialogue, reconciliation, and social change.

Hence, the theory is employed in the framework of a study on dispute management strategies of Commodity Market Associations (CMAS) and effects on peaceful co-existence among members in Kwara state, Nigeria to explore various methods for resolving conflicts, including negotiation, mediation, and arbitration. It conforms with the examination of how CMAs in Kwara State utilize these strategies to manage disputes among their members and promote peaceful co-existence.

Theoretical Considerations on the Study

Conflict Resolution Theory (CRT) offers invaluable theoretical contributions to the assessment of dispute management strategies among Commodity Market Associations (CMAs) in Kwara State, Nigeria. This framework provides a structured lens through which to understand, analyze, and enhance the effectiveness of conflict management within these associations. First, CRT emphasizes the nature and dynamics of conflicts as perceived divergences of interests, goals, or values among individuals or groups. In the context of CMAs in Kwara State, conflicts can arise from disputes over resource allocation, market practices, or leadership roles among others. Hence, recognizing conflicts as natural and potentially constructive processes, CRT encourages CMAs to view disputes not merely as problems to be solved but as opportunities for improving organizational dynamics and fostering growth.

Secondly, CRT's focus on conflict resolution processes becomes particularly relevant. The theory advocates for constructive communication, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques to address conflicts effectively. For CMAs in Kwara State, this entails promoting open dialogue among members, facilitating mediation sessions, and employing negotiation strategies that aim for win-win outcomes. Where these approaches are integrated, CMAs will be capable of mitigating tensions, build consensus, and achieve resolutions that satisfy the

interests of all parties involved. Moreover, CRT's framework of conflict styles, as articulated by Thomas-Kilmann, offers practical insights into how different approaches—competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating—can be employed strategically within CMAs. Understanding these styles helps in tailoring conflict resolution strategies to fit specific disputes and organizational contexts. For instance, when resolving disputes over market regulations, a collaborative approach may be more effective in achieving sustainable agreements that benefit all stakeholders.

Another crucial contribution of CRT lies in its principles of interdependence and effective communication. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of stakeholders within CMAs and promoting clear, empathetic communication, the theory fosters mutual understanding and trust. This is essential for managing conflicts that stem from misunderstandings or miscommunications, which are common in organizational settings. Furthermore, CRT's consideration of power dynamics in conflicts is pertinent to assessing dispute management strategies among CMAs. In Kwara State, power imbalances between different market participants or leadership factions can influence negotiation outcomes and the fairness of dispute resolutions. The theory underscores the importance of addressing these imbalances through equitable processes and impartial mediation, thereby promoting organizational justice and cohesion.

Critically, while CRT provides a robust framework, its application must also consider cultural norms and contextual sensitivities specific to Kwara State. Conflict resolution approaches derived solely from Western perspectives may not align with local values or practices. Hence, integrating indigenous conflict resolution methods and adapting CRT principles to local contexts enhances their relevance and effectiveness within CMAs. On the overall, Conflict Resolution Theory offers comprehensive theoretical foundations and practical tools for assessing and enhancing dispute management strategies among CMAs in Kwara State, Nigeria. This theoretical framework, when applied through qualitative research methods, not only enriches our understanding of dispute management practices but also contributes to the broader discourse on organizational conflict resolution in diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Data Analysis and Results

SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Distribution of Interview Respondents

S/N	Position	Gender	Code	Date
1.	Representative of Commodity Market Associations' Executives of Ipata market, Ilorin	M	(R ₁)	21/08/2023
2.	A Commodity Trader at Ipata market, Ilorin	M	(R ₂)	21/08/2023
3.	Representative of Security Agents at Ipata market, Ilorin	M	(R ₃)	22/08/2023
4.	A Market User at Ipata market, Ilorin	F	(R ₄)	22/08/2023
5.	Representative of Commodity Market Associations' Executives of Mandate market, Ilorin	F	(R ₅)	21/08/2023
6.	A Commodity Trader at Mandate market, Ilorin	F	(R ₆)	21/08/2023
7.	Representative of Security Agents at Mandate market, Ilorin	M	(R ₇)	22/08/2023
8.	A Market User at Mandate market, Ilorin	M	(R ₈)	22/08/2023

9.	Representative of Commodity Market Associations' Executives of Owode market, Offa	F	(R ₉)	22/08/2023
10	A Commodity Trader at Owode market, Offa	F	(R ₁₀)	22/08/2023
11	Representative of Security Agents at Owode market, Offa	M	(R ₁₁)	22/08/2023
12	A Market User at Owode market, Offa	M	(R ₁₂)	22/08/2023
13	Representative of Commodity Market Associations' Executives of Kara market, Ajase-Ipo	M	(R ₁₃)	22/08/2023
14	A Commodity Trader at Kara market, Ajase-Ipo	M	(R ₁₄)	22/08/2023
15	Representative of Security Agents at Kara market, Ajase-Ipo	M	(R ₁₅)	22/08/2023
16	A Market User at Kara market, Ajase-Ipo	M	(R ₁₆)	22/08/2023
17	Representative of Commodity Market Associations' Executives of Gbugbu International market, Edu	M	(R ₁₇)	21/08/2023
18	A Commodity Trader at Gbugbu International market, Edu	M	(R ₁₈)	21/08/2023
19	Representative of Security Agents at Gbugbu International market, Edu	M	(R ₁₉)	22/08/2023
20	A Market User at Gbugbu International market, Edu	M	(R ₂₀)	22/08/2023
21	Representative of Commodity Market Associations' Executives of Kaima market, Kaima	M	(R ₂₁)	22/08/2023
22	A Commodity Trader at Kaima market, Kaima	F	(R ₂₂)	22/08/2023
23	Representative of Security Agents at Kaima market, Kaima	M	(R ₂₃)	22/08/2023
24	A Market User at Kaima market, Kaima	F	(R ₂₄)	22/08/2023

Source:Field Study, 2023

The table above showed that the distribution of interviewees who gave their opinions on the research objectives and questions related to the topic of the study. It, therefore, captures responses from respondents – Commodity Market Associations' leaders, commodity traders, security agents, and other market users from the three senatorial districts in Kwara State, Nigeria. The results gained were incorporated and discussed in the study to gain more ground and standards as regards reliability and validity of the information given.

SECTION B: Answering Research Objectives and Questions

Examine the causes of trade disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State.

Interviews conducted on causes of trade disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State reveal that such disputes arise for various reasons including disagreements in pricing, quality of products for sale, allocation of resources among traders, personal conflicts, and lack of proper communication as thus,

In my experience working with commodity market associations and as a commodity market trader, I've observed several common causes of disputes that tend to arise among our members and in this market. One of the most prevalent causes is related to pricing. Members often disagree on the fair

market price for various commodities. This sometimes stem from fluctuations in market conditions, differing assessments of quality, or sometimes simply due to individual members' attempts to maximize profits. Another common issue is product quality where traders and buyers may dispute the quality of commodities being traded. This could involve claims of misrepresentation, where a seller presents their products as higher quality than they actually are, leading to disputes when buyers discover discrepancies (R₁, R₆, and R₁₇).

Other respondents explain that,

Based on my experience and observations, several common causes have led to disputes among traders (sellers and buyers alike). In some cases, disputes occur because of a lack of access to timely and accurate information. Members may not have access to essential market data or other essential and genuine information, which often lead to misunderstandings and disputes. Also, disputes may arise over the allocation of shared resources within the market, such as storage facilities, transportation services, or marketing resources. But this may not be a major cause of trade disputes because some of us always find personal alternatives around such (R₅, and R₁₄).

Furthermore, more causes of trade disputes were discovered through interviews. These include disagreements over payments, delivery and fulfilment disputes, contractual disputes, regulatory compliance disputes, as well as market competition. A Market Associations' Leader clearly states that,

Our members repeatedly disagree on the appropriate pricing of commodities. This can occur when there are fluctuations in market prices or when sellers believe they are not receiving a fair price for their products... Let me tell you, another cause of disputes in our midst is disagreements over payments for purchases. This mostly revolves around late or non-payment for goods delivered, disputes over the agreed-upon payment terms, or even disputes concerning the method of payment (R₁₃).

A market user asserts that,

It is painful to know that disputes in commodity sales are often caused by the fulfilment of delivery obligations. This is when there are delays in delivery or failure to provide the agreed quantity of commodities, leading to conflicts and breaches of contract. Related to this are issues related to contract terms and conditions. This includes disputes over the interpretation of contract clauses, obligations, or timeline. Just yesterday here, I almost fought my customer over her inability to get me the quantity of grains I made order for since last week Tuesday. In fact, I am not even interested in her stories! (R₄, R₁₆, and R₂₀).

Another Market Associations' Executive explains that,

We as association's executives struggle with our members over compliance with local or national regulations governing commodity trading, such as taxation, environmental regulations, or health and safety standards. Traders sometimes refuse to pay agreed market levies, while some would not participate in the environmental sanitation that comes up on every Thursday!

Another reason that I know is fierce competition among members for customers, trading spaces, and scarce market resources(R₂₁).

Identify the conflict management mechanisms involved in disputes resolution among commodity market traders in Kwara State

Interviews conducted on conflict management mechanisms involved in disputes resolution among commodity market traders in Kwara State reveal that there are existing conflict management initiatives or mechanisms among members of commodity market associations in Kwara State. These include association rules and regulations, mediation and arbitration, grievance committees, education and training, collaboration with government agencies, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Services. One Interviewee responded thus:

Yes, there are several existing initiatives and mechanisms in place in this our market to manage conflicts among members and other stakeholders in the market. Particularly, we have our own established rules and regulations governing member behaviours and trade practices. These rules and regulations already outline acceptable conduct, pricing guidelines, and dispute resolution procedures. These mechanisms have evolved over time to promote fair trade practices and peaceful resolution of disputes(R₁, and R₃).

A Market Associations' Leader explains that,

Our association has established committees for mediation and arbitration that composed of experienced members. These committees are charged with the responsibility to resolve disputes between members through negotiation or arbitration. Successfully, these committees have been moderately effective in settling disputes, particularly those related to pricing, quality, and contractual misunderstandings. But I need to say that the effectiveness of the committees depends on the willingness of parties to participate in the process, and we are encouraging our members(R₂₁).

A female Market Associations' Executive further corroborates the use of committees thus:

Here, we as an association set up grievance committees specifically tasked with addressing member complaints and conflicts. They are made of selected noble traders, especially the elderly and those who have a long history in the market. Those committees investigate complaints, listen to both sides, and attempt to find mutually acceptable solutions. They provide a platform for members to voice their concerns, and I believe they have been effective in resolving minor disputes(R₉).

A trader notes that,

This market union recognizes the importance of educating members about market dynamics, contract management, and conflict resolution techniques. They provided us with different training programmes to enhance our understanding of our rights and responsibilities. Sincerely, these initiatives have helped us in preventing disputes by promoting better communication, love, respect and adherence to market rules (R₂₂).

Collaboration with government agencies in promoting fair and peaceful trade within commodity market traders in Kwara State was buttressed by another respondent as thus:

In our own case, the market association partnered with government agencies responsible for trade regulation and market oversight such as..... This collaboration has helped and is still helping us to ensure that market operations comply with relevant laws and regulations, thereby reducing disputes related to regulatory compliance (R₁₅).

In the overall, mediation and arbitration services are becoming increasingly popular for resolving commodity market disputes. These methods provide a more structured and neutral approach to conflict resolution, ensuring that disputes are settled fairly and efficiently.

Examine the effectiveness of the mechanisms for managing disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State

Respondents through interviews carried out attested to the effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms for disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State, thus:

In my experience and assessment of the methods for managing disputes among commodity market traders here, I would say that the mechanisms put in place are somewhat effective in preventing conflicts from escalating, but I would like to quickly say there is room for improvement. For instance, our mediation and arbitration committee address disputes in a timely manner, and thus, it is playing a valuable role in resolving conflicts, thereby bridging differences, and finding mutually acceptable solutions (R₅, R₁₂, R₁₉).

To other respondents, having clear rules and regulations and open communication channels aided the effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms for disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State:

Since we have well-defined rules and regulations governing trading activities in this market, these rules helped set expectations and provided a basis for resolving disputes amongst us. Knowing the rules by all parties has subsequently facilitated smoother conflict management and resolution. Also, our CMA in this market encourages accessible communication among members and provides channels for raising concerns and complaints for all parties. This is greatly contributing to addressing disputes towards effective conflict management, especially at an early stage before they escalate (R₃, R₈ and R₁₈).

To show the effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms for disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State as favourably fair and impartial, respondents believe that,

In my estimation of the mechanisms for managing disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State, I would say that those efforts are ensuring fairness and impartiality, and I believe it was as a result of transparency. There is always an attempt to maintain transparency in the dispute management and resolution process, hence, decisions are communicated to parties as well as reasons for the decisions are well provided. This has undoubtedly promoted

efficiency and effectiveness of the conflict management mechanisms for disputes among commodity traders and all other stakeholders in the market (R₁₁, R₁₇, and R₂₄).

Summary of Major Findings

The study assessed the effects of dispute management strategies on commodity market associations' peaceful co-existence among members in Kwara State, Nigeria. From the data presentation and analysis from in-depth interview, the following findings are identified.

- i. The major and common causes of trade disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State, Nigeria are disagreements in pricing, quality of products for sale, allocation of resources among traders, personal conflicts, lack of proper communication. Other causes of trade disputes include disagreements over payments, delivery and fulfilment disputes, contractual disputes, regulatory compliance disputes, as well as market competition.
- ii. Commodity Market Associations in Kwara State have in place some conflict management mechanisms or methods such as mediation, arbitration, informal discussions, even litigation, although they are wary or cautious of litigation as a conflict resolution mechanism.
- iii. Other existing dispute management initiatives and mechanisms among members of the Kwara State Commodity Market Associations include the association's rules and regulations, mediation and arbitration, grievance committees, education and training, cooperation with government agencies, and non-judicial approaches such as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Traders do also rely on traditional elders and local leaders to manage and resolve disputes.
- iv. The dispute management mechanisms among commodity market traders in Kwara State are satisfactory in their effectiveness. These mechanisms are effective in preventing escalation of conflicts and are also effective in resolving disputes among commodity traders in Kwara State. The majority of respondents viewed the dispute management mechanism as very fair and impartial in resolving disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State.

Conclusion

This qualitative assessment of dispute management strategies among commodity market associations in Kwara State, Nigeria, has provided valuable insights into the complex dynamics of conflict management and resolution within these associations. Through in-depth interviews, we gained a diverse understanding of the strategies employed, the challenges faced, and the perspectives of market users.

The qualitative data highlighted the significance of effective communication, trust-building, and proactive measures in preventing disputes and fostering a harmonious environment. It revealed that conflicts often arise from disagreements over pricing, the quality of products sold, the allocation of resources among dealers, personal conflicts, lack of proper communication, etc. Moreover, disputes among commodity market traders in Kwara State also arise from regulatory compliance disputes, payment disagreements, delivery and performance disputes, contractual disputes, and market competition.

The study further highlighted that Commodity Market Associations in Kwara State use dispute management mechanisms and methods such as informal discussions, the association's rules and regulations, mediation, arbitration, grievance committees, education and training, cooperation with government agencies, and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services. These have played a key role in shaping the stability and prosperity of these important economic hubs.

Conclusively, this research contributes to the broader discourse on effective dispute management in market-based organizations, offering a qualitative lens that complements existing quantitative studies. It is hoped that the insights gained will inform policymakers, association leaders, and stakeholders in Kwara State and beyond, fostering more robust and adaptive dispute management strategies that contribute to the sustained peace and coexistence within commodity market associations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper, and considering the unique context of Kwara State and its commodity market dynamics, it is recommended that:

- a) Efforts should be made towards the formalization of dispute management mechanisms within commodity market associations. This involves developing and implementing structured processes that members can follow when conflicts arise. This formalization would certainly enhance transparency and fairness in resolving disputes amongst the commodity markets stakeholders.
- b) The establishment of community mediation resources or committees within commodity market associations becomes essential. These entities would serve as neutral mediators and facilitate dialogue between conflicting parties. Training members to serve as mediators would also contribute to a more localized and community-driven approach to conflict management, resolution and transformation.
- c) In respect of the above, training and capacity-building programs, focusing on conflict management styles, conflict resolution skills, and awareness of available dispute management strategies should be provided for association members. Through this, members would be empowered to handle conflicts more effectively and reduce reliance on traditional methods that may lack formal structures.
- d) Improved communication can prevent misunderstandings and contribute to early intervention in potential conflicts. Hence, stakeholders should emphasize the importance of effective communication within commodity market associations, while encouraging open dialogue, clear channels of communication, and the dissemination of information related to dispute management strategies.
- e) Commodity Market Associations should promote the importance of documentation and record-keeping in the management of disputes. They should establish a system for recording and tracking conflicts, resolutions on such conflicts, and lessons learned as this would contribute to organizational learning and the continuous improvement of dispute management strategies. In the same manner, they should encourage a culture of regular review and adaptation of dispute management strategies based on feedback and changing circumstances towards contributing to the long-term effectiveness of conflict management strategies.

References

- Adegbite, V., Alawode, A., & Alabi, M. (2021). Trade disputes in Nigeria: An examination of the issues arising from the JUSUN strike.
- Astaptsova, M. (2022). What is an online marketplace? *Omnyfy*. <https://omnyfy.com/what-is-an-online-marketplace/>
- Baffles, J., & Nagle, P. (2022). Commodity prices surge due to the war in Ukraine. *World Bank Blog*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/commodity-prices-surge-due-war-ukraine>
- Beers, B. (2021). Examples of barter transactions? *Investopedia*. <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/101314/what-are-some-examples-barter-transactions.asp>
- Bonkat, L. (2015). Surviving in a conflict environment: Market women and changing socioeconomic relations in Jos Nigeria—2001–2010. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. Phil) in Political Science awarded by BIGSAS at Bayreuth University. <https://epub.unibayreuth.de/id/eprint/2919/1/Dissertation%20of%20%20Lohna%20Bonkat%20pdf.pdf>
- Bown, C. P., & Reynolds, K. M. (2014). Trade flows and trade disputes. *Policy Research Working Paper 6979*. World Bank Group, Development Research Group. Trade and International Integration Team.
- Caputo, A., Marzi, G., Maley, J. F., & Silic, M. (2019). Ten years of conflict management research 2007-2017. *International Journal of Conflict Management*.
- CFI Education. (2020). What is conflict theory? *Corporate Finance Institute*. <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/economics/conflict-theory/>
- Chappelow, J., & Barnier, B. (2020). Conflict theory. *Investopedia*. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/conflict-theory.asp>
- Hayes, A. (2021). Commodity market. *The Balance*. <https://www.thebalance.com/what-are-commodities-3306236>
- Honeyman, C. (2013). Commercial conflict. <https://www.beyondintractability.org/coreknowledge/commercial-conflict>
- Honeyman, C. (2013). Labor-management conflict. <https://www.beyondintractability.org/coreknowledge/labor-management>
- Kenton, W., & Boyle, M. J. (2020). Balance of trade (BOT). *Investopedia*. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/bot.asp>
- Koop, F. (2019). What is conflict theory? Looking at Marx's main concepts. *ZME Science*. <https://www.zmescience.com/science/heatwave-climate-change-155527/>
- Learn, R. (2020). What is conflict theory? *Robinhood*. <https://learn.robinhood.com/articles/gzswQoUGEZSTPk9xcGS2T/what-is-conflict-theory/>
- McKinsey & Company. (2022). European consumer pessimism intensifies in the face of prices. *McKinsey & Company*. <https://mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/survey-european-consumer-sentiment-during-the-coronavirus-crisis>
- Porter, G., Lyon, F., Adamu, F., Obafemi, L., & Blench, R. (2005). Trade and markets in conflict development and conflict resolution in Nigeria: Scoping study report to the UK Department for International Development. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23513629> Trade and Markets in Conflict

[Development and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria Scoping Study Report to the U K Department for International Development](#)

- Porter, G., Lyon, F., Adamu, F., & Obafemi, L. (2010). Conflict and cooperation in market spaces: Learning from the operation of local networks of civic engagement in African market trade. *Human Organization*, 69(1). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44148585>
- Rahim, M. A. (2002). Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict. *The International Journal of Conflict Management*, 13.
- The Human Rights Watch. (2022). Ukraine/Russia: As war continues, Africa food crisis looms. *Human Rights Watch*. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/28/russia-war-continues-africa-food-crisis-looms>
- Verdhan, R. (2021). Conflict management – Theory, style & conflict types. *Thesis Business*. <https://www.thesisbusiness.com/conflict-management.html>
- Weber, M. (1968). *Economy and Society*. (G. Roth & C. Wittich, Trans.). Bedminster.
- Xiang, J. (2020). Market disputes and government intervention: An explanatory framework of risk transformation. *The Journal of Chinese Sociology*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-020-0115-z>