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INFORMATION SHARING STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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Abstract

This paper discusses the strategies of information sharing for conflict resolution in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Conflict resolution is seen as the activity of the third party. The third party that wishes to intervene, need nothing as an instrument for peace and conflict resolution than information and this information need to be communicated for the impact to be felt. This paper identified information sharing techniques use for the types of Conflict and how conflict resolution in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Also survey method of research is use while questionnaire was use as the instruments for collecting data from 45 sampled respondents out of 110 populations. It was find out that negotiation, brainstorming, storytelling, and guidance and counseling are not frequently use as information sharing for conflict resolution. It was recommended that training and retraining of bodies involved in conflict resolution on the use of information sharing techniques should be organize time to time to be able to develop skill that will end conflict not only create peace.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is part of our daily reality because it dominated the space for peace and development, it cut across all sphere of society. So far there is no historical narrative about a society that is devoid of conflict. Conflict in human community or society may be blame on different values, needs, interest and the scarcity of available resources which access to them must be controlled and fought for.

The nature of conflict comprises inter-communal type; intra-communal type and natural conflict. Inter-communal conflict arises when two or more communities disagree on ethnic issues, boundary disputes, farmland occupation and other forms of disputes. Intra-communal conflict occurs within a community that may be as a result of chieftaincy crisis, political representations and land issues. The national conflict is a globalize inter and intra-communal conflict.

Understanding the consequences of conflict to academic progress and development means possessing the capabilities to set boundaries against it occurrence and/or control when it eventually does so. Therefore, this article is focusing on reporting ways by which conflict can be resolved using information sharing platforms to achieve peaceful coexistence.

Conflict resolution is seen as the activity in the part of one or more third parties wishing to affect some ongoing manifest conflict and bring it to some conclusion by changing the behaviour, attitude or goals of the adversaries. Conflict resolution is an acceptable process whereby individuals resolve issues in an informal or formal atmosphere, or where issues are resolved as part of the ongoing interaction between individuals. (Mitchell, 1987).

Primarily, conflict can be resolved using two basic approaches namely, peaceful negotiation or arbitration and force. Resolving a conflict by force is generally inadequate and can make the conflict protracted and difficult to manage: This is why Oyeshola (2005) reported that; most

societies therefore preferred peaceful resolution to open combat. Other techniques of conflict resolution include: surrendering, running away, over-powering the opponent with violence, filing a lawsuit and so on.

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Ahmadu Bello University is one of Nigeria's premier university establish in 1962, today it has 12 faculties and over 83 departments and units. This academic community has always been referred to as the largest in sub-Saharan Africa this implies contesting for space, recognition, gratification and attention. By so doing, there is no doubt that conflict will evolve. However, as a system, each organ must work harmoniously to achieve the objective of the university. Apart from the academic settings, the university has directories, institutes and centres also contributing and competing as well

INFORMATION SHARING FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Information sharing describes the exchange of data, facts, opinion, understanding, knowledge etc between various organizations, people and technologies. Information sharing is a central process through which team members collectively utilize their available informational resources. (Jessica and Leslie 2009). Information is an indispensable and essential ingredient in today's social, economic, industrial, educational, political, religious, cultural and technological development. It is very apparent today that without information no meaningful developmental activity or operation will be achieved.

In sharing information, people are able to express their views, articulate common grounds, and agreed on necessary adjustments that could foster understanding and harmonious peaceful coexistence. Thus, conflict resolution provides an opportunity to interact with parties concerned with the hope of at least reducing the scope, intensity and effects of conflict. Interaction with

parties in conflict is aimed at gathering information for what happen, how it happens, when it happens, where it happens, who are involved and what majors to be taken to end the conflict. In conflict resolution, the best solution is the solution that is best for both sides.

Information Sharing Strategies for Conflict Resolution

Mediators or conflict managers use different techniques in gathering, educating and communicating information for parties in conflict to reduce tension, create peace or resolve conflict, the techniques are: brainstorming, negotiating, dialogue etc.

1) BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is the processing of developing large number of ideas in a short amount of time that can later be evaluated and applied to a task, is one of the problem solving approach, (Payne,1999). However, this plays a greater role in putting an end to conflict because information is gathered, sorted, discussed, and disseminated to the parties in conflict; also, issues in conflict are discussed extensively to the understanding of the parties in conflict (APO, 2010).

1. Set a time limit, 10 to 20 minutes, depending upon the size of your group and the complexity of the issue.
2. The best group size is 3-15 people. If you have more, break into two or more groups and brainstorm simultaneously.
3. Focus on one issue at a time. The question or issue must be one about which all participants can speak.
4. Record all responses on a blackboard or big sheets of newsprint so everyone can see them; don't record the name of the person suggesting. Record only key words and phrases, not word for word.

Brainstorming Techniques for Conflict Resolution : Step 1: Prepare the Group; Step 2: Present the Problem; Step 3: Guide the Discussion (http://www.mindtools.com/brainstm.html)

2) NEGOTIATION

Another technique for communicating or sharing information is negotiation, which is a voluntary attempt to resolve conflicts that arise from competing needs, interest and goals. It is a problem solving approach in which parties in conflict seek agreement rather than resort to violence and force. Roger and William theory of cooperative conflict behavior, stated four (4) principles for effective negotiation. They are:

1) Separate people from their problem.

   This principle helps parties to get a clearer picture of the substantive problem.

2) Focus on interest rather than position.

3) Generate a variety of options before settling on an agreement.

4) Insist that the agreement be based on objective criteria.

3) DIALOGUE

Another technique use for resolving conflict which has to do with information sharing is dialogue. Dialogue is defined as discussion between people in which opinions are exchanged. (Mohammed, 2008). The importance of dialogue is: an inclusive process; entails learning, not just talking; recognizes one another's humanity; stresses a long-term perspective. (http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/dialogue_conflict.)
However, dialogue is nothing if not backed by concrete actions. And concrete actions mean understanding the nature of the problems and trading off. Therefore, this is to emphasize and

show the important of information sharing through dialogue in peace and conflict resolution in human society where conflict is seen as part of the norms.

OBJECTIVE

1. Ascertain the types of conflict resolved by some individuals involved in conflict resolution in Ahmadu Bello university Zaria
2. Determine the information sharing techniques used for conflict resolution by some individuals involved in conflict resolution in Ahmadu Bello university Zaria

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey method of research. Mohammed (2000) opined that survey can be said to be survey when it focuses on a given population where data is collected and analysed and the information gathered can be generalized. Therefore, survey is appropriate because it has advantages of wider application as it allows data to be collected on a large population.

The population of the study is made up of 110 respondents. They comprise six organs recognized by the university to influence conflict resolution, these are: Dean of students Affairs, Deans of Faculties, Head of Departments, and Security Officers, from these, a sample of 50% of the population were randomly selected to represent the sample size this is because Random sampling eliminates bias by giving all individuals an equal chance to be chosen.(Moore and McCabe 2006). Questionnaire was the instrument used for gathering data for convenience and effective data collection.

Table 1: Population and Sample of the Study

Individuals involve in conflict resolution	**No of individual involved**	
	Population	Sample
Dean of Student Affairs	1	1
Deans of the Faculties	12	6
Head of the Departments	65	22
Security Officers	32	16
Religious Leaders	6	3
Total	**110**	**45**

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results where presented from the data collected from the respondents. The analysis was done using simple frequency and percentages.

Table 2: **Bodies involved and Techniques use in conflict resolution in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria**

Types of conflicts in ABU	**Bodies involved and Techniques use in conflict resolution in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria**																								
	Dean Student Affairs					**Deans of Faculties**					**HODs**					**Security**					**Religious Leaders**				
	D	N	B	S	G/C	D	N	B	S	G/C	D	N	B	S	G/C	D	N	B	S	G/C	D	N	B	S	G/C
Inter-religious sect	√					√											√								√
Leadership	√						√				√														√
Venue allocation		√					√				√						√					√			
Union leaders election					√			√				√													
HOD & Deans election							√					√													
Class Reps election			√								√						√								
Staff ranking										√			√												
Seating position							√					√													
Property sharing							√					√									√				
Students bed space		√															√								
Examination result							√					√													
Sexual harassment					√															√					
Parking space			√								√					√									
Queuing system																√									
Overstay student										√					√										
Examination malpractice						√					√														
Security check point					√										√					√					
Dress code					√					√					√					√					√
Supervisor/supervisee						√				√				√											
Academic discuss						√						√													
Staff training		√					√					√					√								
Staff transfer					√															√					
Sharing of honorarium		√															√								
Responsibility	√				√					√		√													

KEYS: D = Dialogue; N = Negotiation; B =Brainstorming; S = Story telling; G/C = Guidance & Counselling

It is vividly clear that negotiation, brainstorming, storytelling and guidance and counselling are not use as information sharing technique for resolving conflict in the area of study. The fact is that the bodies involved in conflict resolution were not well trained and experienced in using the techniques in conflict resolution as such they may not have interest in using the technique. The implication may be that, the bodies involved in managing conflict may be creating Pease not removing the issue in conflict. Thus, the conflict will be taking dimension.

Table 3: Information Sharing Techniques for Conflict Resolution and Mitigation in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria

Individuals involved in conflict resolution	Information Sharing Techniques for Conflict Resolution									
	Dialogue		Negotiation		Brainstorming		Story telling		Guidance & Counselling	
	Freg.	%	Freg.	%	Freg.	%	Freg.	%	Freg.	%
Dean of Student Affaire	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	13
Deans of the Faculties	2	11	2	22	-	-	-	-	2	24
Head of the Department	5	28	3	33	1	33	-	-	44	50
Security Officers	8	44	4	45	-	-	-	-	-	
Religious Leaders	2	11	-	-	2	67	2	100	1	13
Total	18	100	22	100	9	100	2	100	24	100

Table 3 shows that dialogue is the most information sharing technique use for conflict resolution in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The reason is because of the nature of conflict within the institution and the categories of people that involve in conflict resolution in the university.

Another reason is because dialogue allows opinion to be shared that is issue(s) in conflict to be shared. This goes with the opinion of Mohammed (2008) that dialogue is discussion between people in which opinions are exchanged. However, some conflicts in our institutions or communities today are resolved by dialogue, which helps to know the issue in conflict and the best solution to live in peace and harmony.

Surprisingly, brainstorming score very low in the table, this is because the bodies involve in conflict resolution are highly committed in one or two thing as such they don't much time for brainstorming for conflict resolution but they have for other things. If issue in conflict and the solution are not brainstorm very well, the bodies involved in conflict management will end up creating peace not resolving conflict and the issue in conflict will keep on changing dimensions which may worsen the situation.

CONCLUSION

Information is an essential commodity that is required in all spheres of human endeavors. Wars are won and lost due to availability or non-availability of the right information, at the right time, in the right place, for the right person. Moreover, conflicts areas so consoled by building the bridge of information to close up the communication gap. Therefore, information today is considered an important factor in conflict management and constitutes one of the more important factors that bring about changes in community if effectively utilized.

Information sharing is considered to be essential for development and progress of all the social structures in the community ranging from family, religious, educational institution, political institution and the rest. The development may be attributed in part to the intensive use of information. It has been asserted that for peaceful coexistence of any institution largely depends on the nature, quality, relevance, accuracy and accessibility of information.

RECOMMENDATION

The paper recommended that dialogue, negotiation, storytelling, guidance and counseling should be strongly use as information sharing technique for conflict resolution in the institution.

Training and retraining of bodies involved in conflict resolution on the use of information sharing techniques should be organize time to time to be able to develop skill that will end conflict not create peace.

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