ISSN:2782-8492

FEDPOLAD Journal of Engineering & Environmental Studies (FEDPOLADJEES); Vol. 4, ISSUE 1. OCTOBER, 2024 Edition
Website: *https://seemjournals.fedpolyado.edu.ng/index.php/fedpoladjees*

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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN HOUSING MAINTENANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:
The study examines the conflict management in housing maintenance in Nigeria. Seventy (70) questionnaires were distributed for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the causes and effects of conflict management in Nigeria construction industry for collection of data and only sixty-three (63) were received for the purpose of achieving the objectives of this study and were distributed for the collection of data. Housing maintenance has become increasingly complex due to disagreements among construction and maintenance stakeholders. Several factors contribute to this complexity, including insufficient funding, lack of commitment from project owners, irresponsible behaviour of occupants, shortage of skilled labour for specialized building aspects, inadequate communication, and the prioritization of profits by clients and maintenance contractors. These challenges make rehabilitation and reactivation of outdated and dilapidated structures a dispute-prone process. Moreover, the multidisciplinary nature of maintenance works, involving various professionals and stakeholders, often fuels conflicts. The construction industry is inherently prone to disputes, particularly given the numerous uncertainties that typically plague projects. The study was conducted primarily through a comprehensive literature review focused on conflict management strategies in housing maintenance within the Nigerian context. The study concludes that professional bodies in the built environment should set up a conflict resolution body to formally oversee and resolve disagreements, reducing crisis and disputes. It recommends that parties to a maintenance contract thoroughly understand the contractual agreement before proceeding, ensure proper planning and organization of payment and schedules and both clients and contractors, and maintain good relationships between clients, professionals, and workers.

Keywords: *housing maintenance, conflict management, disputes, professional bodies, rehabilitation.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The complexity of construction projects nowadays is increasing. Construction is a process where disputes are almost guaranteed due to its intricate, relational, and protracted nature. Additionally, the multidisciplinary nature of the construction project causes disputes between the participants. It appears that disagreements and conflicts will always arise in the construction sector, particularly given the high degree of uncertainty that most projects face. The construction firm is important for having a high degree of interpersonal and inter-organizational conflict, according to Nasir and Khamid (2013). This is an essential continuing fact, in a project setting, conflict is therefore as inevitable as change seems to be. Conflicts can arise whenever project team members interact while carrying out their duties. Mba (2013) claims that when one hears the word "conflicts," images of hostility, struggles between parties, opposition processes, and threats to cooperation come to mind. However, not all conflicts take these forms, particularly in the construction industry; some take the form of

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needs to be met or desires to be satisfied, disagreements to be resolved, and ideas to be shared that ultimately result in changes in attitude, feelings, and perception. Occasionally, disputes can be relevant to the advancement of a building project since the problem that impacts the project and the cause of the conflict are successfully addressed and resolved to prevent delays. According to Lee (2011), referenced in Ogunbayo (2012), conflict is just as necessary as peace because the building business and other human endeavours are inevitably filled with conflict, which is the sole reason for seeking peace.

N. Jaffaret al. (2011) seen conflict as skepticism or questioning, resistance, inconsistent behaviour, dispute, or hostile encounter. These days, building projects are more complicated, and conflict tends to go hand in hand with them. Frequently, the construction project unites disparate and needy people or groups to create what has been called a temporary project coalition. Conflicts are still a problem in the construction sector and have the potential to cause project failures, according to research by Kassabet al. (2010). Public trust and respect for the pride of professional competences have not been the only things impacted by professional misconduct in the building business. Professional organizations are aware that the government's particular discussions on the state of professionalism in the building industry raised unjustified concerns. Managing a project without any form of misunderstanding, ill-feeling and crisis is almost impossible because misunderstanding is natural to human being in every sphere of life. According to Ohlendorf (2001), differences in belief, orientation, demands, prospects, viewpoints, imagination, and ego are the root causes of conflict among project team members. These findings are similar to what most scholars have noted regarding other aspects of life. According to Chong (2011), the most common reasons of conflict in the construction sector are mismatched goals, poor communication, or a lack of qualified candidates for important roles. Conflict also arises from internal strife within project teams. He went on to say that the intricacy of the construction sector, from project design to construction and project handover, requires a great deal of specialized expertise, which project managers must employ skillfully if they are tactical enough to address conflicting issues on a project. According to Ogunlana and Mahato (2011), conflict in the construction industry is a dynamic, complex scenario that requires the project manager to manage in order to obtain positive outcomes. The rate of change in this sector is continuous and not constant between different parties.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The target of this study is to investigate the conflict management in housing maintenance in Nigeria, its causes, effects and how it can be manage. The objective of the study are:

i. To examine the causes of conflict management in housing maintenance in Nigeria.

ii. To assess the effect of the conflict management in housing maintenance in Nigeria.

iii. To proffer solution to the conflict management in housing maintenance in Nigeria.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review indicated that the terms conflict, claim, and dispute are frequently used interchangeably. As long as the disagreements, incompatibilities, or oppositions between project participants remain within the bounds of their contractual obligations and do not develop into a dispute that calls for the involvement of a third party, they are viewed as conflict. Conflicts are still an issue in the construction sector and have the potential to cause project failures, according to research by Kassab et al. (2010). According to Martin (2013), who cited other studies, disagreements

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and disputes arise from the construction industry's harshness, pressures, and toughness. Not only has the public's trust and respect for the pride of professional competence been impacted by professional misconduct in the construction firm.

Mba (2013) claims that when one hears the word conflicts, images of hostility, struggles between parties, opposition processes, and threats to cooperation come to mind. However, not all conflicts take these forms, particularly in the construction industry; some take the form of needs to be met or desires to be satisfied, disagreements to be resolved, and ideas to be shared that ultimately result in changes in attitude, feelings, and perception. Conflict is a fight between at least two interdependent parties who believe that others' involvement, limited resources, or irreconcilable goals are impeding their ability to achieve their objectives, it was suggested that the causes of conflict management in hosing maintenance includes among others as paucity of funds, lack of commitment by the project owners, bad attitude of the occupants, lack of skilled labour of some technical aspect of building, lack of communication, maximization of profits by the clients and maintenance contractors on building maintenance makes rehabilitation and reactivation of the obsolete and dilapidated structure a process in which disputes are virtually ensured. Furthermore, the involvement of multidisciplinary in maintenance works also leads to conflicts among the parties. An event that causes one person or group to feel negatively impacted by another person or group is another way to characterize conflict. According to Hocker and Wilmont's (2011), conflict can be as a perceived battle between two or more people and that it arises from incompatible differences, among other important elements. Per Fatile and Adejuwon (2011), conflict arises when two or more individuals hold divergent beliefs about the allocation of resources related to their own growth. Nahawandi et al. (2015) described conflict as a process in which people disagree seriously on matters that are significant to them. Ellis and Baiden (2008) elucidated that disagreements among project participants have been recognized as the primary factors contributing to poor performance in construction projects. These arguments frequently result in extended delays in project implementation, disruptions, and occasionally complete work stoppages.

Unexpected problems are inevitable in building projects and have the power to completely stall or delay the work. Even though you can never be sure what may come up, you can plan ahead for the more frequent issues and take proactive steps to keep them from happening. A construction project resembles a tightrope act. Numerous moving parts, even in straightforward tasks, might lead to delays or difficulties. The most common problems with project management that your team could encounter are as follows: communication errors between key stakeholders and crews, delayed timelines, problems with documentation processes, contractual disagreements, unclear project vision and contract errors and omissions. There are goals and plans for every construction project, however common conflicts management also affect a lot of projects. As quickly and effectively as feasible, project managers must prevent or overcome these challenges. A client and the contractor must have the capacity to resolve conflicts. Clients and contractors need to be aware of the many kinds of conflicts in order to resolve them.

Every building project will inevitably encounter conflicts (Peter Wallensteen, 2012). There are several reasons why they could appear during a building job. They even surface in well-intentioned endeavours. Differences in belief, orientation, demands, prospects, views, imagination, and ego are

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among the causes of conflicts between clients and contractors in housing management, according to Chong (2011), Ogunlana and Mahato (2011), Khanaki and Hassanzadeh (2010), and other researchers. These findings are similar to what most researchers have noted regarding other aspects of life. Considered conflict in the construction industry as a dynamic, complex, and ever-changing issue involving multiple parties that need to be managed by the project manager in order to produce favourable outcomes. As (Lee, 2011) concluded, conflict is as necessary as peace because the only reason people want peace is because there is a conflict, which is unavoidable in the construction sector as well as other fields of human effort.

According to Leffel, Hallam, and Darling (2012), conflict management is about knowing the tactics needed to reduce the dysfunctional element of conflict and increase its constructive efficacy rather than advocating for the end of conflict. Studying conflict management is crucial because it facilitates the comprehension and resolution of disputes in all types of organizations. The goal of conflict management is to prevent and restrict future acts of violence by encouraging constructive behavioural adjustments in all parties involved (Fisher, 2000). Therefore, internal techniques employed by different authorities to resolve problems without truly eliminating them are referred to as conflict management strategies. Since conflict is an inevitable byproduct of human interaction and cannot be eradicated in any social structure, resolving conflict is regarded as one of the most significant difficulties facing governance. The professional bodies in the built environment should set up a conflict resolution body to formally oversee and resolve disagreements, reducing crisis and disputes. It recommends that parties to a maintenance contract thoroughly understand the contractual agreement before proceeding, ensure proper planning and organization of payment and schedules and both clients and contractors, and maintain good relationships between clients, professionals, and workers.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Seventy (70) questionnaires were distributed for the purpose of achieving the objectives of this causes and effects of conflicts management in Nigeria construction industry for collection of data and only sixty three (63) were received this happened because some of the respondent were not interested in completing the questionnaire and some cannot be retrieved due to the careless act of the respondents. Data were obtained from both the primary and secondary sources which include interview, questionnaire, textbooks journal publications and internet facilities. The data was analyzed (i.e the mean and standard deviation), using statistical package for social society (SPSS). The statistical tools used for this study include percentage, mean, and relative significance index (RSI) to determine which of the causes, effects and solutions of conflicts management on housing maintenance in Nigeria. The relative significance index ranking (RSI) was used for ranking of the factors studied. The responses of the items on the questionnaire were obtained on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. ‘‘Very High” were scored 5, ‘‘High’’ were scored 4, ‘‘Average’’ was scored 3, ‘‘Low’’ were scored 2 and ‘‘Very Low’’ were scored 1.

These methods had been used in construction research by authors such as, (Bakhary, 2005; Elhag and Boussabaine, 1999; Faniran, 1999; Idrus and Newman, 2002; Kangiwa and Olubodun, 2003) among others proposed an equation for calculating the Relative Significance Index (RSI) in prevalence data:

$$RSI = \frac{\sum \mu}{AN} \qquad (0 \leq index \leq 1)$$

Where μ is the weighting assigned by respondents to each factor.

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A has the most weight (i.e. 5 in this case).

N represents the total number of respondents.

Table 7 serial number 1,

$$RSI = \frac{\sum\mu}{AN} = \frac{1a+2b+3c+4d+5e}{5N} = \frac{\mathbf{1}(10)\ \mathbf{x}\ \mathbf{2}(16)\ \mathbf{x}\ \mathbf{3}(10)\ \mathbf{x}\ \mathbf{4}(17)\ \mathbf{x}\ 5\ (10)}{5(63)} = 0.603$$

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data were presented using tables for clarification and better interpretation. The analysis tools included both descriptive and inferential statistics.

A. Respondents Profile

Table 1: Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	46	73.02
Female	17	26.98
Total	63	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 1 showed the gender of the respondents. It showed that ninety two percent (73.02%) are male, and eight percent (26.98%) are female. The result shows the representation of genders in the construction industry in the study area.

Table 2: Population distribution

Questionnaire administered	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Questionnaire retrieved	63	90
Un-retrieved questionnaire	07	10
TOTAL	70	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 2 showed the population distribution of the respondents. It showed that sixty three percent (90%) are male, and eight percent (26.98%) are female. The result shows the representation of genders in the construction industry in the study area.

Table 3: Length of service

Years	Midpoint (x)	Frequency (f)	Fx	Percentage
1-5	6	14	84	9.94
6-10	8	11	88	10.41
11-15	13	10	130	15.38
16-20	18	15	270	31.95
above 21	21	13	273	32.31
Total		**63**	**845**	**100.00**

Mean = ∑fx/∑f= 845/63 = 13.41

Table 3 shows the respondents mean year of experience estimated at approximately thirteen years (13yrs). With this average working experience of thirteen years, respondents are deemed experienced enough to supply reliable data for the research.

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Table 4: Academic qualifications of Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary/secondary	2	3.17
National Diploma/NCE	24	38.10
HND/BSc	18	28. 57
MEng/MSc/MTech	10	15.87
PhD	9	14.29
Total	**63**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 4 represents the academic/educational qualification obtained by the respondents. 38.10% is with National Diploma/NCE, while 28. 57% is with HND/BSc, while 15.87% is with MEng/MSc/MTech, 14.29% is with PhD, and 3.17% with Primary/secondary certificates. The result shows that all respondents possess academic qualifications from the various schools as from elementary to tertiary education to acquire training and knowledge to supply reliable data for the study.

Table 5: Professional qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
NIOB	17	26.98
NIQS	21	33.33
NIA	14	22.22
NSE	7	11.11
Others	4	6.35
Total	**63**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 5 represents the professional qualifications obtained by the respondents. 33.33% is registered with NIQS, while 26.98% is registered with NIOB, 17.77% is registered with NIQS, and 22.22% is registered with NIA, 11.11% with NSE and 6.35% with other professional bodies. The result shows that all respondents possess registration of their various professional bodies in Nigeria and adequate professional training to supply reliable data for the study.

Table 6: Causes of conflicts management on housing maintenance in Nigeria

S/N	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	Total	RSI	Rank
1.	Difference in belief, orientation, demands, and prospects views	17	11	16	10	9	63	0. 546	14
2.	Lack of proper understanding among the professionals	11	20	10	12	10	63	0. 568	11
3.	Failure to have the right players in key positions	11	7	15	20	10	63	0. 635	4
4.	Lack of communication amongst professionals	19	10	12	15	7	63	0. 540	15
5.	Misaligned ambitions among professionals	12	15	11	7	18	63	0. 613	6
6.	Nature of the construction and the complexity of the project	14	13	15	10	11	63	0. 571	10
7.	Diverse skills, ideologies and group differences	11	15	10	18	9	63	0. 597	7
8.	Struggles between parties	15	13	14	13	8	63	0. 556	13
9.	Threats to cooperation	14	11	10	10	18	63	0. 597	5
10.	Pride and ego	9	10	11	12	21	63	0.683	1
11.	Harshness, pressures and toughness	11	14	15	13	10	63	0. 590	8
12.	Poor leadership	12	13	16	12	10	63	0. 584	9
13.	Incompatible behavior	12	10	8	15	18	63	0. 654	2
14	Misconduct by professionals	10	13	12	10	18	63	0. 641	3
15	Controversy or antagonistic interaction	11	18	9	16	9	63	0. 565	12

Source: Field survey, 2024

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Table 6 shows the factors causing conflicts on housing maintenance in Nigeria. Pride and ego among parties ranked first with RSI value of 0.683, incompatible behaviour ranked second with RSI value of 0. 654 and misconduct by professionals ranked third with RSI value of 0.641. Lack of communication amongst professional ranked least with RSI value of 0.540. The least causes of conflicts on housing maintenance in Nigeria is 0. 540 **(**54**%).**

Table 7: Effects of conflicts management on housing maintenance in Nigeria

S/N	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	Total	RSI	Rank
1.	Reduce communications and trust between individuals	10	16	10	17	10	63	0. 603	6
2.	Produces tension and distracts team members	11	12	10	20	10	63	0. 619	4
3.	Project delays	11	20	15	7	10	63	0. 552	10
4.	Failures and pertinent to the progress of a construction project.	15	10	12	19	7	63	0. 578	8
5.	Claim for extra money and or time	12	7	11	15	18	63	0. 663	1
6.	Misunderstanding and Ill-feeling and crisis	14	13	11	10	15	63	0. 597	7
7.	Breaks personal and professional relationships	11	18	10	15	9	63	0. 578	8
8.	Reduces effectiveness	13	13	14	15	8	63	0. 574	9
9.	Undetermined team spirit	12	11	12	10	18	63	0. 635	3
10.	Increase project costs	9	10	11	21	12	63	0. 654	2
11.	Project failures	11	10	15	17	10	63	0. 616	5

Source: Field survey, 2024

Claim for extra money and or time has the highest RSI value of 0. 663, increase project costs of housing maintenance ranked second with RSI value of 0. 654 and undetermined team spirit ranked third with RSI vale of 0. 635 while reduces of effectiveness of the parties ranked least with RSI value of 0. 574 **(**57.40%**)** and projects delayed ranked least from the rear with RSI value of **(**55.20%**).**

Table 8: Probable solutions of conflicts management on housing maintenance in Nigeria

S/N	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	Total	RSI	Rank
1	Proper management of disputes and conflicts among the parties.	18	11	12	10	12	63	0. 559	4
2	Resolving conflicts and disputes in a formal manner	21	10	11	9	12	63	0. 54	6
3	Conflict management minimizes the negative outcomes	17	10	15	11	10	63	0. 559	4
4	Project manager's effectiveness in managing conflicts	15	13	16	9	10	63	0. 556	5
5	Improvement on communication channels	12	10	10	13	18	63	0. 648	1
6	Promotion of positive behaviours among parties involved	7	13	19	11	13	63	0. 632	2
7	Encouragement of the team work	11	18	11	14	9	63	0. 575	3

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 8 shows the possible solutions to the causes of conflicts in housing maintenance in Nigeria. Improvement on communication channels among the parties involved in housing maintenance ranked first with RSI value of 0. 648, followed by promotion of positive behaviours among parties involved in housing maintenance with RSI value of 0. 632 and encouragement of the team work ranked third with RSI value of 0. 575. Resolving

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conflicts and disputes in a formal manner ranked least with RSI value of 0. 54 **(**54%**).**

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

This study has studied conflict management in housing maintenance in Nigeria. Construction work may be seriously affected by the conflicts if not properly managed. Overseeing a project from start to finish should be the aim of every client/developer/owner. When problems do arise, the client or contractors ought to be capable of resolving them fast. A building project can be completed significantly more quickly if certain issues are avoided. This paper concludes that the professional bodies in the built environment should set up a body that will oversee and resolve conflicts formally to reduce conflicts and disputes in the industry. It is also concluded that pride and ego among parties should dropped and there should be an adequate and improvement of communication channels among parties to aver crisis of misunderstanding.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is anticipated that this study will significantly contribute to the nation's construction industry participants' ability to manage their differences without negatively impacting individuals and to maintain housing so that all parties involved may finish their work on time. These recommendations were put forth in light of the investigation:

i. There should be adequate and improvement on communication amongst parties involved in housing maintenance

ii. Good leadership is the key to any successful business, leadership should be display at all time.

iii. There should not be any room for pride and ego amongst the professional and workmen to avert disagreement on conflicts, group differences.

vi. Parties to a contract should aware contractual document before proceeding into agreement.

v. Maintaining positive working relationships with clients, professionals, and employees.

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